



Opposition Moves Governor Against Budget Session Curtailment

Seeks dismissal of Goa government, warns of further action if special session not convened.

Team Goemkarponn

PANAJI: A delegation of Opposition MLAs from the Congress, Aam Aadmi Party (AAP), and the Revolutionary Goans Party (RGP) has approached the Goa Governor, intensifying its protest against the abrupt curtailment of the ongoing Budget session of the Legislative Assembly.



Led by Leader of Opposition Yuri Alemao, the delegation—including AAP MLAs Venzy Viegas and Cruz Silva, and RGP MLA Viresh Borkar—

met Governor P. Ashok Gajapathi Raju at Raj Bhavan to raise serious constitutional concerns over the decision. The Budget session was

cut short on Monday soon after the passage of the State Budget. Speaker Ganesh Gaonkar acted following a motion moved by Protocol Minister Mauvin Godinho, citing the enforcement of the Model Code of Conduct (MCC) in South Goa after the announcement of the Ponda by-election. Speaking to reporters,

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Opposition May Move President Over Assembly Session Curtailment

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PANAJI: AAP MLA Venzy Viegas has indicated that the Opposition is prepared to escalate the issue of the curtailed Goa Assembly session to the highest level, including approaching the President of India. Speaking to the media, Viegas said that as elected representatives, legislators have the authority to exercise their constitutional powers.



He noted that the matter has already been brought to the attention of the Governor, and the Opposition will wait for an appropriate response.

Agitation Against Section 39A Will Intensify: MLA Viresh

Team Goemkarponn

PANAJI: RGP MLA Viresh Borkar on Wednesday said the agitation against Section 39A will continue and be expanded to villages across Goa, amid rising concerns over land-related issues. He noted that villagers from various parts of the state have been approaching him with complaints about increasing land conversions in their areas. Borkar urged people to come forward and actively participate in protests to



safeguard their villages. He also alleged double standards in the Assembly, stating that while the Opposition is expected to maintain decorum during protests, they were not allowed to discuss Section 39A, with proceedings pushed through without adequate debate.

First BNS Conviction in Goa: Mapusa Court Sentences Accused in Arpora Assault Case

Anjuna Police secure landmark conviction; victim to receive Rs 35,000 compensation

Team Goemkarponn

MAPUSA: In a landmark development, Goa has recorded its first full trial conviction under the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS), 2023, with the JMFC 'D' Court in Mapusa sentencing a 39-year-old man in a case involving stalking, criminal trespass, attempted assault, and intimidation. The case was registered by Anjuna Police on May 26, 2025, following a complaint by a 20-year-old woman from Arpora, who alleged that



the accused, Sarvesh alias Muru alias Babu Govekar, had been persistently following her over a long period. On May 24, 2025, at around 3:15 pm, the accused allegedly entered the

verandah of her house in Simwaddo, Arpora, armed with a koita, attempted to assault her while she was alone, wrongfully restrained her, used abusive language targeting her modesty, and threatened her and her family members with dire consequences, including death threats. He was arrested on the same day the offence was reported, and after completion of investigation, a chargesheet was filed. Following trial, the court convicted the accused

and sentenced him to three years' simple imprisonment and a fine of Rs 15,000 under Section 78 of BNS, a fine of Rs 10,000 under Section 79, and one year's simple imprisonment along with a fine of Rs 10,000 under Section 333, with additional imprisonment in default of payment of fines. The court also directed that the total fine amount of Rs 35,000 be paid to the victim as compensation under the provisions of the BNSS, 2023.

India Should Build 90 Day Oil Reserve To Strengthen Energy Security

Parliamentary panel urges expansion of storage capacity and improved access to cooking fuel and piped gas

New Delhi: A parliamentary committee has recommended that the government increase the country's crude oil reserves to maintain a buffer stock sufficient for 90 days, aligning with international energy security standards. The suggestion comes amid concerns over global fuel supply disruptions triggered by the ongoing conflict involving Iran. In its latest report on budgetary demands for the petroleum and natural gas sector for the financial



year 2026 to 2027, the committee emphasised the need to strengthen India's strategic petroleum reserves. It noted that expanding oil storage capacity would help the country better manage potential supply shocks

and maintain stability in fuel availability during global crises. To achieve the recommended target, the committee advised the government to explore the construction of additional underground oil storage caverns in regions where geological conditions allow such infrastructure. Expanding these facilities would increase the country's ability to store crude oil for extended periods and reduce vulnerability to sudden disruptions in global supply chains.



"Yes, I'm Alive": Netanyahu Appears With US Envoy To Quash Viral Death Rumours

New Delhi: Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has released a new video message alongside the United States Ambassador to Israel, Mike Huckabee, dismissing viral rumours that falsely claimed he had been killed during the ongoing tensions with Iran

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Four Held in Belagavi for Circulating Fake Rs 500 Notes, Three From Goa

Nearly 500 counterfeit notes seized; probe on to trace source and possible interstate links

Team Goemkarponn

BELAGAVI: Belagavi Market Police have arrested four individuals, including three from Goa, for allegedly attempting to pass off counterfeit ₹500 currency notes in the city. The accused have been identified as Mohammed Arbaz (21) from Taleband-Davorlim, Rupesh Hanumanth Vakode (26) from Canacona, Mohammad Hussain Bakki (23) from Margao,



and Shrivankumar (25) from Begusarai in Bihar. Police said a total of 495 fake ₹500 notes were recovered from the accused.

Congress Mirrors BJP Playbook in Ponda, Risks Undermining Its Own Credibility

The Congress party's decision to field Ketan Bhatikar for the upcoming Ponda bypoll has set off an uncomfortable sense of déjà vu. For years, the party has sharply criticised the BJP for encouraging defections and sidelining loyal workers. Yet, in this instance, it appears to have adopted a strikingly similar approach. Bhatikar, who entered the Congress fold barely a week ago, has been quickly elevated as the party's candidate. His political journey is well known. He contested the 2022 Assembly election from Ponda on an MGP ticket and lost narrowly to the late Ravi Naik. Subsequently, during the Zilla Parishad elections, he backed his own candidates, effectively distancing himself from the MGP before eventually joining Congress.

