



Ponda on a **KNIFE'S EDGE** as Numbers Point to Photo Finish

Community arithmetic and a 77-vote legacy make this bypoll too close to call.

SURAJ NANDREKAR

Ponda: The Ponda bypoll is shaping into a razor-tight contest where the numbers tell a story of balance rather than dominance. BJP's Ritesh Ravi Naik, Congress candidate Ketan Bhatikar and AAP's Geetesh Naik are in the fray, but the real fight is emerging between the BJP and Congress, with arithmetic suggesting that even a minor swing could decide the outcome. With 31,956 voters, including 16,157 men and 15,793 women, Ponda presents a near-even gender split and a

PONDA VOTER BREAKDOWN	
HINDU VOTERS	
Bhandari	5,700
Scheduled Tribe	2,220
GSB	2,340
Vaishya	1,600
Brahmins	776
Maratha	700
Chari	300
Scheduled Caste	300
Migrants / Non-Goans	7,000
TOTAL VOTERS 31,956	
Male	16,157
Female	15,793



The Hindu vote, spread across multiple caste

socially layered electorate. The Hindu vote, spread across multiple caste groups, forms the largest chunk, but it is far from monolithic. Alongside this, migrant voters and minority communities together form blocs that can shift the balance. The shadow of the 2022 election looms large. Ketan Bhatikar had then lost by just 77 votes to the late Ravi Naik, underlining how finely poised this constituency can be.

That result has turned this bypoll into a high-stakes rematch of sorts, with the BJP fielding Ravi Naik's son to retain the seat.

For the BJP, the path is clear but not simple.

The party is banking on consolidating Hindu votes across communities such as Bhandari, GSB, Vaishya and others. The Bhandari community alone accounts for 5,700 votes, making it a crucial segment. If the BJP manages to bring together a large share of these groups along with the Scheduled Tribe vote, it builds a strong foundation. The migrant and non-Goan vote, numbering around 7,000, could be decisive. This segment has often leaned towards the BJP, and if that trend holds, it significantly

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Man Abducted From Macazana, ₹3 Lakh Robbed; One Held

Curtorim Police Say Accused Planned Kidnapping, Took Victim To Karwar

Team Goemkarponn

CURTORIM: Curtorim Police have arrested one person in connection with an abduction and robbery case, while three other accused remain at large. Police said the FIR was registered based on a complaint filed by Ashok Kumar (56), a resident of Borda, Fatorda. The complainant alleged that on March 24, 2026, at around 2.30 pm, he was forcibly taken from outside Canara Bank at Macazana, Salcete, by four persons — identified as Nilesh Jadhav, Balaram Shetty, Ajit, and another unknown accomplice. According to police, the accused allegedly forced the complainant into his own Hyundai Venue car and drove him to an isolated area in Karwar,



Karnataka. There, they allegedly threatened him with death, put him in fear, and demanded money. The accused reportedly robbed him of ₹3 lakh in cash from his possession. During the investigation on April 6, police arrested Ajit Kumar Kattimani (34), son of Mallikarjun Kattimani, a resident of Aquem, Margao, currently staying at Kumbharwada, Bidar in Karnataka. Police said that during preliminary interrogation, the accused admitted his involvement in the offence along with the other suspects.



Amit Palekar Set To Join Congress After Exiting AAP

Team Goemkarponn

PANAJI: Nearly four months after stepping down from the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP), former Goa unit chief Amit Palekar is poised to join the Indian National Congress on Friday, April 10. A senior Congress functionary confirmed that Palekar will officially be inducted into the party in the presence of AICC Goa desk in-charge Manikrao Thakre. Party insiders suggest that he is likely to be projected as the Congress candidate from the St Cruz constituency for the 2027 Assembly elections. Palekar, a lawyer by profession who later entered politics, was appointed as the president of AAP's Goa unit in May 2022.

High Court Orders Removal Of Shivaji Statue At Headland Sada

Police Asked To Ensure Security; Notice Issued To MLA Sankalp Amonkar.

Team Goemkarponn

PANAJI: The Goa High Court has directed authorities to remove a statue of Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj that was allegedly installed without permission on land belonging to the Mormugao Port Authority (MPA) at Headland Sada. In its order, the court instructed the South Goa Superintendent of Police to make necessary



arrangements to maintain law and order during the removal process,

anticipating possible public reaction. The court has also permitted the petitioner to include Mormugao MLA Sankalp Amonkar as a respondent in the case. Accordingly, a notice has been issued to Amonkar seeking his response. The matter is scheduled to come up for further hearing on May 4, when the court will review compliance and consider the next course of action.

India Has Fiscal Strength to Handle West Asia Crisis: Nirmala Sitharaman

Finance minister says strong fiscal discipline gives India room to support economy and cut interest rates if required.

New Delhi: Nirmala Sitharaman said India has sufficient fiscal space to respond to global challenges and support sectors affected by the escalating crisis in West Asia, highlighting the country's financial



resilience amid global economic uncertainty.

Speaking at an event organised by the National Institute of Public Finance and Policy in New Delhi, the Finance Minister noted that the global economy is currently facing significant volatility, uncertainty

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Loose Talk, Fraying Trust: BJP Must Rein In Its Own Before Alliances Unravel

The controversy triggered by Mauvin Godinho's public invitation to Jit Arolkar is not merely a case of loose political talk. It raises deeper questions about discipline within the BJP, the stability of alliances, and the timing of political messaging in Goa's fragile electoral landscape.

At one level, the statement itself was politically unnecessary. Extending an open invitation to a sitting MLA from an alliance partner, the Maharashtrawadi Gomantak Party, suggests either a lapse in judgment or a deliberate attempt to test political waters. Both possibilities are troubling. Alliances are built on mutual respect and strategic coordination, not public poaching. Damu Naik was quick to call out the remark as "irresponsible," and rightly so. His intervention reflects an awareness within the party that such statements can damage not just relationships with allies, but also the BJP's own credibility. When senior leaders speak out of turn, it creates confusion about the party's official stance and fuels speculation of internal divisions.

