



10-day ultimatum to withdraw fish meal unit consent

■ LoP Yuri Alemao Warns of massive agitation in Cuncolim; alleges health risks, pollution violations and crony favouritism by BJP-led government.

Team Goemkarponn

Cuncolim: Leader of Opposition Yuri Alemao has issued a 10-day ultimatum to the BJP-led Goa government to withdraw the 'Consent to Operate' granted to a new fish meal unit at the Cuncolim Industrial Estate, warning of a massive agitation if the order is not revoked.

Addressing the media, Alemao alleged that the government's decision has put the health and well-being of residents of Cuncolim at risk and accused it of favouring vested interests.

"We have given an ultimatum to the BJP Government to withdraw the 'Consent to Operate' within the next 10 days.



If the Government fails to withdraw it, we will be forced to launch a massive agitation. This insensitive and corrupt Government will be responsible for any law and order issue," Alemao said.

He further alleged that the government was not only "playing with the lives of Cuncolikars" but also compromising the interests of international

consumers by permitting the processing of stale fish. Calling it a "clear-cut case of bribe," the Leader of Opposition claimed that the government had helped "crony capitalists" at the cost of public welfare, thereby adding to the hardships faced by local residents.

Alemao also raised environmental and public health concerns, stating that there are no sewage

treatment plants (STPs) for the fish meal units and no effective odour control mechanisms in place. "This directly affects the health of the public. A recent study by the Health Department has proved it," he said. Warning the government against ignoring public sentiment, Alemao said, "If the Government goes against the people, we will teach them a lesson."



MLA Sankalp seeks written assurance from Adani over coal-related foul smell

Team Goemkarponn

Vasco: Sankalp Amonkar, MLA of Mormugao, on Tuesday led a delegation to meet officials of Adani Group over complaints of foul smell during coal handling operations at the port.

Amonkar sought an explanation from the company regarding the recurring odour issues and demanded a written assurance outlining corrective measures along with a clear timeline to resolve the problem.

Addressing reporters after the meeting, the MLA said that residents have repeatedly raised

concerns about pollution and foul smell allegedly emanating during coal handling activities. He stressed that public health and environmental safety cannot be compromised.

"The fight against the MPA and coal handling units will continue until pollution concerns are properly addressed," Amonkar said, warning that the agitation will persist if concrete steps are not taken. He added that the company has assured the delegation that it will provide written commitments within 24 hours detailing the corrective actions and proposed timeline.



Burnt Black Box From Ajit Pawar Crash May Be Sent Overseas For Data Recovery

■ Parallel DGCA Probe Underway As Authorities Examine Airworthiness And Operational Records.

New Delhi: The flight data recorder recovered from the January 28 air crash that claimed the life of Maharashtra Deputy Chief Minister Ajit Pawar may be sent abroad for specialised analysis, according to government officials.

The aircraft's black box has been retrieved from the crash site near Baramati in Pune district, but it was found in a severely damaged and burnt condition. Aviation authorities are assessing its technical state to

determine the feasibility of extracting critical flight data. A final decision on whether to dispatch the recorder overseas for advanced data recovery is expected within the next one or two days. Officials indicated that unlike certain previous aviation incidents where recorders could not be located, the device in this case was successfully recovered. However, the extent of damage has necessitated further technical evaluation before data retrieval can proceed.

BJP-backed candidates to file CCP nominations on Friday

Team Goemkarponn

Panaji: The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP)-backed candidates for the upcoming Corporation of the City of Panaji (CCP) elections will file their nominations on Friday, party leaders said, adding that the final list will be

confirmed only after the withdrawal date. Senior BJP leader Atanasio Monserrate said that while nominations are scheduled to be submitted on Friday, the party will take a final decision on its officially backed candidates only

after the withdrawal deadline. "Nominations will be filed on Friday, but the final list of BJP-backed candidates will be clear only after the

withdrawal date. There is still scope for changes," he said. BJP Goa President Damodar Naik also confirmed that the selection process is ongoing and the party will announce its final list after the withdrawal stage is completed.



India AI Impact Expo Showcases Extraordinary Potential Of Indian Talent, Says PM Modi

■ Summit Positions India As Global Leader In Responsible And Inclusive Artificial Intelligence

New Delhi: Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Tuesday highlighted key moments from the ongoing India AI Impact Expo 2026, describing it as a powerful coming together of ideas, innovation and intent. He said the event reflects the vast potential of Indian talent in shaping the future of artificial intelligence for global good and reaffirmed the country's resolve to deploy AI responsibly, inclusively



and at scale. The Prime Minister noted that intelligence, rational thinking and decision making are the

foundations that make science and technology meaningful for society. He said the objective of the India AI Impact Summit

is to ensure that artificial intelligence serves the broader public interest and delivers tangible benefits across sectors. Held at Bharat Mandapam in New Delhi, the summit has drawn policymakers, industry leaders, researchers and start ups from across the world. The gathering signals India's ambition to move beyond theoretical discussions and focus on practical applications

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Congress Sends Mixed Signals on Goa Forward Tie Up

The latest remarks by AICC leader and Goa desk in charge Manickrao Thakre have injected fresh uncertainty into what appeared to be a developing understanding between the Congress and the Goa Forward Party for the 2027 Assembly elections.

For weeks, political conversations in Goa suggested that the two parties were moving towards a pre-poll alliance. The signals were strong enough to create an impression that an arrangement was not merely exploratory but imminent. It is in that context that Thakre's assertion that alliances cannot be announced in such a manner and must follow due process within the party has raised eyebrows.

Formally speaking, his position is unexceptionable. Alliances in a national party like the Congress require deliberation at the state level, followed by consideration and approval by the central leadership. Seat sharing, local dynamics and long-term strategy cannot be decided in haste. There is nothing unusual about insisting on procedure.

The problem lies elsewhere. It lies in the messaging.

If talks were at an early stage, why allow public perception to run ahead of reality? If discussions had matured, what prompted this sudden recalibration? Either way, the episode reveals a lack of coordination in how Congress communicates its strategy in Goa.