There is little doubt that Bhatikar is a formidable contender. His previous electoral performance and local connect make him a strong challenger, especially in what is expected to be a closely fought bypoll. Against a BJP candidate, possibly Ritesh Naik, the contest promises to be intense.

However, the issue here is not about winnability alone. It is about consistency in political messaging and the value placed on party loyalty. By choosing a recent entrant over a long-serving party worker like Rajesh Verekar, Congress risks sending a troubling signal to its grassroots cadre.

Verekar, by most accounts, has been working steadily for the party and was an aspiring candidate for the seat. His exclusion raises a fundamental question: what incentive remains for loyal workers if electoral tickets are handed out to newcomers based on immediate political calculations? In a party that has struggled to maintain organisational strength in Goa, such decisions could deepen internal disillusionment.

More importantly, this move weakens Congress's moral

To be fair, elections are ultimately about winning. Parties are under pressure to field candidates who can secure victories, especially in high-stakes contests like bypolls. From that perspective, Bhatikar's selection may be seen as a pragmatic choice. But pragmatism without principle is a slippery slope. It may deliver immediate gains, but it erodes trust within the organisation and among voters. The larger concern is the message this sends ahead of future elections. If party workers begin to feel that loyalty and sustained effort do not translate into opportunity, it could weaken the organisational backbone of Congress. Political parties are not built only on candidates; they are built on workers who sustain them between elections.

argument against the BJP. The party has consistently accused the ruling side of engineering defections and rewarding turncoats. But when it adopts a similar strategy, the criticism begins to ring hollow. Political expediency may justify such decisions in the short term, but it comes at the cost of long-term credibility.

Defections and political realignments are not new to Goa's political landscape. They have, in many ways, become part of its electoral culture. Yet, parties that seek

to position themselves as alternatives must demonstrate a different standard of functioning. If Congress is to distinguish itself from the BJP, it cannot afford to mirror the very practices it condemns.

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The larger concern is the message this sends ahead of future elections. If party workers begin to feel that loyalty and sustained effort do not translate into opportunity, it could weaken the organisational backbone of Congress. Political parties are not built only on candidates; they are built on workers who sustain them between elections. At the same time, voters are not blind to these shifts. The electorate in Goa has witnessed frequent party-switching and opportunistic alignments. Each such decision reinforces a perception that ideology and commitment are secondary to electoral arithmetic.

The Ponda bypoll will, no doubt, be closely watched. It will test not only the electoral strength of the BJP and Congress but also the credibility of their respective narratives. For Congress, the challenge goes beyond winning a seat. It must also answer whether it stands by the principles it claims to uphold. In choosing Bhatikar, the party may have strengthened its chances in the immediate contest. But it has also opened itself to the very criticism it has long directed at its rival. The real test will be whether this strategy pays off politically or further blurs the distinction between the two parties in the eyes of the public.

LETTER TO THE EDITOR When Dissent Becomes a Threat to Democracy

The reported arrest of Sonam Wangchuk under stringent laws like the National Security Act raises troubling questions about the use of state power. Why such a drastic step was taken in the first place, and why a subsequent release followed, remains unclear. This lack of transparency only deepens public concern. Wangchuk is not an obscure figure. He is widely respected for his work in education and sustainable innovation, and is known to many as the real-life inspiration behind the film *3 Idiots*. When a figure of such standing is treated as a threat to national security for raising concerns about Ladakh, it inevitably leads to unease about where the line between dissent and wrongdoing is being drawn. Laws like the NSA and UAPA are meant for exceptional circumstances. Their use against individuals engaging in public advocacy risks sending a message that disagreement with authority is no longer acceptable. In a democracy, dissent is not only legitimate, it is necessary. This is not about one individual alone. It is about the broader principle of how a nation treats voices that question, critique, or seek accountability. The strength of a democracy lies in its ability to accommodate such voices without resorting to coercion. Those entrusted with power must exercise it with restraint and responsibility. Actions that appear arbitrary or excessive undermine public trust and weaken democratic institutions. India's constitutional values were shaped by a commitment to freedom and justice. Safeguarding these principles requires that dissent be engaged with, not silenced.

-Santan Pereira, Calangute

Curtailing Debate Weakens Democracy

The decision to curtail the Goa Assembly's Budget Session following the imposition of the Model Code of Conduct for the Ponda bypoll raises serious concerns about the functioning of democratic institutions. While procedural constraints due to elections are understandable, the manner in which the session was wrapped up is troubling. Nearly 79 per cent of the Budget, amounting to thousands of crores, was reportedly passed without detailed discussion or scrutiny. This effectively denied elected representatives the opportunity to debate key issues concerning governance, public spending, and accountability. Budget sessions are not mere formalities. They are the cornerstone of legislative oversight, where policies are questioned, priorities are debated, and the government is held accountable. Bypassing this process weakens the very essence of parliamentary democracy. The argument that time constraints necessitated such a move does not fully justify avoiding discussion. Alternatives such as a Vote on Account, followed by a detailed debate in a later session, have been used in the past under similar circumstances. Choosing not to explore such options only fuels the perception that scrutiny was deliberately avoided. Equally concerning is the precedent this sets. If election schedules can routinely override legislative debate, it risks normalising the sidelining of democratic processes. Governance cannot be reduced to procedural compliance alone; it must also reflect the spirit of accountability. The Opposition's protests, though disruptive, highlight a genuine grievance. Denying space for debate only deepens mistrust between the treasury and Opposition benches. At a time when public confidence in institutions is critical, the government must ensure that expediency does not come at the cost of transparency and democratic norms.

-Shraddha Naik, Davorlim

Goa Faces 84% DySP Shortage, SPs Handling Dual Roles

Team Goemkarponn

PANAJI: The Goa police force is grappling with a severe shortage of Deputy Superintendents of Police (DySPs), with nearly 84% of positions currently vacant. This has led to Superintendents of Police (SPs) taking on additional responsibilities to manage the gap at this crucial supervisory level.

