

Suraj Nandrekar: Girish, welcome back. What led to this change?

Girish Chodankar: Thank you. In politics, leadership changes are part of the process. The Congress leadership reviews the performance of office bearers from time to time and takes decisions based on the party's requirements.

There were discussions within the party at various levels. Our central leadership, state leaders, district leaders, and block presidents were consulted. Ultimately, the party felt that a change was needed as we prepare for the next Assembly election.

Suraj: There were complaints that Amit Patkar was not accessible to grassroots workers. Was that one of the reasons?

Girish: There were concerns from some workers regarding communication and organisational coordination. The party conducted its assessment and arrived at a decision. Such changes are not personal. They are based on organisational requirements and electoral strategy.

Suraj: You are returning at a time when Congress is still recovering from major setbacks, especially after the defections following the 2017 and 2022 elections. How do you see the challenge?

Girish: The biggest setback was in 2017. Congress emerged as the single largest party, yet the BJP formed the government using the Governor's office and its political influence. Subsequently, several Congress MLAs defected.

Those defections severely damaged the party organisation and public confidence. Since then, our focus has been on rebuilding. We fought the defections politically and legally, even approaching the courts. Unfortunately, the legal process did not deliver the outcome we expected.

But we have learned from those experiences.

Suraj: People still remember the mass



"Goa Cannot Be Left in the Hands of Those Selling Its Future"

Just days after being reappointed as President of the Goa Pradesh Congress Committee, **Girish Chodankar** sits down with **Goemkarponn Editor Suraj Nandrekar** for an extensive discussion on the future of the Congress in Goa.

Chodankar spoke about the reasons behind the leadership change in the state Congress, the party's strategy to recover from the setbacks caused by defections, the possibility of alliances ahead of the 2027 Assembly elections, allegations surrounding ticket distribution, and his plans to strengthen the organisation at the grassroots level. He also outlined the Congress party's position on defectors, voter roll issues, and what he described as the failures of the BJP government led by Chief Minister Pramod Sawant.

defections. Can Congress regain credibility?

Girish: Absolutely. Our strength lies in our workers. Many Congress workers remained loyal despite setbacks. There are also leaders and workers who left and now wish to return.

Our immediate priority is rebuilding confidence at the grassroots. Congress must once again become a strong opposition voice that can challenge the government effectively.

Suraj: What are your priorities as the new GPCC President?

Girish: There are three major priorities.

First, strengthening the organisation. We will rebuild Congress from the village level upwards. We already have state, district, block and booth committees, but there is a gap between blocks and booths. We plan to create village committees to bridge that

gap and ensure stronger grassroots engagement.

Second, we will focus on protecting voters' rights. We have received complaints that the names of several voters have been deleted from the electoral rolls. Our teams, including legal experts, will work to identify such cases and help eligible voters restore their names.

Third, we will aggressively expose what we see as failures of the BJP government. Issues such as land conversion, environmental concerns, unemployment, and alleged corruption will remain central to our campaign.

Suraj: Recently, there has been discussion about whether Congress will take back defectors. Has the party closed its doors permanently?

Girish: The Congress position is very clear. We opposed defections and conveyed strong sentiments from Goa to the central leadership.

Rahul Gandhi publicly stated that defectors would not be encouraged. In 2022, despite pressure from some quarters, we refused to give tickets to many defectors.

The people of Goa suffered because elected representatives betrayed the mandate. We cannot ignore those sentiments.

Suraj: But what about leaders like Michael Lobo, Digambar Kamat, Vishwajit Rane and others who have significant electoral influence?

Girish: Winning elections cannot be the only criterion. Politics is also about credibility.

Our experience has taught us that accommodating defectors often damages the party in the long run. The Congress must build leadership from within and reward loyalty.

Suraj: You were particularly critical of Vishwajit Rane.

Girish: Yes. In my view, Vishwajit Rane and

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Anjunem Water Levels Plunge Below 15%; Concerns Mount Over Drinking Water Quality

Once Touted as a Landmark Eco Tourism Project, the Mangrove Boardwalk Now Stands Dismantled Amid Questions of Accountability

Satyavatinandan Satrekar

KEY POINTS

- ▶ Anjunem Dam storage has fallen below 15 per cent capacity.
- ▶ Residents report foul-smelling, greenish and bad-tasting water.
- ▶ Low reservoir levels can trigger algal blooms, oxygen depletion and contamination from sediments.
- ▶ Dead storage water is generally unsuitable for drinking without intensive treatment.
- ▶ Harmful bacteria and toxin-producing cyanobacteria may be present.
- ▶ Public disclosure of water quality data is urgently needed.
- ▶ Experts recommend detailed water quality monitoring and independent testing.
- ▶ The crisis highlights the need for long-term water security planning and additional storage infrastructure.

The water level in the Anjunem Dam has fallen to less than 15 per cent of its storage capacity, raising serious concerns over both the quantity and quality of water being supplied to thousands of consumers in Sattari, Bicholim and adjoining areas.

For more than a month, residents have complained that the water supplied for domestic and drinking purposes has a foul odour, greenish colour and unpleasant taste. Despite repeated complaints and public representations, the situation appears to have worsened, prompting an important question: Is the water currently being supplied safe for human consumption?