The party is still recovering from years of instability marked by defections and electoral setbacks. Its credibility has suffered, and rebuilding it requires discipline and clarity. A possible alliance with Goa Forward could be read as a pragmatic move to consolidate opposition votes. In a fragmented political landscape, cooperation among like-minded parties is often the only viable path to competitiveness.

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Yet alliances also come with risks. They affect grassroots workers who may have long-standing rivalries with local leaders from other parties. They demand ideological coherence, not just arithmetic advantage. Within the Congress, there are likely differing views on whether joining hands with a regional outfit strengthens the party or dilutes its independent identity.

Those internal debates are necessary. But they must be settled before public pronouncements create expectations.

For the Goa Forward Party,

the mixed signals are not inconsequential. Public talk of an alliance builds momentum and shapes strategy at the constituency level. When a senior AICC leader steps in to stress that nothing can be announced without formal approval, it can be interpreted as hesitation or even reluctance.

More importantly, voters are once again left guessing.

Goa's electorate has witnessed enough political realignments and post-poll manoeuvres to be sceptical of opaque negotiations. If there is to be a pre-poll understanding for 2027, it should be anchored in a clear common programme. What is the shared vision on governance, environment, land protection and economic development? What distinguishes this prospective alliance from past arrangements that collapsed under pressure?

These are questions that matter more than seat-sharing formulas.

Thakre's emphasis on institutional process may well be a corrective. But discipline in procedure must be matched by consistency in public communication. When senior leaders speak in different tones, it reinforces the perception of disunity.

The road to the 2027 Assembly elections is still long. There is ample time for dialogue and decision-making. But every statement shapes public trust. In a small state like Goa, political signals travel fast and are scrutinised closely.

The Congress must decide not only its electoral strategy but also how it conveys that strategy. If it intends to ally with Goa Forward, it should say so clearly once its internal processes are complete. If it prefers to go it alone, that too should be communicated without ambiguity.

What Goa does not need is speculation punctuated by reversals. In politics, as in governance, clarity is strength.

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

DECISION ON DUAL NATIONALITY LONG OVERDUE

The long-standing demand for Dual Nationality by the Indian diaspora across the world remains unresolved. The demand for Dual Nationality has been unanimous and, having not been opposed by any quarter, the government should try to bring this issue to a logical conclusion, as it would be in everyone's best interests to put this issue to bed once and for all. It would be prudent for the Central Government to allow Indians dual nationality, as they can have a foreign nationality and still maintain very close links with their motherland. Surely, this could be an emotional as well as financial win-win situation for the nation. A positive decision by the government on this issue would come as a great relief to many who, through birth or for historical and professional reasons, have acquired another citizenship. Meeting the aspirations of a multitude of Indians now spread across the world would prove extremely beneficial to the diaspora and the motherland, economically and with freedom of movement. It is worth remembering that about half of the countries of the world, including major powers, allow dual citizenship, meaning that a person can be a citizen of more than one country without any issues at all. After all, we are living in an age where the world is a global village, just like no man is an island.

-Aires Rodrigues, London

Broken Glass, Broken Systems

Recurring injuries from broken glass on Goa's beaches should concern anyone who values both public safety and the state's tourism-driven economy. When beachgoers leave with cuts on their feet, it points to a deeper failure in managing waste after consumption. Figures from Drishti Marine show that injuries linked to broken glass have been reported across major beaches over the past two years. Lifesavers administering first aid for preventable wounds is not merely an unfortunate episode. It signals a pattern. Shack operators acknowledge that bottles are often carried to the shore, consumed and then buried or discarded, only to resurface later as hazards. In this backdrop, the Deposit Refund Scheme introduced by the Department of Environment and Climate Change deserves serious attention. By placing a refundable deposit on bottles and other packaging, the scheme creates a direct financial incentive for consumers to return containers instead of abandoning them. As Dr Anthony de Sa, who heads the DRS Scheme Administrator Committee, has emphasised, the goal is to stop waste before it reaches beaches and drains. Yet policy intent must be matched by execution. Collection points need to be accessible near coastal stretches. Retailers and shack owners should be part of the system. Public awareness campaigns must run consistently, especially during peak tourist months. Goa's beaches are its greatest asset. Ensuring they remain safe and clean is not just an environmental duty but an economic necessity.

-Sudhir Kerkar, Calangute

Eight Women Rescued, Pimp Arrested In Alleged Prostitution Racket At Arambol

Team Goemkarponn

Mandrem: Mandrem police have rescued eight women and taken one person into custody for allegedly running a prostitution racket in the Harmal-Arambol belt of North Goa.

The action followed mounting pressure from local residents, who confronted authorities claiming that certain spa and massage centres in the area were being misused as a cover for illegal sex trade activities.



Villagers alleged that escort services were being operated openly and had earlier submitted the names of suspected individuals to senior police officials seeking intervention. Acting on the complaints, police conducted a raid that led to the rescue of the

women and the arrest of the alleged pimp.

Officials said further investigation is underway to determine the extent of the network and whether more persons are involved. The incident has sparked renewed debate over the regulation and monitoring of

some establishments in Arambol. Local community members have urged authorities to step up enforcement measures, warning that they will escalate protests if decisive action is not taken to shut down unlawful operations.

Residents expressed concern that such activities could tarnish Arambol's image as a family-friendly tourist destination and called for stricter vigilance to safeguard the area's reputation.

Goa govt to register co-working spaces to boost startup ecosystem

■ Property owners invited to list premises for startups, IT firms under centralised registry

Team Goemkarponn

Panaji: In a bid to strengthen Goa's startup ecosystem and support small businesses, the state government has decided to legalise and formally register co-working spaces across Goa, creating new opportunities for property owners to lease their

premises to startups and technology companies. The Department of Information Technology, Electronics & Communications (DITE&C) has called for Expressions of Interest (EOI) from property owners to register suitable office spaces under a centralised platform.

No Rollback Of Section 39A ?

■ Decisions On Land Conversions To Follow Legal Process, Not Protests, Says Minister.