Chief Minister Pramod Sawant, who also oversees the home department, revealed that the force has a total of 1,036 vacancies across ranks. The sanctioned strength of DySPs stands at around 65 posts,

including two ex-cadre positions. Of these, 44 are allotted to the Goa police, while the remaining posts fall under the Indian Reserve Battalion. The vacancies are split between 27 promotional posts and 38 meant for direct recruitment.

The situation has been further strained after the state government promoted 19 DySPs to the rank of SP earlier this year, widening the gap at the DySP level. In response, the



administration has initiated steps to recruit approximately 30 DySPs directly, with the personnel department moving a proposal for necessary approvals.

However, recruitment has faced legal and procedural hurdles. In 2024,

the Goa Public Service Commission cancelled an ongoing process to directly recruit 28 DySPs. The government later informed the Bombay High Court of its decision to scrap direct recruitment altogether at that stage.

To address concerns over fairness, police inspectors were granted a five-year age relaxation for DySP recruitment. As per a 1997 policy, 80% of DySP posts are to be filled through promotions, while the remaining 20% are reserved for direct recruitment. At present, promotional quotas have largely been filled, but direct recruitment posts continue to remain vacant.

The issue has also been under judicial scrutiny. In April 2021, the high court admitted a petition filed by police inspectors opposing the exclusive reliance on promotions.



Goa Loses 3% of Coastline to Erosion; 'Stable' Shore Shrinks by 7%

Team Goemkarponn

Panaji: Goa's coastline is undergoing a steady transformation, with about 3% of its shore already eroded and the stretch considered stable dropping by nearly 7%, according to recent assessments of shoreline changes.

The findings point to a gradual but concerning shift, as more sections of the coast move out of the "stable" category and become vulnerable to erosion. This has raised alarms for beach-dependent livelihoods, coastal infrastructure, and the state's tourism-driven economy.

Researchers link the trend to a mix of natural forces and human activity. Sea-level rise, shifting wave dynamics, and increasing pressure from coastal development are all believed to be contributing to the

changing shoreline.

Authorities are tracking these changes using scientific studies and satellite-based mapping to identify hotspots and plan interventions. Protective steps such as beach nourishment and coastal defense structures have been introduced in some areas, though experts say long-term solutions will require careful planning.

Environmentalists warn that unregulated construction and intensive use of coastal zones could accelerate the damage, urging stricter enforcement of coastal regulations and sustainable development practices.

With visible changes already underway, the data underscores the need for urgent and balanced action to safeguard Goa's fragile coastline while supporting communities that depend on it.

Goa Cyber Police Block 442 Links, 866 Numbers Amid Rising Fraud Complaints

Team Goemkarponn

PANAJI: Even as online fraud complaints continue to rise in Goa, cyber police have intensified enforcement, blocking 442 web links, 168 social media accounts, and 866 mobile numbers linked to fraudulent activities.

Replying to a starred question tabled by MLA Govind Gaude in the Assembly, Chief Minister and Home Minister Dr. Pramod Sawant said



complaints related to online banking frauds, investment scams, and impersonation cases have increased in the state. He attributed the rise

to improved awareness and reporting by citizens following sustained outreach by Goa Police. To tackle the growing cyber threat, the Cyber Crime Police Station at Ribandar, along with cyber response cells across all police stations, has been strengthened and equipped with advanced investigation tools such as Sammanvay, Pratibimb, and Sahyog. Personnel are also undergoing regular training through

the Indian Cyber Crime Coordination Centre (I4C) and central detective training institutes. Authorities are also focusing on victim support, with cyber officers assisting complainants in securing court orders for reversal of defrauded funds. Additionally, the Centre is set to roll out a Money Restoration Module under the National Cybercrime Reporting Portal to speed up recovery of stolen money.

Over 1 Lakh Traffic Challans Issued in Goa; AI Enforcement, Body Cameras Rolled Out to Curb Corruption

Team Goemkarponn

PANAJI: Goa's traffic enforcement system is seeing a major push towards technology-driven policing and transparency, with over 1 lakh challans issued between April 2025 and January 31, 2026, the State Legislative Assembly was informed. In a detailed reply, Chief Minister and Home Minister Dr. Pramod P. Sawant said Police Inspectors issued 60,804 challans, while Sub-Inspectors accounted for 47,422, reflecting intensive on-ground enforcement across



the state. At the same time, the government is increasingly relying on automation to reduce human intervention. Under the Goa Vehicle Authentication (GoVA) project, AI-powered cameras installed at border check posts are now detecting violations and automatically generating fines for

vehicles lacking valid documentation. To enhance transparency during traffic checks, the department has directed officers of Sub-Inspector rank and above to wear body-worn cameras while on duty. Although not mandated by law, the move is aimed at reducing disputes and ensuring accountability.

Traffic Congestion in Panaji Linked to Parking Shortage, Vehicle Surge: Govt

■ Over 22,000 illegal parking cases booked in 3 years; measures underway to ease city traffic

Team Goemkarponn

PANAJI: The Goa government has identified key reasons behind growing traffic congestion in Panaji, pointing to the absence of off-street parking and a heavy influx of vehicles as the primary causes. In a reply tabled in the Legislative Assembly, Chief Minister and Home Minister Dr. Pramod Sawant stated that traffic personnel are deployed at various locations to ensure smooth vehicular movement, while multiple steps have been initiated to tackle congestion



across the capital city. Among the measures taken, authorities have directed casino operators to strictly follow designated parking arrangements and ensure that customers use multi-

level parking facilities. Additionally, the Corporation of the City of Panaji (CCP) has been asked to explore relocation of petrol pumps along D.B. Marg and construct additional multi-level parking infrastructure. The government has also requested Goa Tourism Development Corporation (GTDC) to install adequate directional signboards and improve traffic flow. Short-term and long-term traffic management suggestions have been forwarded to the Transport Department.

Rs 49.68 Lakh Fraud at Calangute Medical Store; Woman Booked

Team Goemkarponn

MAPUSA: A major financial fraud involving nearly ₹50 lakh has come to light at a medical store in Calangute, with a woman accused of diverting customer payments to her personal account over several years. According to a complaint filed by Yatin Govind Naik, a resident of Shivsagar



Apartments, Mapusa, the offence was registered on March 16 at 8:11 pm. The complaint states that between February 2020 and October 2025,

the accused—whose name has been withheld and who is a resident of Pernem—allegedly tampered with the payment system at Abania Drug Store in Calangute.