But the issue goes beyond internal discipline. It touches upon the BJP's broader political approach in Goa. Over the past few years, the party has relied heavily on inducting leaders from other parties, particularly the Congress, to consolidate power. While this strategy has delivered short-term gains, it has also led to a perception that ideological coherence and alliance commitments are secondary to electoral arithmetic. Godinho's remark feeds directly into this narrative. If the BJP is seen as constantly seeking to expand by absorbing leaders from both opposition and allies, it risks appearing opportunistic rather than principled. For a party that emphasizes organizational discipline and ideological clarity, this perception can be damaging. The timing makes matters worse. With

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the Ponda by-election just days away, the BJP should ideally be projecting unity and focus. Instead, this episode has introduced an element of distraction and controversy. Political opponents will undoubtedly seize on this to question the party's stability and its commitment to alliances. For the MGP, the statement is bound to raise

concerns. Even if dismissed as an individual remark, it signals a lack of sensitivity to alliance dynamics. Smaller parties in alliances often operate with an inherent sense of vulnerability. Publicly inviting one of their MLAs to switch sides only reinforces those anxieties.

Interestingly, Jit Arolkar himself has responded with restraint. By emphasizing his focus on constituency work and deferring any decision on future electoral plans, he has avoided escalating the issue. His response stands in contrast to the provocation and reflects a more measured political approach.

This episode also highlights a recurring challenge in Goa politics: the thin line between political ambition and political overreach. Leaders often speak with an eye on future electoral scenarios, but not every thought needs to be aired publicly. In a state where alliances are crucial and political equations are constantly shifting, words carry weight. The BJP leadership in Goa would do well to treat this as a moment for introspection. Maintaining discipline is not just about avoiding embarrassment; it is about preserving trust—within the party and with its allies. Clear communication channels and adherence to protocol are essential, especially in a coalition environment. At a broader level, the incident serves as a reminder that political strategy cannot rely solely on expansion through induction. Sustainable growth requires strengthening the party's base, nurturing local leadership, and respecting alliance frameworks. Godinho's remark may have been off-the-cuff, but its implications are significant. In politics, especially in a state as nuanced as Goa, even a single statement can ripple across alliances, elections, and public perception. The BJP now faces the task of containing the damage and reaffirming its commitment to both discipline and partnership.

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Rushed Academic Changes Ignore Ground Realities in Goa

The recent push to align Goa's school academic calendar with the CBSE schedule raises serious concerns that cannot be ignored. While such a move may appear progressive on paper, it seems to be driven more by personal impressions than by a grounded understanding of local realities. Goa's hot and humid climate, especially during peak summer months, makes it extremely challenging for students to cope with extended school hours. Many institutions still lack adequate infrastructure such as proper ventilation, cooling systems, and transport facilities. In rural areas, poor road conditions and unreliable transport further compound the daily struggle for students and parents alike. What is more troubling is the apparent absence of meaningful consultation. Parents, teachers, and school administrators, who are directly impacted by these decisions, have not been adequately heard. Educational reforms cannot be imposed in haste; they must emerge from dialogue, data, and a deep sensitivity to local conditions. A one-size-fits-all approach, borrowed from national boards, may not serve the best interests of Goan students. Policy decisions in education must prioritize the well-being, safety, and holistic development of children over administrative convenience. This situation underlines the urgent need for dedicated leadership in the education sector. Goa deserves an Education Minister who listens, engages, and acts with foresight and responsibility.

-Swapnila Ashish Kudchadkar

Azad Maidan Must Remain Free

Azad Maidan in Panaji is not merely an open space; it is a site of deep historical and civic significance. For decades, this public square in Goa's capital has served as a platform where citizens have gathered to voice their concerns, aspirations and demands on a wide range of issues. From the 1979 student agitation demanding a 50 per cent bus concession, to the movement for recognition of Konkani as Goa's official language, to the protests led by the Goa Bachao Abhiyan against the controversial Regional Plan, Azad Maidan has stood witness to defining moments in our democratic journey. It remains one of the few spaces where the public voice can be expressed freely and collectively. It is therefore imperative that Azad Maidan be preserved as a non-commercial, public space. Any attempt to convert it into a venue for commercial activity undermines its very purpose and erodes its legacy as a people's forum. One recalls with concern how, in 1985, the then Panjim Municipal Council leased out Azad Maidan to a Delhi-based association for a sale exhibition that was to run for several months. This decision, widely seen as an abuse of power, was challenged, and the authorities were compelled to act. Despite political pressure, the Collector intervened and ordered the exhibitors to vacate the grounds, a decision later upheld by the High Court. That episode serves as a reminder that public spaces must remain protected from short-term commercial interests. Azad Maidan must continue to remain free, open, and accessible to the people of Goa.

- Aires Rodrigues, London

Multi-drug overdose claims life of 21-year-old at Anjuna party

Team Goemkarponn

ANJUNA: A 21-year-old from Indore, who collapsed at a late-night party in Anjuna last week, has died from a lethal combination of drugs, preliminary medical tests indicate. Initially suspected as a drug overdose, early toxicology screening has confirmed the presence of six psychoactive substances well above safe limits.

According to sources, rapid bedside tests conducted at Goa Medical



College and Hospital revealed amphetamine, methamphetamine, MDMA (ecstasy), cannabis, benzodiazepines, and alcohol in the youth's system — a dangerous mix known to overwhelm the central nervous

system and potentially trigger cardiac arrest, respiratory failure, or multi-organ collapse.

"All six substances were found significantly above threshold levels, pointing to a clear case of overdose," a senior official familiar with the investigation said. While these initial findings are strong indicators, forensic teams have sent viscera samples to the laboratory in Verna for a detailed chemical analysis, which will provide a definitive toxicology report.

Eyewitnesses reported confusion at the venue when the youth collapsed, with delays in recognising the severity of his condition and arranging medical help. Police are recording statements from party attendees and organisers to reconstruct the sequence of events.