Team Goemkarponn

Panaji: Amid retired Justice Ferdino Rebello's "Enough is Enough" campaign against alleged widespread land conversions, Goa's Town and Country Planning (TCP) Minister Vishwajit Rane on Monday indicated that the government has no plans



to repeal Section 39A of the Goa Town and Country Planning Act, which governs zone changes. Rane emphasised that policy decisions

cannot be influenced by memorandums or public protests. "We are elected representatives with legislative authority to discuss and pass laws in the Assembly. Any changes must go through the proper legislative process," he said, adding that Section 39A was enacted with the approval of all MLAs.

AAP challenges BJP to upgrade Ponda ID Hospital or face 'Jan Andolan'

Team Goemkarponn

Ponda: The Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) on Monday challenged the BJP-led Goa government to immediately upgrade the Ponda ID Hospital to a super speciality level, warning that it would launch a "Jan Andolan" if urgent

action is not taken. AAP leaders Valmiki Naik, Sandesh Teleikar Dessai and Minu Gawade visited the hospital on February 16 to assess the ground situation and interact with patients. Addressing the media, the leaders said that 110 vacancies remain unfilled at the hospital, including crucial posts such as Medical Superintendent, Surgeon, Radiologist,

Paediatrician, Psychiatrist, Neurologist and Lab Technicians. Citing data from a Legislative Assembly Question (LAQ), AAP further alleged that referrals from Ponda to Goa Medical College (GMC) have increased by 400 per cent over the last three years, indicating what they termed as a collapse of local healthcare services.

Goa Strengthens Global Outreach With Almaty Delegation Visit

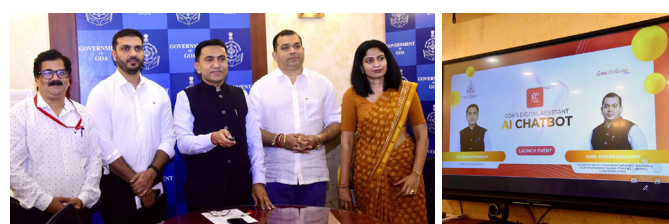
■ Tourism Department Hosts Kazakhstan Guests To Promote Year Round Destination Appeal.

Team Goemkarponn

Panaji: The Department of Tourism, Government of Goa welcomed a 12 member delegation from Almaty, Kazakhstan, at Paryatan Bhavan in Panaji during their eight day visit to the state. The guests were received with flowers in a traditional gesture that reflected Goa's emphasis on warm hospitality and meaningful travel experiences. Senior officials present to greet the delegation included Assistant Director of Tourism Jayesh Kankonkar, Deputy General Manager Marketing at the Goa



Tourism Development Corporation Deepak Narvekar, Assistant Tourist Officer Chitra Vengurlekar and Senior Manager Pravin Phaldesai, along with other representatives from the department. The group was brought to Goa by Caper Travel, with Executive Director Abida Kumar and Senior Vice President Goa Charters Egbert Dias accompanying the visitors.



Goa launches AI chatbot to strengthen transparent, citizen-centric governance

Team Goemkarponn

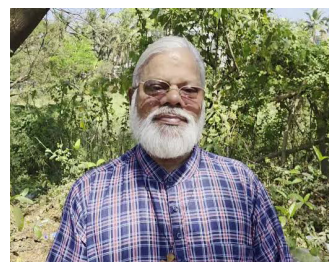
PANAJI: The Department of Information Technology, Electronics and Communications (DITE&C), in collaboration with Goa Electronics Limited, on Tuesday launched Goa's Digital Assistant — an AI-powered Chatbot (Beta version) — aimed at transforming citizen service delivery through the Goa Online portal. The AI Chatbot was launched by Pramod Sawant in the presence of Rohan Khaunte, IT Minister; Shri Kabir

Shirgaonkar, Director, DITE&C; and Ms Revati Kumar, CEO and Executive Director, Goa Electronics Limited. CM highlights transparency and ease of livingSpeaking at the launch, Chief Minister Pramod Sawant said the chatbot marks "a next chapter in Goa's digital journey," emphasising that the initiative strengthens transparency, enhances speed and brings government services closer to citizens through a more responsive and personalised digital experience.

GFDO Alleges Move To Shut Dabolim Airport To Prop Up Manohar International Airport

Team Goemkarponn

Panaji: Goans for Dabolim Only (GFDO) has alleged that moves are reportedly underway to shut Dabolim Airport for civil aviation in order to support the struggling Manohar International Airport at Mopa, operated by the GMR Group. In a press release issued on February 17, GFDO said it was not surprised by reports suggesting that Dabolim could be sacrificed to prop up the Mopa airport. The organisation claimed it had repeatedly warned the government and prospective bidders that the Mopa project carried serious structural and financial risks. GFDO stated that concerns flagged earlier by expert reports, including those



by the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) and Aéroports de Paris Ingénierie (ADPI), had pointed to feasibility issues. The mounting financial losses at Mopa over the past three years, the group said, were a predictable outcome of what it termed a "deeply flawed and commercially unsound project." According to GFDO, keeping Mopa competitive vis-à-vis Dabolim would restrict GMR's ability to levy higher user development fees and tariffs required to recover its costs.

Drishti Marine Foils Suicide Bid At Colva; Multiple Rescues Across Goa Beaches

Team Goemkarponn

Panaji: Lifesavers of Drishti Marine thwarted a suicide attempt by a 25-year-old tourist from Bihar at Colva Beach, even as several other rescue and assistance operations were carried out across Goa's beaches over the weekend. At Colva, the woman was found crying near a Drishti Marine jet ski during beach closing hours following an argument with her husband and reportedly expressed suicidal intent. Lifesavers immediately alerted Goa Police when she could not be traced at the location. She was later found by a



beach marshal in a nearby garden and taken to the police station for further assistance. In a separate incident at the same beach, beach marshal Pratik Velip sustained a dog bite from a stray while on patrol and was shifted to a medical facility for treatment. Captain Arun Shirodkar also secured and returned a lost mobile

phone to its owner after due verification. At Morjim Beach, a 40-year-old tourist from Bengaluru was rescued after getting stuck in deep waters. Lifesavers Dattaram and Ketan rushed with a rescue boat and jet ski, bringing him safely back to shore. At Baga Beach, beach marshal Nilofer Usgaonkar intervened

when a tourist from Madhya Pradesh was found taking photographs of a foreign tourist without her consent.