Police said the accused intentionally removed the store's official Indian Overseas Bank QR code scanner and replaced it with her own personal QR scanner linked to her

bank account. As a result, payments made by customers were diverted directly into her account without the knowledge of the business owner.

Further, the accused is also alleged to have opened an unauthorized pigmy account at Sattari Cooperative Bank and siphoned off funds. The total amount misappropriated is estimated at ₹49,68,000.



Illegal LPG Racket Busted in Sangolda; Probe Underway

Team Goemkarponn

SANGOLDA: A case of illegal decanting, storage, and sale of LPG cylinders has been reported in Sangolda, raising serious safety concerns.

According to a complaint filed by Deepa R. Fulari, Assistant Director attached to the Department of Civil Supplies and Consumer Affairs, Goa, the incident took place on March 16 between 5:30 pm and 8:50 pm. During this time, unknown individuals were allegedly engaged in unauthorized handling and sale of LPG cylinders without obtaining the

required permissions from the competent authority.

Officials stated that the accused were operating without following mandatory safety protocols, thereby posing a significant risk to human life and property in the area.

Based on the complaint, police have registered a case, and further investigation is currently in progress under the supervision of the Police Inspector of Saligao Police Station.

Authorities are working to identify those involved and to determine the full extent of the illegal operation.

Govt Official Threatened During Land Survey in Ecoxim; Case Registered

Team Goemkarponn

Mapusa: A government official was allegedly threatened and obstructed while carrying out official duties during a land demarcation survey in Ecoxim village of Bardez. As per the complaint filed by Ms. Sneha Govenkar, Assistant District

Education Inspector attached to the Directorate of Education, Mapusa, the incident occurred on February 20, 2026, at around 11:00 am near the Government Primary School at Survey No. 365/10, Ecoxim. The complainant, along with a government surveyor, had visited the site to conduct a

land demarcation exercise as per official orders. During the process, the accused, identified as Sarvesh Sharad Halarnkar, allegedly behaved in an aggressive and threatening manner and issued death threats to the complainant. Police further stated that the accused forcibly snatched an official

file from the surveyor, thereby obstructing the government work being carried out at the site. Based on the complaint, an offence was registered on March 16 at 8:12 pm. Further investigation is being conducted by PSI Sitaram Malik to ascertain the full sequence of events and take necessary action.



Woman Duped of Rs 6 Lakh in Fake Plot Deal in Thivim

Team Goemkarponn

PORVORIM: A 23-year-old woman from Socorro has filed a complaint alleging she was cheated of ₹6 lakh in a fraudulent property deal involving a plot in Thivim village.

According to police, the offence was registered on March 16 at 9:02 pm based on a written complaint by Priyanka Kumari, a resident of Sabnis Valley, Aradi Socorro, Porvorim. She alleged that the accused, identified as Sandesh Mayenkar of Chincholem, Tiswadi, deceived her on the pretext of selling a 200 sq. metre plot located

under Survey No. 60, Sub-division 8-A in Thivim.

The complainant stated that the accused showed her property documents on multiple occasions and convinced her to transfer a total amount of ₹6 lakh through online transactions, bank transfers, and cash payments.

However, despite receiving the money, the accused neither transferred ownership of the property in her name nor returned the amount as promised. Police have registered a case of cheating, and further investigation is underway under PSI Akash Chodankar.

25-Year-Old Man Abducted Near Zuari Bridge; Four Booked

Team Goemkarponn

AGACAIM: Police have registered a kidnapping case after a 25-year-old man was allegedly abducted near the New Zuari Bridge in Agacaim. According to a complaint filed by Usha Rao, a resident of Shantinagar, Vasco, the incident

occurred between the night of December 27 and 9:00 am of December 28, 2025. Her son, Abhay Rao, was allegedly taken away by the accused without her knowledge and kept in wrongful confinement. The accused have been identified as Raja Gupta, Kajal Gupta, Vishal

Navik—all residents of Verna—and Anand, a resident of Colva. Based on the complaint, Agacaim Police have registered Crime No. 14/2026 under relevant sections of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS) 2023, including provisions related to abduction and common intention.



Man Arrested for Assaulting Woman, Injuring Her Mother in Curtorim

Team Goemkarponn

CURTORIM: A man has been arrested for allegedly assaulting a woman and her mother with a gardening tool following a personal dispute in Davorlim. According to police, the complaint was filed by Rachel Pereira, a resident of Baga, Davorlim. The incident occurred in the early hours of March 16, 2026, around 4:00 am, when the accused, identified as Willy Santana Fernandes of Argicol, Curtorim, allegedly attacked the complainant. Police stated that the aarophi used a gardening pick axe to assault both the complainant and her mother.

Group Assault in Collem Over Old Rivalry; Eight Booked

Team Goemkarponn

COLLEM: A violent assault involving a group of eight persons has been reported in Collem, allegedly stemming from previous enmity. According to a complaint filed by Monoj Velip, a resident of Shigao, the incident occurred on March 15, 2026, between 5:30 pm and 6:30 pm. The complainant, along with Raviraj Velip and



Prajay Gaonkar, was travelling on an Activa scooter from Voldem to Shigao when they were intercepted by the accused. Police stated that

the accused—identified as Amir Gaonkar and Gopal Gaonkar, both residents of Voldem, Collem, along with six other unidentified individuals—formed an unlawful assembly and wrongfully restrained the victims. The group allegedly assaulted the complainant using wooden sticks, an iron rod, a koita, and also punched and kicked him, causing bodily injuries.

AAP Felicitates Kejriwal in Panaji, Slams BJP Over 'Fake Case'

Team Goemkarponn

PANAJI: The Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) Goa unit held a grand felicitation ceremony in Panaji on March 17 to honour party national convenor Arvind Kejriwal following his discharge in the alleged liquor policy case, while launching a sharp political attack on the BJP. The event saw participation from party leaders, volunteers, and supporters across Goa. AAP also felicitated its first CCP corporator Jack Sukhija and Zilla Panchayat winner Antonio Leao Fernandes for their recent electoral victories. Addressing the gathering,



Kejriwal termed the case an "agnipariksha" for the party and claimed that despite allegations of ₹100 crore corruption, no evidence was found.