Investigators are also probing the source and distribution of the substances consumed and examining whether any illegal activity or negligence contributed to the incident.

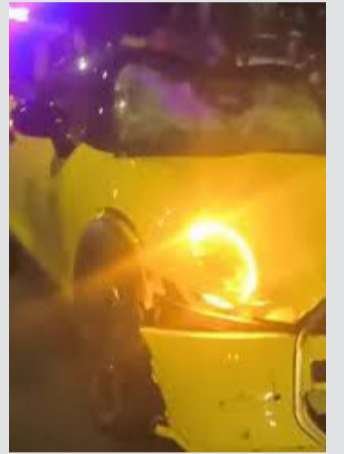
Luxury car rams into two-wheeler on Dona Paula stretch, 23-year-old woman killed

■ Panaji police arrests 22 year old driver.

Team Goemkarponn

PANAJI: A 23-year-old woman died on the spot after a high-speed luxury car collided with a two-wheeler on the Dona Paula stretch late Sunday night, bringing road safety concerns in the area into sharp focus. The deceased, Diksha Parwarkar, a Karnataka native working at Hotel

Cidade de Goa, was riding with colleague D Arun, a Margao resident originally from Chennai. Arun sustained serious injuries and is undergoing treatment at a hospital. The driver of the car, 22-year-old Darius Dias from Chicolna, Bogmalovasco, has been arrested, and an FIR registered. Police and eyewitnesses said the accident occurred near Manipal Hospital when a yellow Mini Cooper, allegedly speeding, lost control and hit the oncoming two-



wheeler. The collision's force threw both victims into the air before they landed on the road. Locals and hospital staff rushed to assist. Diksha was declared dead on arrival due to severe head injuries. Arun suffered critical head and leg injuries. Authorities are probing whether the driver was under the influence of alcohol. The crash has renewed fears over speeding along the Dona Paula stretch, where wide roads often encourage reckless night driving.

Drug Menace Unchecked, Police Fail; Politicians Complicit: Archit Naik

Team Goemkarponn

PANAJI: Goa's image across India is fast deteriorating from a tourist paradise to a hub of narcotics and lawlessness, alleged Archit Shantaram Naik in a press statement, while demanding urgent action to tackle the growing drug menace in the state.



Referring to the recent

death of a young tourist from Indore, Naik said the postmortem confirming death due to a drug overdose was deeply alarming and not an isolated incident. He claimed that narcotics are now freely circulating even in the hinterlands of Goa, raising serious concerns about enforcement and policing.

Naik also questioned the silence of BJYM and ABVP, the youth and student wings of the BJP, stating that their lack of response raises serious questions. He alleged that when those in power choose to look away, it strengthens suspicions that political patrons may be shielding the drug trade.

Marathi rights panel ramps up campaign ahead of 2027 Assembly polls

Team Goemkarponn

PANAJI: Ahead of the 2027 Goa Assembly elections, the Marathi Rajbhasha Nirdhar Samiti has intensified its efforts to consolidate Marathi-speaking voters into a strong political bloc. The panel has renewed its demand for official language status for Marathi and urged the government to act, warning that inaction could lead to its resignation. Speaking at a press conference, Samiti convenor Subhash Velingkar said the movement to promote Marathi must now translate into political leverage. He announced Phase 2 of a state-wide agitation under the slogan "Now or Never", with public meetings scheduled



in major cities including Panaji, Margao, Ponda, and Vasco. As part of the campaign, the Samiti plans to collect around five lakh signatures, which will be submitted to the President of India to push for Marathi to be recognised as a co-official language alongside Konkani. Velingkar criticised the current government led by Pramod Sawant, accusing it of repeatedly misleading Marathi supporters.

Goa mandates registration of Ganesh idol vendors ahead of festival, clamps down on PoP idols

Team Goemkarponn

PANAJI: Ahead of the Ganesh Chaturthi festival, the Goa government has tightened regulations on the sale of Plaster of Paris (PoP) idols, making it mandatory for all idol vendors to register by July 15. The Director of Environment has warned that vendors failing to comply will not be



permitted to sell or import idols in the State. Under directives issued through the Environment (Protection) Act, the Goa

State Pollution Control Board (GSPCB) has been tasked with developing and maintaining an online registration portal. This portal will be accessible to authorities and the public, ensuring transparency and monitoring of vendors. From 2026 onwards, only registered vendors will be allowed to operate. The move, following guidelines from the

Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEF&CC), aims to reduce environmental harm caused by PoP idols and encourage eco-friendly alternatives during one of Goa's largest festivals. Vendors must declare that idols are made from clay, chikan mati, or shadu mati, with PoP content not exceeding 20%.

Around 15,000 applications received for undergraduate admissions in Goa

Team Goemkarponn

PANAJI: The Directorate of Higher Education (DHE) has received nearly 15,000 applications for undergraduate admissions across 40 government and aided colleges for the 2026-27 academic year.

The centralised admission process, which began on March 23, will continue until April 13, with applications being accepted online through the Samarth e-Gov portal on the DHE website. Over 16,000 students successfully cleared their

Class 12 exams this year. Applicants are allowed to select up to five colleges or programmes, and they may also apply for multiple courses within the same college. Candidates are required to register only once on the portal. Undergraduate



Admissions

programmes available include BA, BCom, BSc, music, theatre, home science, BVoc, BCA, BBA, BA BEd, BSc BEd, BPEd, BA LLB, and BSc Agriculture.

Man Assaulted With Cable After Rash Driving Row; Accused Arrested In Pernem

Team Goemkarponn

PERNEM: Pernem Police have arrested a 28-year-old man after he allegedly assaulted a complainant with an aluminium armoured cable following a dispute over rash driving at Dhargal. According to police, the offence was registered on April 5, 2026 at 10:00 pm based on a complaint filed by Krishna Mandrekar (54), a resident of DMello Waddo, Saligao. The incident reportedly occurred earlier in the evening around 5:30 pm



at Oxelbag, Dhargal in Pernem.