She promptly alerted Goa Police, who escorted the individual to the beach tower. In another incident, a lost Google Pixel phone was recovered and returned to its owner by beach marshal Sachin Amre and lifesaver Suraj Sawant in the presence of police personnel. Nilofer also recovered a lost iPhone during patrol and handed it over to police staff Dhanaji Jadhav, besides tracing and returning another misplaced phone to a tourist.

Unidentified Man Found Dead Near Old Market Circle In Fatorda

Team Goemkarponn

Margao: An unidentified male, believed to be between 40 and 45 years of age, was found dead in a semi-decomposed condition near Old Market Circle, Fatorda, on Tuesday afternoon.

According to Fatorda Police Station, police received a phone call at around 2:03 pm from staff in the area informing them that a man was lying motionless near the market circle. Police personnel rushed to the spot and found the body of an unknown male in a semi-decomposed state. An unnatural death (UD)



case has been registered. The police conducted the necessary occurrence panchanama and inquest panchanama at the scene.

Preliminary enquiries revealed that the deceased was homeless and frequently loitered around the SGPD Market area. He was reportedly a chronic alcoholic. The body has been preserved at South Goa District Hospital for medico-legal formalities and post-mortem examination.

Car Hits Divider Near Ambedkar Garden, One Injured; Case Registered

Team Goemkarponn

Panaji: The Panaji Police have registered an offence against a 40-year-old man for allegedly driving in a rash and negligent manner after his car rammed into a road divider near Babasaheb Ambedkar Garden in the early hours of February 13. As per information from Panaji Police Station, the case has been registered under Crime No. 22/2026 under Sections 281 and 125(a) of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS), 2023. According to the complaint lodged by HC Anil G. Kurtikar (Buckle No. 6246), the incident occurred at around 4:45

am on February 13 near Babasaheb Ambedkar Garden, Patto. The accused, identified as Pandurang Ganachari (40), a resident of Mercas-Murda, Tiswadi, was allegedly driving an Ertiga car (GA-07-N-2303) from Panaji towards the KTC side when he lost control of the vehicle and dashed against the road divider.

As a result of the impact, the occupant of the vehicle, Visaesh Jaggi (34), a resident of Madan Mahal, Jabalpur, sustained injuries to his right shoulder.

Police have initiated further investigation into the matter under the supervision of HC Anil Kurtikar.

Kadamba Bus In Head-On Collision At Goa Velha, Scooter Rider Dies

Team Goemkarponn

Panaji: A 50-year-old scooter rider lost his life after a head-on collision with a Kadamba bus under the flyover at Goa Velha junction on Sunday morning.

According to Agacaim Police Station, the incident occurred on February 15 at around 8:05 am. The complaint was lodged by HC Vinit Kurtikar (Buckle No. 7110) on behalf of the State. Police informed that the accused, Sankesh Bhosle (51), a resident of Aldona, Bardez, was driving a Kadamba bus bearing registration number GA-03-X-0496.

He allegedly drove the bus at a high speed in a rash and negligent



manner, without due care and caution, thereby endangering human life.

Upon reaching under the flyover at Goa Velha junction, the bus reportedly swerved extremely towards the right side into the opposite lane meant for oncoming traffic and collided head-on with a Maestro scooter (GA-06-J-3277), which was proceeding from Siridao towards Goa Velha market. The scooter rider, identified as Prashant Bagkar (50), a resident of

Bogda near Alto Desterro Church, Mormugao, sustained grievous injuries in the crash.

He later succumbed to his injuries while undergoing treatment at Goa Medical College casualty ward.

The accused driver was arrested on February 15 at 6:05 pm and subsequently released on bail at 7:56 pm the same day. Further investigation is being carried out by PSI Rushikesh Raikar of Agacaim Police Station.

Sessions Court Confirms Bail To Suspended Raia Panchayat Secretary



Team Goemkarponn

Margao: The District and Sessions Court confirmed the interim bail granted to Amrit Govind Shankalkar, suspended secretary of the Raia Village Panchayat, in connection with a rape and sexual assault case registered against him. Shankalkar was arrested on December 23, 2025, following a complaint lodged by a woman alleging rape and sexual assault. He was granted interim bail on December 27, 2025.

Chargesheet Filed In School Van Driver Sexual Assault Case

Team Goemkarponn

Porvorim: The Porvorim Police Station have filed a detailed chargesheet in the much-talked-about sexual assault case involving a school van driver. The case was registered in December 2025, following a complaint of sexual assault. The accused driver was arrested soon after the offence

was reported and has remained in judicial custody since then. Police have filed the chargesheet under Sections 64, 65, 74, 351 and 115(2) of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS), along with Sections 8(1) and 8(2) of the Goa Children's Act, and Sections 4, 6, 8 and 12 of the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences Act (POCSO) Act. The chargesheet



reportedly cites numerous witnesses and technical evidence collected during the course of investigation.

The matter will now be tried before the Special Children's Court for the State of Goa.

Travel Agent Files Complaint Against Constable For Alleged Abuse Over Tatkal Ticket

Team Goemkarponn

Margao: A travel agent based in Malbhat has lodged a formal complaint with the Station House Officer of Margao Police Station alleging abuse and threats by a police constable over a Tatkal railway ticket booking. Ranjit Nishad, proprietor of S M Tours & Travels located at Apollo Victor Hospital Complex,



Malbhat, stated in his written complaint that on February 16, 2026, Constable Arbaz Khan allegedly contacted him seeking assistance in booking a Tatkal train ticket from Margao to

Jhansi for travel on February 17. According to Nishad, the constable called after 11:20 am requesting a Tatkal ticket on the Goa Express and Mangala Express routes. The travel agent claimed he informed the constable that Tatkal bookings are subject to availability and that the quota is usually exhausted by 11 am, making confirmation difficult after that time.