He stated that even a detailed court order indicated insufficient material to initiate trial proceedings. He also highlighted that leaders like Manish Sisodia

had spent months in jail but were not found guilty. Kejriwal alleged that the case was politically motivated and orchestrated by the BJP to curb AAP's growing influence. "BJP cannot defeat us on schools and hospitals, so they orchestrated a fake case," he said, adding that no illicit money was used in

Goa elections. Targeting the BJP-led government in Goa, Kejriwal pointed to civic issues in Ponda, citing garbage accumulation, sewage overflow in areas like Curti, and poor infrastructure. He accused the ruling party of neglecting basic governance while focusing on targeting political opponents. AAP Goa in-charge Atishi said the development was celebrated across Goa as a victory of truth, asserting that allegations linking Goa elections to the case were baseless. Goa State President Valmiki Naik described the outcome as a win for honest politics.

Display of Child Helpline 1098 Made Mandatory in Goa Schools

Team Goemkarponn

PANAJI: The Directorate of Education has made it mandatory for all government, aided, and unaided schools across Goa to prominently display the Child Helpline number 1098 on their premises.

Officials stated that directions have already been issued to all school heads to ensure that the helpline number is displayed at visible locations within school campuses. Authorities have also urged that the number be placed at other prominent public places to increase awareness and accessibility.

The move comes in the



backdrop of the Supreme Court of India taking suo motu cognizance of the alarming rise in child rape cases across the country under the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences Act.

The initiative aims to strengthen child safety measures and ensure that children in distress have quick access to support services through the dedicated helpline.



New Edition of 'Foler Rakhnno' Released in Goa

Team Goemkarponn

PANAJI: A new edition of the novel Foler Rakhnno by late author Reginald Fernandes was officially released on March 16 by New Age Printers, the printing press of the Archdiocese of Goa and Daman. The book was launched by chief guest Tomazinho Cardozo, noted writer and former Speaker of the Goa Legislative Assembly, in the presence of guest of honour Rev. Fr. Socorro Mendes, Parish Priest of St. Anthony Church, Siolim. Other dignitaries included Fr. Myron Jeson Barreto, Fausto V. Da Costa, editor of Gulab magazine, and Salvador Fernandes, son of the late author. Originally published in 1970, Foler Rakhnno—which translates to The Guardian of the Lighthouse—is a romantic novel centred around the Siquerim lighthouse and a hidden treasure of

jewellery. The book had gone out of print and has now been reintroduced for readers due to continued demand and the enduring popularity of Fernandes, fondly known as the "Romanxincho Patxai."

Speaking at the event, Cardozo praised Fernandes' literary contributions and stressed the need to republish and preserve his works, while maintaining their unique style. Rev. Fr. Socorro Mendes highlighted the engaging nature of Fernandes' writing, recalling how communities once gathered to listen to such stories being read aloud. Fausto V. Da Costa spoke about the novel's distinctive style, noting its vivid imagery, simple language, and sharp dialogue that resonates with readers. The function began with a welcome address by Fr. Myron Jeson Barreto, while Dr. Glenis Mendonca proposed the vote of thanks.

BJP Goa Hails NDA's Rajya Sabha Victory in Bihar

Team Goemkarponn

PANAJI: The Bharatiya Janata Party Goa unit has congratulated leaders of the National Democratic Alliance (NDA) on their emphatic victory in the Rajya Sabha elections from Bihar. In a statement, BJP Goa extended felicitations to party National President Nitin Nabin and Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar on their election to the Upper House of



Parliament. The party stated that their elevation would strengthen Bihar's representation in Parliament and contribute to advancing Narendra

Modi's vision of a "Viksit Bharat." Highlighting the results, BJP Goa noted that the NDA's clean sweep of all five Rajya Sabha seats in Bihar reflects strong public trust and unity behind its development agenda. State BJP President Damu G Naik said the Goa unit joins party workers across the country in wishing both leaders a successful and productive tenure in national service.



AAP ropes in Geetesh Naik to boost Ponda base

Team Goemkarponn

PONDA: In a significant political development ahead of the Ponda Assembly by-election, Arvind Kejriwal inducted social worker and Bhandari Samaj leader Geetesh Naik into the Aam Aadmi Party, strengthening the party's grassroots presence in the constituency. Naik was formally welcomed into the party in the presence of Goa Prabhari Atishi, State President Valmiki Naik, and other senior leaders. The induction is being seen as a strategic move by AAP to consolidate support in Ponda, particularly among key community groups. With over 15 years of experience in social work, Geetesh Naik has been actively involved in community initiatives and enjoys considerable local influence. He joined the party along with a large number of supporters, which party leaders believe will significantly enhance AAP's organisational strength at the grassroots level.

Ponda Bypoll Preparations Reviewed Ahead of April 9 Vote

Team Goemkarponn

MARGAO: A review meeting with Nodal Officers and Liaison Officers for the upcoming bye-election to the 21 Ponda Assembly Constituency was chaired by the Collector and District Election Officer, South Goa. The meeting focused on assessing election preparedness, with key discussions on randomization of polling personnel, strengthening inter-departmental coordination, and ensuring availability of logistics. Officials also stressed



strict adherence to guidelines laid down by the Election Commission of India to facilitate a smooth and transparent electoral process.

Authorities reiterated their commitment to conducting free and

fair elections, with all necessary arrangements being streamlined in advance.

The bye-election to the 21 Ponda Assembly Constituency is scheduled to be held on April 9, 2026.