Police stated that the accused, identified as Gaurav Konadkar (28) of Oxelbag, Dhargal, allegedly abused the complainant and his employee Rakib Mandal

(25), a native of West Bengal, using filthy language after being questioned about rash driving. The accused then allegedly assaulted both with slaps and fist blows.

The complainant further alleged that the

accused struck him on the head with an aluminium armoured cable, causing bleeding injuries. The accused also allegedly threatened to kill the complainant and his employee. Police placed the accused under arrest at 10:13 pm on April 5, 2026 and he was kept in the police station lockup. All Supreme Court guidelines were followed during the arrest. Further investigation is being carried out by PSI Prathmesh Parsekar of Pernem Police Station.

Scooter Stolen From Open Parking At Margao

Team Goemkarponn

MARGAO: A Honda Activa scooter worth ₹35,000 was reported stolen from an open parking area at Powerhouse, Margao, police said. According to Margao Town Police, the complaint was filed by Ahmed Hussain Patel, a resident of Gogol Housing Board, Margao. The theft reportedly occurred during the intervening period between March 28 at 9:00 pm and March 29 at 10:00 pm. Police stated that an unknown accused



person decamped with the complainant's Honda Activa scooter from the open parking place.

Margao Town Police have registered a case and further investigation is being carried out by PSI Sameer Gaonkar.



Security Guard Found Dead Inside Property At Siolim

Team Goemkarponn

SIOLIM: A 53-year-old security guard was found dead inside a fenced property at Siolim on Saturday evening, Anjuna Police said.

According to police, Anjuna Police Station registered an unnatural death case (U.D. No. 29/2026) under section 194 BNSS on April 5, 2026 at 6:52 pm following a phone call from Siddesh Mandrekar reporting a body lying near a mango tree inside a property near La Casa Hotel, Costa Wado, Siolim.

The deceased was identified as Sushant Paleykar (53), a resident of Dando, Siolim, who

was employed as a security guard at the same property for the past eight months. He reportedly worked day shifts from 8:00 am to 8:00 pm.

During inquiry, police learned that the deceased was habituated to alcohol consumption.

Police conducted a scene of occurrence panchanama with assistance from the forensic team and dog squad, and necessary exhibits were preserved.

The body has been preserved at GMC Morgue, Bambolim, for further examination. Further inquiry is in progress with PSI Amir Y. Taral of Anjuna Police Station.

Woman Seriously Injured In Car-Scooter Crash At Khandepar

Team Goemkarponn

PONDA: A woman sustained grievous injuries after a car allegedly driven in a rash and negligent manner dashed against her scooter at Khandepar in Ponda.

According to Ponda Police, the case was registered on the basis of a state complaint filed by HC Ramdas Gawas of Ponda Police Station. The incident occurred on



April 3 prior to 8:31 pm at Keryam, Khandepar.

Police said the accused, identified as Seban Andrade, a resident

of Ponda and driver of a Maruti Swift car, was proceeding from Ponda towards Usgao when he allegedly drove the vehicle

in a rash and negligent manner endangering human life. Upon reaching Keryam, Khandepar, the car reportedly dashed against a Jupiter scooter.

As a result of the impact, the scooter rider Harshada Patil of Tisk, Usgao, fell onto the road and sustained grievous bodily injuries.

Further investigation is being conducted by HC Ramdas Gawas of Ponda Police Station.

Unidentified Man Found Dead At Setu Sangam In Bicholim

Team Goemkarponn

BICHOLIM: An unidentified male was found lying at Setu Sangam, Bicholim, and later declared brought dead at CHC Bicholim on Monday morning. According to police, Bicholim Police received

a phone call at around 10:25 am on April 6, 2026 from an unknown caller informing that a man was lying at the spot and suspected to be dead. PSI Jayprakash Jankar rushed to the location and shifted the person in a 108 ambulance to CHC Bicholim, where the

doctor on duty declared him brought dead. Police described the deceased as around 40 years of age, approximately 5.5 feet in height, whitish complexion and medium build.

He was wearing a black jacket and black full pant, and had a tattoo

of a heart with the letter "S" on his right hand. An unnatural death case has been registered at Bicholim Police Station (U.D. No. 22/2026) under section 194 BNSS. The body has been shifted to GMC Morgue, Bambolim, for medico-legal formalities.

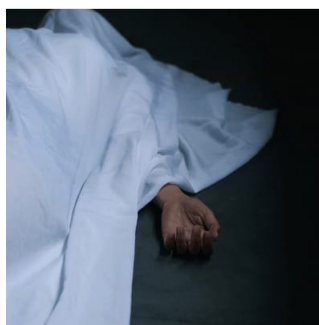


Woman Dies After Allegedly Jumping From Khandepar Bridge

Team Goemkarponn

PONDA: A 45-year-old woman from Cuncolim died after allegedly jumping from Khandepar bridge on April 5, police said. According to Ponda Police, Sanjana Gaude (45), a resident of Mardol, Cuncolim, was brought dead to GMC Bambolim

after being referred from SDH Ponda. The incident reportedly occurred at around 9:30 am when she had gone with her son Saurav Gaude to Usgao on a Jupiter scooter to visit a relative. Police said that upon reaching Khandepar, the woman asked her son to stop the scooter stating she



wanted to purchase some items. She then walked

towards nearby shops while her son waited on the roadside. When she did not return, he began searching for her and was informed that a lady had jumped from Khandepar bridge. He rushed to the spot and found his mother lying beneath the bridge at the edge of the river. She was shifted by 108

ambulance to SDH Ponda and later referred to GMC Bambolim, where she was declared dead. During inquiry, the son informed police that his mother was mentally disturbed due to a property dispute and was under depression, and suspected she may have taken the extreme step. Police conducted

the inquest panchanama and sent the body for post-mortem at GMC Bambolim. The autopsy certified the cause of death as damage to chest, abdomen and pelvis with underlying vital organ injuries, along with fractures of thoracic spine, left radius and ulna due to blunt force impact.