Glass Injuries on Goa's Beaches Put Focus on Practical, Incentivised Remedy: DRS

Team Goemkarponn

Panaji: Recurring injuries from broken glass on Goa's beaches have begun to draw attention to how waste is managed after consumption. As concerns grow over safety and tourism, the state's new Deposit Refund Scheme (DRS) is being seen as one possible way to curb glass litter before it reaches the sand.

Panaji, Feb 2026 - Last year, numerous beachgoers went back



home carrying memories of injuries from broken glass bits littered on Goa's sunny beaches. In January alone this year, two cases were reported wherein people had to be

administered first aid by lifesavers after suffering cuts from broken glass strewn along the popular North Goa shoreline.

The injuries, recorded across multiple beaches, underline a recurring safety concern linked to discarded glass bottles according to Drishti Marine, the state - appointed lifesaving agency.

"The issue of glass litter is a challenge for tourists and citizens alike. For a tourist destination

and any healthy functioning society, it is imperative to address this issue," says Carlos Souza, convenor of the Confederation of Indian Industries' Goa panel on Tourism.

Data sourced from Drishti Marine, the Goa government-appointed beach safety agency, shows that injuries linked to broken glass were reported in 2025 from Anjuna, Arambol, Baga, Benaulim, Calangute, Colva and Palolem.



Vasco carnival parade draws thousands of revelers

Team Goemkarponn

VASCO: The streets of Swatantra Path in Vasco came alive on Monday evening as thousands of revellers from across Mormugao taluka thronged the city to witness the grand Vasco Carnival parade, turning the 1.5-km stretch into a sea of colour, music and celebration. The parade was flagged off by Panchayats Minister Mauvin Godinho, in the presence of Vasco MLA Krishna Salkar, Vasco Carnival Committee Chairman Agnelo Nunes, and other dignitaries. Addressing the gathering, Godinho described Carnival as a celebration rooted in Goa's tradition

of joy and unity. "Goans have always celebrated in a clean and positive manner. Carnival has been sustained over the years because of the love and enthusiasm of the people. It is a time to eat, drink and make merry before the Lenten season begins. While Lent calls for sacrifice and discipline, Carnival gives people an opportunity to celebrate life and togetherness," he said. MLA Salkar said the festival strengthens communal harmony and enhances Goa's tourism appeal. "Carnival brings people of all faiths together and showcases Goa on the national stage. It is not only a celebration for Goans but also a major attraction for visitors.

Sainik Aramgarh Inaugurated At Bambolim; CM Reaffirms Commitment To Soldiers

Team Goemkarponn

Bambolim: Chief Minister Pramod Sawant on Monday inaugurated the newly constructed Sainik Aramgarh (Rest House) at Bambolim, a dedicated facility for serving defence personnel and ex-servicemen visiting the State. Built at a total cost of ₹10 crore



with joint support from the Government of India and the Government of Goa, the rest house

is aimed at providing dignified and comfortable accommodation to members of the Armed

Forces. Addressing the gathering, Chief Minister Sawant said, "The Sainik Aramgarh stands as a symbol of our deep gratitude to the brave men and women of our Armed Forces. This facility will ensure that our soldiers and veterans always have a home in Goa — a place of dignity, comfort and respect."



Orlim Carnival 2026 Reflects Political Unity Ahead Of 2027 Assembly Polls

Team Goemkarponn

Orlim: Orlim Carnival 2026 turned into a show of political unity as senior leaders and grassroots representatives from South Goa shared the dais, signalling coordination ahead of the 2027 Assembly Elections.

Former Deputy Chief Minister and Fatorda MLA Vijai Sardesai and Benaulim MLA Venzy Viegas were present at the event, along with Colva ZP member Antonio Fernandes (Mam), Colva Sarpanch Treza, Carmona Sarpanch Sandra, Orlim Sarpanch Simon and former ZP member Joseph. The joint presence of

leaders from different constituencies and local bodies was widely viewed as a strong message of political coordination rooted in grassroots leadership and people-centric issues. Addressing the gathering, the leaders emphasised the importance of unity, strengthening local governance and collective action to tackle key concerns affecting Goans, including livelihoods, development and protection of local interests. With the 2027 Assembly elections on the horizon, the event underscored a growing sentiment for collaborative politics and a united approach to governance in South Goa.

CM Flags Off Women-Run Vehicles Under AGEY In Ponda

■ Launches PM Surya Ghar Awareness Drive.

Team Goemkarponn

Ponda: Chief Minister Pramod Sawant on Monday flagged off vehicles operated by women entrepreneurs and Self-Help Group (SHG) members under the Aajeevika Grameen Express Yojana (AGEY) in Ponda, while also inaugurating an awareness campaign for the PM Surya Ghar



– Har Ghar Bijli Yojana. Addressing the gathering, the Chief Minister said the initiative reflects the vision of "Har Ghar Udyam, Har Gaon Samridh" I Har Ghar Urja,

Har Ghar Samridh," aimed at strengthening rural livelihoods and promoting clean energy adoption. Under AGEY, 48 vehicles across eight blocks have been made

operational to improve last-mile connectivity and provide assured income opportunities to women. An additional 24 vehicles are expected to be rolled out soon to cover the remaining blocks. "Through AGEY, we are not only enhancing connectivity in rural Goa but also ensuring sustainable income for our women entrepreneurs.

Archdiocesan Board Of Education Celebrates All Goa Institutions' Day

Team Goemkarponn

Panaji: The Archdiocesan Board of Education (ABE) celebrated All Goa Institutions' Day on February 13, 2026, under the theme "Educating for Hope and Transformation," bringing together dignitaries,

educators and students from across the State. The function was presided over by His Eminence Filipe Neri Cardinal Ferrão, President of the ABE, while Rev. Fr. Pedro Rodrigues attended as the chief guest. Auxiliary Bishop Simiao Purificação Fernandes and several

other clergy and office bearers of the ABE were present. The programme began with a welcome address followed by a prayer dance presented by students of St. Mary's of the Angels Convent High School, setting a reflective tone for the celebration. A prayer

service followed, uniting the gathering in gratitude and purpose. Fr. Anand D. Souza extended a formal welcome, while Fr. Tony Alemão presented the annual report, outlining the milestones achieved and reaffirming the Board's commitment to educational excellence.