100 Robotic Surgeries Completed: Manipal Hospital Goa Advances Precision Knee Replacement Care

■ VELYS robotic system enhances surgical accuracy and speeds up patient recovery

PANAJI :Manipal Hospital Goa has achieved a major milestone in advanced orthopaedic treatment after successfully completing more than 100 robotic surgeries using the VELYS robotic assisted technology. The achievement marks a significant step forward in the use of precision driven surgical solutions for bone and joint care in the state. The procedures were carried out under the guidance of orthopaedic specialist Dr. Rohan R. Desai and his team, reflecting the hospital's growing focus on integrating modern medical technologies into routine clinical practice. The milestone highlights the institution's efforts to improve surgical



accuracy, patient safety and long term treatment outcomes through innovative techniques. The VELYS robotic system is designed primarily for total and partial knee replacement procedures. It allows surgeons to plan and perform operations with enhanced precision using real time data during surgery. The

technology enables personalised treatment by providing detailed intraoperative insights and assisting in precise soft tissue balancing. These capabilities help reduce post operative discomfort, support faster rehabilitation and improve mobility for patients following surgery. A key advantage of the

procedures performed with this technology is the use of cruciate retaining total knee replacement implants.

This method preserves the natural posterior cruciate ligament in the knee, which helps maintain natural joint movement and improves the patient's sense of balance and stability.



Preserving the ligament can also contribute to better long term performance of the implant compared to other conventional approaches. Doctors involved in the programme noted that the use of robotic assisted systems has helped improve surgical outcomes while also enabling patients to

regain mobility more quickly after knee replacement procedures. The technology has also supported the wider adoption of advanced implant techniques designed to provide more natural joint function. Hospital authorities said the completion of 100 robotic surgeries within a short period reflects the growing acceptance of technology driven orthopaedic care among patients in Goa. With continuous investment in expertise, patient focused treatment protocols and advanced surgical systems, the hospital aims to further strengthen its position as a leading centre for specialised bone and joint care in the region.

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HSBC Mutual Fund launches its maiden Exchange Traded Fund (ETF) offerings in India with HSBC Gold ETF and HSBC Gold ETF Fund of Fund (FoF)

HSBC Mutual Fund announced the launch of HSBC Gold ETF, investing in physical gold or gold related instruments, and HSBC Gold ETF Fund of Fund (FoF), investing in units of HSBC Gold ETF. The launch marks the first ETF offerings from HSBC Mutual Fund in India. The New Fund Offer (NFO) schemes open for subscription this week. NFO Period: HSBC Gold ETF – 16 to 18 March 2026, HSBC Gold ETF Fund of Fund – 19 to 25 March 2026. Both funds will be managed by Dipan Parikh, HSBC Mutual Fund. HSBC Gold ETF will invest in physical gold, and the performance of the scheme will be benchmarked against the domestic price of gold. HSBC Gold ETF Fund of Fund will invest in the units of HSBC Gold ETF. These funds offer investors a convenient opportunity to invest in gold.

During the NFO period



HSBC Mutual Fund

of HSBC Gold ETF and HSBC Gold ETF Fund of Fund, investors can invest a minimum of Rs 5,000 and in multiples of Re 1 thereof. The investment objective of HSBC Gold ETF is to seek returns that, before expense, track the performance of domestic prices of gold subject to tracking errors, while the investment objective of HSBC Gold ETF Fund of Fund will be to seek to provide returns that are in line with returns provided by HSBC Gold ETF.

While HSBC Gold ETF will be traded on NSE and BSE, HSBC Gold ETF Fund of Fund can be invested in directly with the AMC via Lumpsum, SIP, SIP Top-up, STP and SWP Options. HSBC Gold ETF will invest at least 95% of its total assets in gold or gold related instruments

and may hold up to 5% of its total assets in money market securities.*

HSBC Gold ETF FOF shall invest minimum 95% in units of HSBC Gold ETF and may hold up to 5% of their total assets in debt or money market securities / Funds. The Scheme will remain invested in the underlying scheme regardless of the prevailing gold price or future outlook for this asset class.

Commenting on the launch, Kailash Kulkarni, CEO, HSBC Mutual Fund, said, "Gold, which has long held a place of importance in the Indian household is increasingly being recognized as an asset allocation pillar, offering investors to diversify their portfolio. Its unique ability to act as a hedge against market volatility makes gold essential

for long-term wealth preservation and growth. With our Gold ETFs, investors can now enjoy diversification in gold without the complexities of physical storage or handling. This approach empowers investors to build more resilient portfolios and pursue their financial objectives with confidence.

Venugopal Manghat, CIO, Equity, HSBC Mutual Fund, said, "Gold's track record of low correlation with equities, makes it a valuable diversifier and an effective hedge during heightened volatility. By maintaining a disciplined allocation to gold, investors could manage overall portfolio risk and long-term stability. With the HSBC Gold ETF and the Gold ETF FoF, we offer investors efficient and flexible means to get exposure to domestic gold price movements, supporting their broader diversification and risk management objectives."

Opposition Moves Governor Against Budget Session Curtailment

Alemao questioned the rationale behind the move, pointing out that legislative proceedings in other states continue despite elections. He alleged that the curtailment was aimed at preventing the introduction and passage of Private Members' Bills, particularly those concerning land protection and environmental safeguards. In a significant escalation, the Opposition has formally petitioned the Governor seeking the dismissal of the Council of Ministers headed by Chief Minister Pramod Sawant and dissolution of the Goa Legislative Assembly. The petition alleges that the premature curtailment of the Budget session

amounts to a violation of constitutional provisions, including Articles 174, 202, 203, and 208, as well as the obligations under the Model Code of Conduct.

The delegation has also demanded that a Special Session of the Assembly be convened. It warned that if the government refuses or fails to do so, further constitutional remedies would be pursued. Alemao stated that the Opposition has urged the Governor to summon the Assembly under Article 175 of the Constitution. He added that in case of continued inaction, provisions under Article 356(1) could be invoked.

"Yes, I'm Alive": Netanyahu Appears With US Envoy To Quash Viral Death Rumours

The video emerged after several days of online speculation triggered by Netanyahu's absence from public appearances and misleading social media posts suggesting that earlier footage

of him appeared manipulated. Some users even claimed the video showed the Israeli leader with six fingers, prompting conspiracy theories that the clip had been digitally altered.