MPA loses 0.5 million tonnes cargo amid Middle East crisis, still records highest growth

Team Goemkarponn

MORMUGAO: The Mormugao Port Authority (MPA) has reported a loss of around 0.5 million tonnes of cargo due to the ongoing tensions in the Middle East and disruptions along the Strait of Hormuz, even as the port posted the highest growth among major ports in the country this financial year. Addressing reporters, MPA Chairman Dr N Vinod Kumar said the impacted cargo was equivalent to about two to three vessels that were scheduled to arrive from Gulf regions. "Due to the Middle East conflict and the situation



in the Strait of Hormuz, we lost nearly 0.5 million tonnes of cargo, which translates to around two to three vessels.

The affected consignments mainly included gypsum and bauxite coming from the Gulf. However, the overall impact on port operations has been minimal," said

Dr Kumar.

Despite the setback, MPA registered a strong performance, emerging as the fastest-growing major port in India. The port handled 21.01 million tonnes of cargo during the current financial year, compared to 18.1 million tonnes last year, marking a growth of nearly 16

percent.

"We have handled 21.01 million tonnes of cargo this year as against 18.1 million tonnes last year, achieving nearly 16 percent growth.

Among all major ports in India, this is the highest growth recorded. It has been a result of excellent teamwork, and we are very pleased with this achievement," Dr Kumar said. He also addressed concerns regarding coal handling, clarifying that the growth was not driven by an increase in coal cargo. "Whenever there is growth, there is a perception that coal handling has increased.



Review Meeting Held to Assess Preparedness for 21-Ponda Bye-Election

Team Goemkarponn

PONDA: In view of the upcoming bye-election to the 21-Ponda Assembly Constituency, a review meeting with all nodal officers was convened by Collector and District Election Officer (South Goa) Ms. Eгна Cleetus, IAS, to assess overall preparedness, including the law and order situation. The meeting was held in the presence of Additional Collector-II

Shri Ramesh Gaonkar and Deputy Collector, South-I, Shri Velton Tellis. Senior officials including the ADM (Law & Order), DySP Ponda, Returning Officer (RO), Assistant Returning Officer (ARO) and representatives from various departments attended the meeting. The District Election Officer reviewed key preparedness measures and issued directions to ensure smooth conduct of the election.

DKA Releases Roman Konkani Book 'Nouchalok Ani Tachi Kola' On National Maritime Day

Team Goemkarponn

VASCO: The Dalgado Konkani Akademi (DKA) marked another milestone in promoting Romi Konkani literature with the release of a new book titled "Nouchalok ani Tachi Kola" (Notes on the Elements of Shipping). The book was formally released by Pusapati Ashok Gajapati Raju in the presence of Guest of Honour Kaushik Seal,



Presiding Officer Sudhir Kumar Shrivastava, Shivram Kamat, DKA President Fr. Myron Jesin Barreto and author Capt. Eddie Viegas.

The function was

jointly organised with the National Maritime Day Celebration Committee, Goa, on the occasion of the 63rd National Maritime Day at Ravindra Bhavan.

The publication is a

unique contribution to Konkani literature focusing on the fundamentals of shipping and maritime knowledge. Written in an accessible style, the book aims to introduce students and aspiring seafarers to basic concepts, navigation skills and elements of shipping. The work is presented in Roman Konkani, making technical maritime knowledge more approachable for local readers.

Danvondem residents demand removal of barricades; MMC assures action within seven days

Team Goemkarponn

MARGAO: Residents of Danvondem met the Chief Officer of the Margao Municipal Council (MMC), demanding the immediate removal of barricades installed in connection with a proposed mega project in the area. The locals expressed strong opposition to the barricades, stating that they were causing

inconvenience to residents and motorists.

They also raised concerns about the potential impact of the proposed project on the locality, including accessibility and day-to-day movement.

During the meeting, the delegation urged the MMC to take prompt action and remove the barricades until clarity on the project is provided.

Over 850 Dogs Sterilised, 1,000+ Vaccinated At Curchorem ABC Camp

Team Goemkarponn

CURCHOREM: A month-long free Animal Birth Control (ABC) and anti-rabies vaccination drive in Curchorem has concluded, with a significant number of street and pet dogs covered under the initiative. During the campaign, a total of 852 dogs were sterilised, while 1,056 were administered anti-rabies vaccines. The programme was carried out by Worldwide Veterinary Service (WVS) Goa in collaboration



with Mission Rabies India, with support from the Curchorem-Cacora Municipal Council and the panchayats of Xeldem and Assolda. Dr Stacy Sequeira, Director of WVS HICKS Goa, said the teams worked extensively across designated areas to safely capture and treat community dogs.

Drishti Lifesavers Rescue 5, Trace 3 Missing Children Over Long Weekend In Goa

Team Goemkarponn

PANAJI: Drishti Marine lifesavers carried out multiple rescue and assistance operations along Goa's coastline over the long holiday weekend, saving five people from drowning, tracing three missing children, administering emergency medical aid, and even apprehending a thief. At Ashwem beach, a 37-year-old man from Bengaluru was rescued after being caught in a flash rip current. Lifesavers Rupesh Kerkar and Sudhir Parab swiftly intervened using a rescue board and jet ski to



bring him back to shore. The victim experienced breathing difficulties and was administered oxygen before being attended to by 108 medical personnel. At Morjim beach, three men from Ludhiana, aged between 24 and 25, were rescued after drifting into a rip current during low tide. Lifesavers Mahadev

Gawde and Yogesh Gadekar successfully brought them back to safety using a rescue board and jet ski. In Baga, a four-year-old boy reported missing triggered an immediate search operation. Lifesavers Sandesh and Siddesh Bhosle, along with a mobile unit led by Sushant Gaonkar, located

the child near the Baga tower. He was reunited with his mother following proper verification in the presence of police and beach wardens. At Calangute beach, a seven-year-old girl from Karnataka was traced to the water sports area after she went missing. In a separate incident, a four-year-old boy from Uttar Pradesh was located at Candolim after a coordinated search by lifeguards Suraj Bind, Suraj Sawant, Vinod Gaonkar, and Beach Marshal Raghunath Patil. Both children were safely reunited with their families.