AM/NS India expands value-added steel portfolio with world-class branded offerings Vibrance and Optima to power appliance and industrial manufacturing

To meet rising OEMs' demand for surface precision, aesthetics, and manufacturing reliability. Enabling OEMs to source world-class value-added steels from within India, aligned with the Aatmanirbhar Bharat vision

Mumbai: ArcelorMittal Nippon Steel India (AM/NS India) today announced the strengthening of its value-added portfolio with AM/NS Vibrance and AM/NS Optima— two world-class, premium branded steel solutions engineered to meet the increasingly design-led needs of Original Equipment Manufacturers (OEMs) across appliance and industrial manufacturing ecosystems.

With demand rising for steel that combines consistent surface quality, tight tolerances and reliable performance at scale, AM/NS India is expanding its value-added portfolio with branded offerings that reduce reliance on imports while making premium, internationally benchmarked quality available domestically. These two branded coated offerings now form part of a value-added product portfolio that includes Optigal®, Magnelis®, Optigal® Prime, Optigal® Pinnacle, and others — each validated for consistency, efficiency, and durability across diverse applications. Mr. Ranjan Dhar, Director and Vice President — Sales & Marketing, ArcelorMittal Nippon Steel India (AM/NS India), said: "For Original Equipment Manufacturers (OEMs) focused on precision manufacturing and consistent brand quality; material choice directly impacts productivity, cost, and long-term performance.

AM/NS INDIA

Against this backdrop, the addition of AM/NS Vibrance and AM/NS Optima is a significant step in expanding our branded steel portfolio to support OEMs productivity and value creation.

These two coated steel offerings strengthen our position as a preferred solution provider with innovative, high-quality steel solutions in line with our brand promise — 'Smarter Steels, Brighter Futures'. By making world-class value-added steels available domestically, we are contributing to the 'Make in India' vision, while enabling our customers to build differentiated products with confidence and gain competitive advantage domestically and globally. The appliance and industrial manufacturing ecosystems continue to be key growth pillars for our value-added steel portfolio, as we advance purpose-led innovations that help our customers become increasingly 'Aatmanirbhar'."

AM/NS Vibrance — Premium colour-coated steel AM/NS Vibrance is a premium colour-coated steel solution for appliance OEMs, combining strength, precision, and superior surface aesthetics. As appliances become increasingly visible design features in homes and commercial

settings, manufacturers need materials that combine consistent colour, controlled gloss and refined finishes with durability and efficient manufacturability. AM/NS Vibrance meets these requirements through advanced coating technology applied over precision-engineered steel substrates, ensuring reliable performance from fabrication through end use. AM/NS Vibrance ensures that manufactured appliances are visually appealing and built to last. It is well-suited for diverse appliance applications, including refrigerators, washing machines, microwave ovens, and water dispensers.

AM/NS Optima — True Zero-Spangle Galvanised Steel AM/NS Optima is one of India's most premium True Zero-Spangle Galvanised Steel products. It offers a higher degree of surface uniformity and control than conventional Galvanised Steel, enabling manufacturers to achieve cleaner, more consistent finishes.

Built on superior precision-engineered substrates with uniform thickness and tightly controlled surface quality, AM/NS Optima steel bends predictably, offers finishes with visual harmony, and performs consistently across production runs. It empowers manufacturers to create highly refined, precise, and flawless surfaces that fulfil the most exacting applications. It

is well-suited for multiple applications, including AC outdoor units, panels, and cleanroom installations. India's consumer durables market — expected to become the world's fourth largest by FY27 — is rapidly premiumising, driven by rising demand for appliances that offer flawless finishes and complement designed living spaces.

Annual coated steel demand in India — currently at 11.1 million tonnes — is projected to grow at an 8–10% CAGR in the coming years. Within the appliance segment specifically, coated steel consumption is growing at about 10% annually, driven by rising consumer aspirations, rapid urbanisation, accelerating premiumisation, and supportive national initiatives such as the Production Linked Incentive (PLI) scheme and import substitution efforts.

The coated steel demand from industrial applications is projected to grow at an 8–12% CAGR through 2030, supported by government policies driving PLI, self-reliance initiatives, and the expansion of automotive, electronics, and engineering sectors. Together, the appliance and industrial segments reinforce the strategic importance of coated steel in India's long-term growth trajectory and highlight the critical role of high-quality value-added steel in powering the country's manufacturing ambitions.



Travel Trade Central To Goa's Quality Tourism Vision, Says Minister At First Agents Meet 2026

■ GTDC Brings Together Industry Stakeholders To Strengthen Collaboration And Market Outreach



Team Goemkarponn

Panaji: The Goa Tourism Development Corporation convened its first Travel Agents Meet of 2026 in Panjim, bringing together key players from the travel and tourism ecosystem to deepen partnerships and align strategies for promoting Goa as a diverse, experience driven destination. The event saw the participation of Tourism Minister Rohan A. Khaunte, GTDC Chairman Kedar Naik, Managing Director Kuldeep Arolkar and senior officials, along with 55 travel agents, online travel aggregators and new tourism service operators from across Goa. Addressing the gathering, the Tourism Minister underscored the role of travel agents as long term partners in shaping the state's tourism growth. He said collaboration with the trade is essential as Goa expands its focus beyond beaches to promote quality tourism and immersive experiences. The emphasis, he noted, remains on balanced development that benefits

local communities, strengthens livelihoods and enhances visitor satisfaction. GTDC Chairman Kedar Naik highlighted the influence of travel agents as the first point of contact for travellers and key contributors to shaping destination perception. He announced that the Travel Agents Meet would become an annual outreach initiative of Goa Tourism. Plans were also outlined for a dedicated trade show in Gujarat to strengthen engagement in that important source market. Additionally, GTDC will introduce awards recognising top performing travel agents nationally and regionally for measurable contributions to promoting Goa. Managing Director Kuldeep Arolkar said the platform enables GTDC to better align its residencies and new tourism services with evolving market expectations. Representatives from the travel trade welcomed the initiative, describing it as a constructive forum for direct engagement and coordinated efforts.