“Working Together For Peace”: PM Modi, UAE President Discuss West Asia Situation

■ Leaders stress safe navigation through Strait of Hormuz amid regional tensions

New Delhi: Prime Minister Narendra Modi held a conversation with Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan, President of the United Arab Emirates, to discuss the evolving situation in West Asia and concerns surrounding the security of maritime routes such as the Strait of Hormuz. During the interaction, Modi conveyed advance Eid greetings to the UAE leader and expressed India's strong condemnation of attacks that resulted in civilian casualties and damage to infrastructure in the UAE. Both leaders emphasised the importance of maintaining peace and stability in the region and agreed



on the need to ensure safe and uninterrupted navigation through the strategic waterway. The Strait of Hormuz is one of the world's most critical shipping routes for energy supplies, and both countries stressed the importance of safeguarding maritime movement in the region. The two leaders also reaffirmed their

commitment to working together to promote peace, security and stability in West Asia. Earlier in the day, the Ministry of External Affairs said India remains in close contact with several countries, including Iran, to ensure the safe passage of Indian vessels operating through the Strait of Hormuz. MEA spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal stated that the safety and well being of Indian citizens living across the region remains a top priority for the government. He said a dedicated control room set up by the ministry continues to operate to assist Indian nationals and address concerns raised by families.

Indian Tanker Carrying 80,800 Tonnes Of Crude Reaches Mundra Safely

■ Vessel completes journey from UAE as tensions continue across West Asia shipping routes

New Delhi: An Indian flagged oil tanker carrying around 80,800 metric tonnes of crude oil has safely arrived at Mundra Port after completing its voyage from the United Arab Emirates amid heightened tensions in West Asia. The vessel, Jag Laadki, had departed from Fujairah on Sunday morning after loading Murban crude oil. Its departure came shortly after an attack targeted the Fujairah oil terminal on March 14, temporarily affecting operations at the port facility. At the time of the incident, the tanker was loading crude at the Fujairah Single Point Mooring. Despite the disruption at the terminal, the ship was able to



complete the loading process and sail safely towards India without sustaining any damage during the journey. Officials confirmed that the tanker reached Gujarat after successfully navigating regional waters during a period of heightened military and security concerns in the area. The vessel is the third Indian flagged ship to return safely from the conflict affected

zone in recent days. The development comes as tensions remain high in the region involving Iran and other West Asian actors. Iranian authorities have reportedly assured safe passage for Indian commercial vessels through key maritime routes, even while warning of possible strikes targeting port infrastructure in the UAE during the ongoing conflict.



Centre Directs Airlines To Keep 60% Seats Free Of Selection Charges

■ New passenger friendly rules also ensure families on same booking are seated together

New Delhi: In a major relief for air travellers, the Ministry of Civil Aviation has directed airlines to keep at least 60 percent of seats on every flight free from seat selection charges. The move comes after repeated complaints from passengers about hidden costs and additional fees charged for choosing seats during booking. At present, many airlines price seats based on their location in the aircraft. Window seats, aisle seats and those offering extra legroom typically attract higher charges, while only a limited number of seats,

usually located in the middle rows or towards the rear, are available without extra payment. The government's directive aims to ensure that a majority of seats remain available to passengers without additional charges. The new instructions have been issued through the aviation regulator, the Directorate General of Civil Aviation. Airlines have also been asked to seat passengers travelling under the same Passenger Name Record, or PNR, together whenever possible, preferably in adjacent seats.

India Engages With Iran And Other Nations To Ensure Safe Ship Passage Through Hormuz

■ MEA says safety of Indian citizens and maritime trade remains a top priority amid West Asia tensions

New Delhi: India is in active discussions with several countries, including Iran, to ensure the safe movement of Indian vessels through the strategically important Strait of Hormuz, the Ministry of External Affairs said during a briefing on recent developments in West Asia. MEA spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal stated that the government is closely monitoring the evolving situation in the



region while maintaining constant communication with partner nations to facilitate the smooth passage of Indian ships. He emphasised that the safety, security and well being of the Indian community across the region remain the

government's highest priority. According to officials, a dedicated control room set up by the ministry continues to operate to assist Indian nationals and address concerns raised by families. Indian missions across West Asia are functioning round the clock, operating 24 hour helplines and maintaining regular contact with community associations and local authorities. The statement comes

amid reports that India's efforts to safeguard its maritime and commercial interests in the region face uncertainty due to internal power struggles within Iran, particularly between the civilian government and the powerful Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps. Jaiswal also confirmed that the mortal remains of two Indian nationals who died in an attack in Sohar in Oman were received by their families in Jaipur.

Government says fuel rates will remain stable as India diversifies energy imports

New Delhi: The Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas has said the government currently has no plans to increase petrol and diesel prices, despite sharp fluctuations in global oil markets caused by geopolitical tensions in West Asia. During an inter ministerial briefing, joint secretary



Sujata Sharma stated that

the central government intends to keep fuel prices stable for consumers even as international crude oil rates remain volatile. She noted that India has also been working to diversify its energy sources in recent months, including increasing gas supplies from the United States. Officials indicated that

oil marketing companies are absorbing part of the fluctuations in global crude prices to prevent sudden increases in petrol and diesel rates. International oil markets have seen heightened uncertainty due to the ongoing conflict in West Asia involving Iran, Israel and the United States. The tensions have

“Narratives Have Become A Disease”: Ashwin Questions Star Culture In Indian Cricket

■ Former India spinner raises concerns about social media narratives, fan armies and growing brand driven discourse

New Delhi: Former India spinner Ravichandran Ashwin has raised concerns about the growing influence of social media narratives and fan driven campaigns in modern cricket, describing the trend as a troubling “disease” affecting the sport’s discourse.



Speaking at a public event organised by RevSportz, Ashwin questioned how certain opinions about players frequently surface online through fan groups and social media accounts. He said he has often heard similar

viewpoints in private conversations before seeing them appear on the internet under different names, prompting doubts about how such narratives spread. Ashwin suggested that while he was not directly accusing

players of promoting these narratives, the situation raises questions about whether organised efforts exist to shape public perception. According to him, the growing commercialisation of cricket means many players now operate like entrepreneurs, where online narratives and publicity can influence brand value and public relations. He said promoting one’s image is understandable in the modern era, but criticised the tendency to target fellow cricketers in the

process. Ashwin stressed that he would never speak negatively about another player in order to build his own reputation. The veteran off spinner also expressed concern about the increasing focus on star power in Indian cricket, arguing that discussions around the sport have shifted away from technical analysis and the game itself. He said a “superhero” style culture has developed around players, making cricket conversations more about personalities than performance.