Anant Ambani Announces ₹18 Crore Support for Kerala Temples and Elephant Welfare

■ Donations to Guruvayur and Rajrajeshwaram temples to fund renovations, pilgrim facilities and humane care for temple elephants.

New Delhi: Anant Ambani, Executive Director of Reliance Industries Limited, announced financial support worth ₹18 crore for temple development and elephant welfare initiatives during his recent visit to temples in Kerala. During his visit, Ambani pledged ₹3 crore each to the Rajrajeshwaram Temple and the Guruvayur Temple, while also outlining a larger renovation plan for temple infrastructure and heritage restoration.

At Rajrajeshwaram Temple, Ambani offered traditional prayers and rituals before handing over a cheque of ₹3 crore for ongoing renovation work. He also committed an additional ₹12 crore towards a broader development project at the temple. The proposed works include restoration of the historic East Gopuram, a structure believed to be as old as the temple itself and which has remained in a



deteriorated condition for more than two centuries. The funding will also support improvements to parking areas and other facilities to enhance convenience for pilgrims. Temple authorities received Ambani with traditional honours during the visit, with officials and priests present to mark the occasion.

Earlier in the day, Ambani visited Guruvayur Temple and offered prayers to Lord Guruvayurappan. During the visit, he donated ₹3 crore to the temple trust and interacted with temple

officials.

He also announced plans to support elephant welfare initiatives associated with the temple. The proposed initiatives include establishing a dedicated elephant hospital, creating chain free shelters and introducing modern care facilities designed to ensure scientific and humane treatment for temple elephants.

These initiatives are linked to Ambani's wildlife and animal welfare efforts through Vantara. The programme focuses on improving the living

conditions, medical care and overall welfare of elephants connected to temple traditions. Speaking during the visit, Ambani said India's spiritual traditions represent living institutions that foster faith, community values and compassion. He emphasised that preserving this heritage requires collective responsibility and that the initiatives aim to improve facilities for devotees while ensuring dignity and proper care for animals associated with temple culture.



Goa creates platform for startups to pitch to investors

Panaji: The Goa Startup Accelerator (GSA) Programme, an initiative of the Department of Information Technology, Electronics & Communications (DITE&C), Government of Goa, through the Startup & IT Promotion Cell (SITPC), has marked an important milestone, reflecting steady progress in strengthening the state's startup ecosystem.

Launched on February 12, 2026, the five-month structured accelerator programme has been designed to support startups through focused mentorship, market access and growth opportunities.

The programme witnessed an encouraging response, with over 160 applications received, out of which 45 startups were shortlisted for the accelerator. Over the past few weeks, these startups have undergone a series of focused sessions covering key areas such as business model refinement, product-market fit, technology integration, scaling strategies and investor readiness.

As part of this phase, a first milestone demo day was held on March 30 and March 31, 2026, bringing together around 41 startups. A first milestone demo day was held on March 30 and March 31, 2026, bringing together around 41 startups highlighting the diverse and technology-driven solutions emerging from Goa's entrepreneurial ecosystem. Following the presentations, 26 startups

have been selected to move ahead to the next stage of the programme. The evaluation and selection process was carried out by a distinguished panel of jury members composed of investors and industry experts.

Shri Kabir Shirgaonkar, Director, DITE&C, highlighted that the Goa Startup Accelerator Programme is a first-of-its-kind initiative for the state, designed to provide structured and sustained support to startups. The strong response and the quality of participation reflect the growing entrepreneurial energy in Goa, and the department remains committed to enabling startups through the right ecosystem, guidance and opportunities.

One of the Industry experts Shri. Indraneil Borkakoty, while sharing his perspective on the programme, stated that the overall quality of startups and the ideas presented over the two days have been extremely encouraging. He noted that the innovative use of technology across sectors reflects strong potential and expressed confidence in seeing many more such innovators emerging from Goa.

Shri. Gaurav Pogle, Founder and Director, Reclevo Pvt. Ltd, while sharing his experience, stated "Having been in business for several years and having built ventures previously, I chose to be part of this process because it offered an opportunity to learn and engage with industry experts.

...CONTD FROM PAGE 01

Ponda on a KNIFE'S EDGE as Numbers Point to Photo Finish

strengthens the party's position. The BJP is also drawing support from local figures like Apurva Dalvi and Venkatesh Naik, while the backing of the Maharashtra Gomantak Party adds to its formal support base, even if questions remain about how effectively that support will translate on the ground. Congress, meanwhile, is working a different equation. The Muslim and Christian communities together

account for roughly 7,700 votes, forming a consolidated bloc that could tilt heavily in its favour. This gives Congress a strong starting point, but not a decisive one on its own. The party is relying heavily on Bhatikar's personal appeal. His performance in 2022 showed his ability to attract support beyond traditional party lines. His shift from MGP to Congress just before the bypoll is seen as a

strategic move to combine his local connect with the party's organisational reach. Leaders such as Amit Patkar have expressed confidence of a comfortable win, but the numbers suggest the margin may again be tight. A key uncertainty remains the role of MGP voters. While the party has officially backed the BJP, its past association with Bhatikar raises doubts about a complete transfer of votes. Even a partial

split in this segment could disrupt the BJP's calculations in a contest where margins are expected to be narrow. AAP's presence, through Geetesh Naik, adds another variable. While not seen as a frontrunner, AAP could draw a section of urban or protest voters. In a constituency where the last result was decided by 77 votes, even a small diversion could prove decisive. Both sides are projecting confidence.