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India AI Impact Expo Showcases Extraordinary Potential Of Indian Talent, Says PM Modi

under initiatives such as the India AI Mission and Digital India. The framework of the summit is built around three pillars: People, Planet and Progress, aiming to promote inclusive growth through areas

such as personalised education, telemedicine, precision farming and sustainable development. India also showcased its technological sovereignty through India Stack and the launch of 12 indigenous

foundation models trained on extensive Indian datasets and tailored to the country's 22 official languages. With participation from heads of state, ministers and global AI experts, the expo spans 70,000

square metres and features over 600 start ups developing solutions already deployed at scale. International experts praised the summit's emphasis on measurable impact, particularly in education and healthcare,

while underscoring the need for ethical safeguards. UNICEF representatives stressed that AI systems must be designed with protections built in from the outset to ensure they remain safe and beneficial.

With India's AI market projected to exceed 17 billion dollars by 2027, the summit underscores the nation's intent to bridge innovation and real world impact while advancing the vision of Viksit Bharat 2047.

Muslims Face No Insecurity In India, Says Grand Mufti After Meeting PM

■ Sheikh Abubakr Ahmad Emphasises Unity, Peace And Collective National Development.

New Delhi: The Grand Mufti of India, Sheikh Abubakr Ahmad, has said that Muslims in the country face no insecurity or obstacles and that no specific concerns were raised during his recent meeting with Prime Minister Narendra Modi. Speaking after the interaction, the senior cleric stressed the importance of peace, harmony and collective responsibility in strengthening the nation. He stated that India must continue to uphold tranquility and mutual respect among communities, adding that Muslims are safe and able to live without difficulty in



the country.

The Grand Mufti said his discussion with the Prime Minister centred on working together for national development rather than highlighting grievances. He conveyed the need for joint efforts aimed at the country's progress and expressed satisfaction with the meeting, describing it as

positive and constructive.

Reaffirming his commitment to humanitarian values, he said his work extends beyond religious lines and is guided by the principle of serving humanity as a whole.

He called upon citizens to live with love and dignity, underscoring that unity and compassion

remain essential for India's growth.

The Prime Minister also described the interaction as productive, noting that a range of issues were discussed during the meeting. Officially known as Kanthapuram AP Aboobacker Musliyar, Sheikh Abubakr Ahmad has served as the tenth Grand Mufti of India since February 2019. He was elected by the All India Tanzeem Ulama-e-Islam, a national body of Sunni scholars. He also holds key positions in the All India Sunni Jamiyyathul Ulama and the Samastha Kerala Jem-iyathul Ulama.

Opposing Vande Mataram Is An Insult To The Constitution, Says Adityanath

■ Chief Minister Highlights National Pride, Governance Reforms And Uttar Pradesh's Transformation.

New Delhi: Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath has asserted that the National Song represents the pride and honour of the nation and must be respected by every citizen. He noted that Vande Mataram was formally recognised by the Constituent Assembly on January 24, 1950, and said that respecting national symbols such as the Tricolour, the national anthem, the national song and revered national figures is a fundamental duty of all Indians.



As the Centre marks 150 years of Vande Mataram, he expressed appreciation to Prime Minister Narendra Modi for issuing a notification mandating the singing of the National Song at public functions.



India US Defence Partnership On Steeply Upward Trajectory, Says Ambassador

■ Joint Engagements Described As Crucial To Ensuring Stability In The Indo Pacific.

New Delhi: The defence partnership between India and the United States is strengthening steadily and playing a vital role in maintaining stability across the Indo Pacific region, US Ambassador to India Sergio Gor said following a high level visit to the Indian Army's Western Command headquarters.

The ambassador, accompanied by Admiral Samuel J. Paparo, Commander of the US Indo Pacific Command, held detailed discussions with Lieutenant General Manoj Kumar Katiyar regarding evolving security dynamics along

India's Western Front. The visit underscored the growing strategic coordination between the two militaries.

During the interaction, the delegation received a comprehensive briefing on the operational readiness of the Western Command. Officials highlighted the formation's legacy, its execution of Operation Sindoor, and the broader role played by the Indian Army in supporting nation building efforts and contributing to regional stability. The discussions also focused on current security assessments and collaborative approaches to emerging challenges.

Time Has Come To Develop Sixth Generation Aero Engines, Says Rajnath Singh

■ Defence Minister Calls For Advanced Technologies To Accelerate Self Reliance In Military Aviation.

New Delhi: Defence Minister Rajnath Singh has called for the immediate development of sixth generation aero engine technologies, asserting that India must move beyond incremental progress and position itself at the forefront of global defence innovation. During a visit to Bengaluru, Singh inaugurated a modern Missile Integration facility at Bharat Electronics



Limited and reviewed ongoing indigenous engine programmes at the Gas Turbine Research Establishment under the Defence Research

and Development Organisation.

The visit also featured the flagging off of the third and fourth regiment combat systems of the

Akash missile and the unveiling of a specialised Mountain Fire Control Radar designed for high altitude operations

Addressing scientists and industry representatives, the minister said India is progressing steadily towards the development of the Advanced Medium Combat Aircraft, but emphasised that ambitions must now extend further.

Bangladesh Is No Longer Guided By Others' Directives, Says Muhammad Yunus In Farewell Address

■ Outgoing Chief Adviser Stresses Sovereignty, China Ties And Regional Vision Amid Domestic Criticism.

New Delhi: Facing mounting criticism at home, Bangladesh's outgoing Chief Adviser Muhammad Yunus used his farewell address to project a firm foreign policy stance, asserting that the country had restored its sovereignty and was no longer influenced by external directives.



Yunus, who led the

interim administration during a turbulent period following the ouster of former Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, described his 18 month tenure as a phase of reform and renewed national confidence. His remarks came amid continued scrutiny over the government's handling of communal tensions

and concerns raised by minority communities, particularly Hindus, after the July 2024 uprising. In a speech marked by strong nationalist undertones, Yunus outlined a broader regional economic vision involving Nepal, Bhutan and India's northeastern states, commonly known as the Seven Sisters.