CD Fountainhead Clinch GSB Unity Cup 3.0 Title With 19 Run Win

■ Strong batting display and disciplined bowling seal victory over Desserts N More Avengers in Margao final

Team Goemkarponn

PANAJI: CD Fountainhead produced a commanding all round performance to defeat Desserts N More Avengers by 19 runs and emerge champions of the GSB Unity Cup 3.0 cricket tournament held at the MCC Ground. After winning the toss, Desserts N More Avengers elected to field first. Taking advantage of the batting conditions, CD Fountainhead built a solid total of 180 for 7 in their allotted 20 overs.

Opening batter Atchut Naik Dalal got the innings underway with 23 runs, while Aditya Prabhugaonkar accelerated the scoring with a quick 28 from just 18 balls. The innings gained further stability when Manish Kakode played a vital knock of 37 off 22 deliveries, striking five boundaries. In the closing overs, Vikrant Prabhu delivered a valuable unbeaten 38 from 25 balls to guide the team to a competitive total. Captain Pranav Biche also contributed 15 runs.

Suryakumar Yadav’s Leadership Praised As Goa Cricket Officials Meet Him At Naman Awards

■ GCA president and secretary commend India captain after T20 World Cup triumph

Team Goemkarponn

PANAJI: Senior officials of the Goa Cricket Association met and congratulated India men’s cricket team captain Suryakumar Yadav during the prestigious Naman Awards ceremony held in

New Delhi on Sunday. GCA president Mahesh Dessai and general secretary Tulsidas Shetye interacted with the Indian skipper on the sidelines of the event and extended their congratulations following India’s recent triumph in the ICC Men’s

T20 World Cup final against New Zealand national cricket team. The Goan sports administrators praised the team’s performance in the tournament and acknowledged Yadav’s leadership during the campaign. They



highlighted the captain’s impact on the team and his role in guiding India to victory on the global stage.



“Football Is For Everyone”: GFDC Backs Young Girls’ Growth Through Sport

Team Goemkarponn

PANAJI: The Goa Football Development Council reaffirmed its commitment to encouraging young girls to pursue football during an International Women’s Day celebration held at Our Lady of the Rosary School in Dona Paula. The programme was organised by the GFDC training centre in Dona Paula and brought together students, coaches, school

authorities and sports officials. Among those present were GFDC chairman Glenn Ticlo and member secretary Fransquinha Oliveira, who interacted with the young trainees and highlighted the importance of promoting equal opportunities in sports. Addressing the gathering, Ticlo said women today are making remarkable progress across many fields including education, culture and sports.

GR Kare College, Government College Borda Register Wins In Goa University Cricket Championship

Team Goemkarponn

PANAJI: Two competitive matches were played on the eleventh day of the Goa University Inter Collegiate Cricket Men’s Championship 2025 to 26 at the Goa University Ground, with Govind Ramnath Kare College of Law and Government College Borda registering



important victories. In the first match of the day, Govind Ramnath Kare College of Law from Margao defeated Agnel

Institute of Technology and Design, Assagao by five wickets. After winning the toss, GR Kare College opted to field first. Agnel

Institute posted 123 for 9 in their allotted 20 overs. Soham Joshi top scored with a well compiled 47 from 35 deliveries, striking five boundaries and a six. With the ball, Kaushal Desai produced an impressive spell, claiming four wickets for 21 runs, while Aryan Dessai chipped in with two wickets for 13 runs.

Goa Premier League To Begin On March 21 With Statewide Fixtures

Team Goemkarponn

PANAJI: The Goa Cricket Association has announced the official schedule for the upcoming

Goa Premier League 2025 to 26 season, which will run from March 21 to April 17 at venues across the state. The tournament will conclude with a day night

final at the GCA Academy Ground using a pink ball. The opening round will feature Panjim Gymkhana taking on Margao Cricket Club at the NAPEX

GPL DRAW 2025-26				
DATES	TEAM 1	VS	TEAM 2	GROUND
18/20/21 MARCH 2026	PANJIM GYMKHANA	VS	MARGAO CRICKET CLUB	NAPEX
	SALGADCAR CRICKET CLUB	VS	CHOWGULE SPORTS CLUB	PORVORIM
	CHOWGULE SPORTS CLUB	VS	GENO SPORTS CLUB	PANAJI
19/20/21 MARCH 2026	SALGADCAR CRICKET CLUB	VS	CHOWGULE SPORTS CLUB	PANJIM GYMKHANA
	PANJIM GYMKHANA	VS	GENO SPORTS CLUB	PORVORIM
	DEMPHO CRICKET CLUB	VS	MARGAO CRICKET CLUB	NAPEX
31 MARCH/01 APRIL 2026	CHOWGULE SPORTS CLUB	VS	DEMPHO CRICKET CLUB	PORVORIM
	MARGAO CRICKET CLUB	VS	GENO SPORTS CLUB	SANGLEM
	PANJIM GYMKHANA	VS	SALGADCAR CRICKET CLUB	NAPEX
04/07 APRIL 2026	DEMPHO CRICKET CLUB	VS	GENO SPORTS CLUB	NAPEX
	PANJIM GYMKHANA	VS	CHOWGULE SPORTS CLUB	CHICOLIM
	MARGAO CRICKET CLUB	VS	SALGADCAR CRICKET CLUB	PORVORIM
08/12/13 APRIL 2026	SALGADCAR CRICKET CLUB	VS	GENO SPORTS CLUB	NAPEX
	CHOWGULE SPORTS CLUB	VS	MARGAO CRICKET CLUB	PORVORIM
	DEMPHO CRICKET CLUB	VS	PANJIM GYMKHANA	PANAJI
15/16/17 APRIL 2026	TOP TWO TEAMS (FINAL)			PORVORIM (D/N)