India Has Fiscal Strength to Handle West Asia Crisis:.....

and complexity. She pointed out that rising global public debt and geopolitical tensions have added further pressure on economic stability worldwide. Sitharaman said the ongoing conflict in the Middle East has moved beyond a regional security issue and now

poses a broader threat to global energy supply chains and economic stability. She added that such developments are reshaping the global order and contributing to increased geopolitical and financial uncertainty. Despite these global challenges, she

emphasised that India remains in a relatively strong fiscal position. According to the minister, India's overall debt to GDP ratio stands at around 81 percent, which is among the lowest levels compared with several major economies. The Finance Minister noted

that many countries are currently struggling with limited fiscal capacity due to a lack of fiscal discipline in previous years. In contrast, India's consistent approach to maintaining fiscal prudence has created room for policy flexibility during difficult global conditions.

“No State Will Lose Representation”: PM Modi Backs Plan to Expand Lok Sabha Seats

■ Government prepares special Parliament session as part of move to implement women’s reservation before 2029 polls.

New Delhi: Narendra Modi has said that increasing the strength of the Lok Sabha will benefit every state and ensure that no region loses parliamentary representation as the government moves ahead with plans to implement women’s reservation in legislatures. Speaking at a rally in Barpeta in Assam, the Prime Minister said women have waited long enough for representation in Parliament and state assemblies. He stated that the government aims to implement the one third



reservation for women by the time of the 2029 general elections. To facilitate this reform, the government plans to increase the number of seats in Parliament and state assemblies. Modi said certain legal

amendments would be required to implement the proposal, and a special session of Parliament has been convened from April 16 to deliberate on the issue. Emphasising that women’s empowerment remains a priority for the

ruling Bharatiya Janata Party, the Prime Minister said the participation of women in legislative bodies is essential to achieving the goal of building a developed India. Ahead of the proposed legislation, consultations were held with several political parties by Kiren Rijju, the Union Minister for Parliamentary Affairs. The government has urged parties across the political spectrum to support the initiative and move forward through consensus.



Air India CEO Campbell Wilson Resigns Ahead of Contract End

■ Senior aviation executive steps down before completion of tenure scheduled until 2027

New Delhi: Campbell Wilson has stepped down as the Chief Executive Officer of Air India, bringing an early end to his leadership tenure that was originally set to continue until July 2027. Wilson had been appointed CEO and Managing Director of the airline in 2022 on a five year contract following the airline’s transition to private ownership under the Tata Group.

His resignation comes before the completion of that term, though the airline has not yet provided detailed reasons for his departure. A veteran of the aviation industry with more than three decades of experience, Wilson built much of his career within the Singapore Airlines group. Before joining Air India, he served as the Chief Executive Officer of Scoot, the low cost subsidiary of Singapore Airlines. Wilson began his

professional journey with Singapore Airlines in 1996 as a management trainee in New Zealand. Over the years he held several international roles for the airline, working across regions including Canada, Hong Kong and Japan. In 2011, he returned to Singapore to become the founding Chief Executive Officer of Scoot, leading the low cost carrier during its formative years until 2016. He later took on the role of Senior Vice President for Sales and Marketing at Singapore Airlines, where he oversaw areas such as pricing strategy, global sales operations, brand and marketing, distribution, ecommerce and overseas offices. Wilson resumed leadership of Scoot in April 2020 before eventually moving to India to lead Air India during a crucial phase of restructuring and expansion.

“Voters Will Give Befitting Reply”: Amit Shah Hits Back at Kharge’s ‘Poisonous Snake’ Remark

■ Congress chief’s comment comparing BJP and RSS to a snake sparks sharp political backlash.

New Delhi: Amit Shah launched a strong attack on Mallikarjun Kharge after the Congress president compared the Bharatiya Janata Party and the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh to a “poisonous snake,” urging voters to respond decisively in the upcoming elections. Addressing a public rally in Patharkandi in Assam, the Union Home Minister criticised



the remarks and said the people would give a fitting reply through their votes. He pointed to the large crowd present at

the rally and said the enthusiasm of party workers and supporters reflected strong public support for the BJP.

Shah also referred to the election scheduled on April 9, saying the electorate would deliver a clear message to the Congress leadership, including Rahul Gandhi. He expressed confidence that the verdict would significantly weaken the Congress presence. The controversy stems from comments made by Kharge while campaigning in Kerala.

Arvind Kejriwal Seeks Judge’s Recusal in Liquor Policy Case, Says He Will Argue Personally

■ Delhi High Court to hear plea next week after CBI terms recusal request frivolous.

New Delhi: Arvind Kejriwal appeared in person before the Delhi High Court seeking the recusal of Justice Swarana Kanta Sharma from hearing the petition filed by the Central Bureau of Investigation challenging the discharge of the AAP leader and other accused in the alleged liquor policy case. After waiting in court for nearly three hours, Kejriwal informed the bench that he intended to argue the recusal application himself. He requested the court to



accept his plea on record, stating that as a litigant appearing in person he was unable to file the application through the court’s online system. Representing the CBI, Solicitor General Tushar Mehta strongly opposed the request, describing the

recusal petition filed by Kejriwal and seven others as frivolous, vexatious and contemptuous. Mehta argued that the courtroom should not be used for theatrics and said Kejriwal should formally discharge his lawyer if he wished to argue the matter personally. Kejriwal responded that he would exercise his legal rights and present arguments on the recusal application himself, while reserving the option to be represented by legal counsel later in the proceedings.

Bomb Attack in Manipur’s Bishnupur Kills Two Toddlers

■ Explosive fired at house in Moirang Tronglaobi leaves children dead and mother injured

New Delhi: Two toddlers were killed and their mother injured after suspected militants launched a bomb attack on a civilian residence in Bishnupur district of Manipur early Tuesday morning.

The incident occurred around 1 a.m. in Moirang Tronglaobi when an explosive reportedly fired by suspected militants struck a residential house.

According to officials, the victims were asleep in

their bedroom when the bomb exploded inside the home.

A five year old boy and his six month old sister died instantly in the blast. Their mother sustained injuries in the attack and was later provided medical attention.

The sudden explosion caused severe damage to the house and left the family and the local community in shock.