No Sledging, Just Skills: Surya's Message Before India's Big Win

■ Captain calls for discipline in team huddle before clinical T20 World Cup victory in Colombo

New Delhi: India produced a commanding display against Pakistan in their Group A clash of the 2026 T20 World Cup in Colombo, sealing a comprehensive 61 run victory and confirming a place in the Super 8 stage. Rather than engaging in verbal exchanges, captain Suryakumar Yadav set the tone with a message of composure during a pre fielding huddle. He instructed teammates to avoid sledging and focus purely on execution as they prepared to defend 175 for 7.

India's innings was anchored by a steady 32 from Suryakumar,



who batted until the 19th over to ensure stability after early wickets. Ishan Kishan provided the main thrust with the bat, while the bowling unit delivered a collective performance. Jasprit Bumrah and Hardik Pandya led the pace attack effectively, supported well by the spinners as Pakistan were restricted well short of the target.

Suryakumar's leadership drew praise for its situational awareness and maturity. Earlier in the tournament, he had rescued India from a precarious 77 for 6 against the United States.

Against Pakistan, he walked in with the team at 88 for 2 and ensured there was no collapse, balancing strike rotation with controlled aggression.

Though his strike rate was measured, his approach allowed others to play more freely while maintaining scoreboard pressure.

Former India captain Sunil Gavaskar commended Suryakumar's understanding of match conditions and tempo, noting that T20 cricket requires smart risk management rather than reckless hitting.

With this emphatic win, India improved their head to head record over Pakistan in T20 World Cup meetings to 8 to 1, reinforcing their dominance on the global stage.

Rajasthan Royals Approach Gautam Gambhir With Leadership and Equity Proposal

■ Conflict of interest rules make India head coach exit unlikely despite major offer.

New Delhi: Former India opener Gautam Gambhir has reportedly received a significant proposal from Rajasthan Royals to take on a combined role as chief executive officer, mentor and partner. The offer is understood to include a minority equity stake of around two to three percent as the franchise undergoes a change in ownership structure involving new stakeholders. Gambhir is currently serving as head coach of the Indian men's cricket team, a position he assumed after



a successful mentoring career in the Indian Premier League. His association with the IPL has been marked by notable achievements. He led Kolkata Knight Riders to two IPL titles as captain and later contributed to another championship in a mentoring capacity.

Australia on Brink After Sri Lanka Seal Super 8 Spot With Dominant Chase

■ Nissanka's unbeaten century seals Super 8 spot for Sri Lanka as Australia face uncertain fate.

New Delhi: Australia captain Mitchell Marsh conceded his side was second best after an eight wicket loss to Sri Lanka left their T20 World Cup campaign hanging by a thread. Chasing 182 at the Pallekele International Cricket Stadium, Sri Lanka reached the target with two overs to spare to confirm their place in the Super 8 stage.

Marsh felt 181 was competitive but admitted Australia failed to capitalise after a flying start. He acknowledged that Sri Lanka outperformed his team and said qualification is now out of their hands. Australia, currently ranked No. 2 in the world, must rely on other results while ensuring a dominant win in their final group fixture. Sri Lanka's victory was powered by a magnificent unbeaten 100 from Pathum Nissanka off 52 balls. He combined with Kusal Mendis, who struck 51 from 38 deliveries, in a decisive partnership that



kept the hosts in control. Pavan Rathnayake added an unbeaten 28 as Sri Lanka completed a record chase at the venue in 18 overs.

Australia had earlier looked set for a total beyond 200. Marsh smashed 54 from 27 balls on his return from injury, while Travis Head hammered 56 off 29. The opening pair raced to 104 inside nine overs. However, Sri Lanka fought back strongly through leg spinner Dushan Hemantha, who claimed three wickets, triggering a collapse that saw Australia lose four wickets for just six runs late in the innings. Australia's path to qualification is narrow.

Esports Nations Cup Aims to Elevate India Through National Representation

■ EWCF COO Mike McCabe outlines vision to transform competitive gaming into a truly global sport

New Delhi: The push to position esports alongside traditional international competitions is gaining momentum, with the Esports World Cup Foundation placing national identity at the heart of its newest initiative. Through the Esports Nations Cup, the foundation hopes to unlock new audiences and accelerate growth in emerging markets such as India.

According to EWCF Chief Operating Officer Mike McCabe, national



pride has the power to reshape how competitive gaming is perceived. While esports has historically revolved around club rivalries, the Nations Cup shifts the focus to country versus

country competition, mirroring global sporting events. The belief is that seeing players represent their nation can spark wider engagement beyond core gaming communities. India presents a

compelling case. The country has hundreds of millions of gamers, yet structured international pathways remain limited. A national team framework could unify top talent that is otherwise divided across clubs and create a broader narrative that resonates with mainstream audiences. The Nations Cup also seeks to expand access beyond established esports powerhouses in regions such as East Asia, Europe and North America.

Railways Defeat Goa By 218 Runs In Senior Women's One Day Trophy

Team Goemkarponn

Panaji: Goa suffered a heavy 218 run defeat against Railways Women in the Senior Women's One Day Trophy Elite match played at the Taurian World School Ground in Ranchi on Monday. After winning the toss and opting to

bat, Railways piled up an imposing 309 for 6 in their allotted 50 overs. India international Dayalan Hemalatha led the charge with a superb 130 off 117 deliveries, anchoring the innings with authority. She found support from Nuzhat Parween, who contributed 78, while Arushi Goel remained unbeaten on 57

to provide a strong finish. Goa's bowlers struggled to contain the flow of runs, though Metali Gawandar returned figures of 2 for 50. Tanaya Naik, Pooja Kalel, Vidhi Bhandare and Poorva Bhaidkar claimed one wicket each but were unable to stem the momentum as Railways crossed the

Hemalatha's 130 And Poonam Yadav's Five Wicket Haul Seal Dominant Win.

300 mark comfortably. Chasing a daunting target, Goa began on a steady note, reaching 45 without loss. However, the innings unravelled rapidly thereafter. The side was eventually bowled out for just 91 in 24 overs. Openers Purvaja Verlekar top scored with 32, while Harshita Yadav added 25.