Moirang Tronglaobi is located in a low lying area close to the hill districts,



including Churachandpur district.

The region has witnessed repeated incidents of firing and militant activity during the height of the ethnic violence that affected the state in 2023 and 2024.

The attack drew sharp condemnation from local leaders and authorities. Thokchom Shanti Singh, a legislator from the Bharatiya Janata Party, strongly denounced the incident and described it as a brutal act of violence.

“This Is Not What We Sold”: Lalit Modi Criticises IPL Format, Claims ₹2,400 Crore Revenue Loss

■ Former IPL chief says reduced match schedule deprives teams and board of major earnings.

Team Goemkarponn

PANAJI: Lalit Modi has criticised the current structure of the Indian Premier League, claiming the tournament is missing out on nearly ₹2,400 crore in potential revenue because it no longer follows the complete home and away format originally planned for the league. The former IPL



commissioner said the present system, introduced after the league expanded to

ten teams in 2022, has significantly reduced the number of matches. Under the original concept, each team was expected to play every other team twice, once at home and once away. Such a format would result in around 90 league matches followed by four playoff games. However, the competition currently features only 74 matches. According

to Modi, the change has led to the loss of nearly 20 matches in the league stage, which in turn affects both the earnings of the Board of Control for Cricket in India and the participating franchises. In the IPL's financial model, half of the revenue from each match goes to the board while the remaining portion is distributed among the teams.

Goa's Mrunal Naik Selected for BCCI Under 16 Elite Camp 2026

■ Young cricketer to train with top prospects at national camp in Dehradun

Team Goemkarponn

PANAJI: Promising young cricketer Mrunal Naik from Goa has been selected to attend the prestigious BCCI Under 16 Elite Camp 2026, organised by the Board of Control for Cricket in India at its Centre of Excellence. The elite camp is scheduled to take place in Dehradun from May 11 to June 6 and will bring together some of the most talented Under 16 cricketers from across the country. The camp serves as an important platform for young players to receive advanced coaching, training and exposure at the national level. The selection of Mrunal Naik has been welcomed by the Goa Cricket Association, which described the achievement as a proud moment for cricket in the state. GCA President Mahesh Dessai expressed happiness over the young player's accomplishment and said the selection reflects his dedication, consistent performances and commitment to the sport. He noted that the opportunity to train at a national level camp will help the youngster further



develop his skills and gain valuable experience by competing alongside some of the best emerging players in the country. The association's Secretary Tulshidas Shetye and members of the managing committee also congratulated Mrunal Naik for earning a place in the prestigious training programme. They extended their best wishes and expressed confidence that he will benefit greatly from the experience and continue to progress in his cricketing career. The Goa Cricket Association has consistently focused on developing young cricketers through structured training programmes, competitions and exposure opportunities. The selection of a Goan player for the national elite camp highlights the steady progress being made in nurturing grassroots cricket talent in the state.

Don Bosco College Panaji Clinches Goa University Inter-Collegiate Cricket Title

■ Seven-wicket victory over Goa Medical College seals championship at Bambolim.

Team Goemkarponn

PANAJI: Don Bosco College Panaji emerged champions of the Goa University Inter-Collegiate Cricket Men Championship 2025-26 after defeating Goa Medical College by seven wickets in an exciting final played at the Goa University Ground on April 2. After winning the toss, Don Bosco College elected to bowl first. Goa Medical College managed to post a total of 122



runs for the loss of eight wickets in their allotted 20 overs. Adarsh Naik top scored with 33 runs from 31 balls, while Rohan Vadyekar added a useful 23 runs from 21 deliveries. The Don Bosco bowlers delivered a disciplined performance to restrict the opposition. Sankalp

Prabhu led the attack with impressive figures of three wickets for 18 runs.

Sameer Harmalkar, Rudrakshy Sangodkar, Ajay Prajapati and Anuresh Kambli contributed with one wicket each. Chasing a target of 123 runs, Don Bosco College produced

a confident batting display and reached 123 for three in just 12 overs to secure the title.

Aman Kambli starred with the bat, scoring a powerful 66 runs from 35 balls, while Sapanish Satarkar supported well with 31 runs off 22 deliveries.

Chowgule Register Emphatic Innings Win in Goa Premier Division League

■ Salgaocar keep chase alive against Margao CC while Dempo move closer to victory over Geno

Team Goemkarponn

PANAJI: In the fourth round matches of the Goa Premier Division League organised by the Goa Cricket Association, Chowgule Sports Club recorded a commanding innings victory over Panjim Gymkhana, while the clashes involving Salgaocar Cricket Club and Dempo Cricket Club remain firmly in their control heading into the next day. At Chicalim, Panjim Gymkhana



struggled after opting to bat first and were bowled out for just 101 runs. Shubham Desai led the bowling attack with a remarkable spell, dismantling the batting line up.

Shadab Khan fought a lone battle with 45 runs, while Dishank Prabhu

Misquin added 16. Desai finished with seven wickets to put Chowgule firmly on top. In reply, Chowgule Sports Club compiled 213 runs to take a strong first innings lead. Madhur scored 42, Felix Alemao added 37 and Shubham Tari contributed 36.

Over 250 Athletes Compete as Bandora Judo Championship Concludes in Ponda

■ Jaya Dojo Club emerges champion while Warriors Training Center finishes runners up.

Team Goemkarponn

PANAJI: The Bandora Judo Championship 2026 was successfully organised by Bandora Judo Club in association with Madhavrao Dhavlikar Charitable Trust at Nageshi Temple Complex on April 4, drawing enthusiastic participation from across the state. The championship featured competitions in several divisions including Sub Junior, Cadets for boys and girls, and Senior categories



for men and women. The event witnessed the participation of more than 250 athletes representing different clubs and training centres from across Goa, making it one of the largest judo gatherings in the region this year. The tournament

was inaugurated by Mithil Dhavlikar, who attended as the chief guest. During the inauguration, he encouraged the athletes and emphasised the importance of discipline, determination and dedication in martial arts such as judo.