When reservoir levels decline drastically, a series of adverse physical, chemical and biological processes begin to affect water quality. As the volume of water decreases, the concentration of organic matter, nutrients, suspended solids and other contaminants increases.

Stagnant water, elevated temperatures and excess nutrients create ideal conditions for the rapid growth of algae and cyanobacteria (blue-green algae), often imparting a green colour and foul odour to the water. ▶ **CONTD TO PAGE 03**

Sunday Thought

How Many Likes Is a Life Worth?

Suraj Nandrekar

The tragic death of a 23 year old student in Goa, days after a video of him allegedly littering went viral on social media and led to police action, should force society to confront an uncomfortable truth: in the age of social media, punishment often begins long before justice, and public shaming can be far more devastating than the original offence.

Littering is wrong. Civic responsibility matters. Citizens have every right to demand cleaner streets and better public behaviour. But there is a growing difference between promoting accountability and orchestrating humiliation. Somewhere along the way, activism has increasingly become performance. The goal is no longer just to correct a wrong but to expose, shame and publicly condemn.

The consequences can be devastating.

A young man who made a mistake suddenly found himself at the centre of a digital storm. His image, actions and identity became public property. Thousands of strangers judged him, mocked him and formed opinions without knowing anything about his circumstances, character or state of mind. What may have started as an attempt to highlight civic irresponsibility quickly evolved into a trial conducted in the court of public opinion. Unlike traditional justice systems, social media offers no safeguards. There is no proportionality, no due process and no opportunity for redemption. Once a video goes viral, the punishment becomes unlimited. A person is no longer seen as someone who committed a mistake. They become the mistake itself.

This culture of instant outrage is becoming increasingly dangerous. Every smartphone owner now has the power to record, upload and expose. While this has helped uncover corruption, crime and abuse of power, it has also created a generation that often mistakes virality for virtue. The number of views, likes and shares has become a measure of success, even when the human cost is ignored.



The Goa tragedy is not merely about one viral video. It is about a society that has become comfortable watching people being publicly shamed. It is about individuals who rush to share content without considering the consequences. It is about influencers and activists who sometimes forget that the people they expose are human beings, not characters in an online drama.

The incident also raises questions about responsibility. Those who record and share content may not intend harm. Authorities enforcing the law may simply be doing their duty. Yet when public exposure becomes excessive, when an individual's identity becomes the focus rather than the issue itself, the line between accountability and harassment begins to blur.

Social media users must recognise that every post has real-world consequences. A few seconds of footage can alter a person's life forever. The internet never forgets, and public humiliation can leave scars that remain long after public attention moves elsewhere.

This is not an argument against civic activism. Goa needs active citizens who care about public cleanliness, environmental protection and responsible behaviour. But activism without empathy becomes cruelty. Accountability without compassion becomes persecution.

The young student's death should serve as a warning. As a society, we must ask ourselves whether we are creating a culture where people are encouraged to learn from mistakes or one where they are destroyed by them. There is a profound difference between correcting behaviour and crushing a human being.

A cleaner society cannot be built by abandoning humanity. If our pursuit of accountability ends with lives being lost, then something has gone terribly wrong.

The lesson from this tragedy is simple but urgent: before pressing the record button, before uploading a video, before sharing a post, remember that there is a person on the other side of the screen. A few likes are never worth a life.

Masterstroke

Is India Headed Towards One-Party Rule?

Irfan Iqbal Gheta

From Maharashtra to West Bengal, India has witnessed several watershed political developments since 2014 that have significantly altered the country's political landscape.

It was around 2011-12 that Shri Narendra Modi, then Chief Minister of Gujarat, began attracting national attention. Industrialists, bestselling authors and Bollywood personalities increasingly projected him as prime ministerial material. They openly expressed this view on various public platforms and in the national media.

Many of them were impressed by what came to be known as the Gujarat Model of Development. They believed that if Shri Modi was given the opportunity to lead India as Prime Minister, he could transform a nation struggling with corruption, policy paralysis and the perceived dominance of dynastic politics.

In 2014, the Indian electorate handed Shri Narendra Modi and the BJP a decisive mandate. After assuming office in May that year, Shri Modi moved swiftly, signalling from the outset that he had a clear vision and defined priorities.

Whether India has made rapid progress under Shri Modi's three consecutive terms as Prime Minister remains a matter of intense debate and political interpretation. However, what is beyond dispute is that he has created a new template for the practice of politics in India. It is a style of politics that has fundamentally altered the balance of power between national and regional players, with regional parties often finding themselves on the defensive.

The message appears increasingly clear: under Shri Modi's leadership, there is limited political space for parties that seek to challenge the BJP's dominance. Regional parties that attempt to punch above their weight often find themselves weakened, divided or politically marginalised.

Maharashtra provides perhaps the most striking examples. Both the Nationalist Congress Party and the Shiv Sena have experienced internal splits that have left them battling for political relevance and organisational survival. Factions aligned with the BJP continue to enjoy electoral viability, while those outside the BJP-led framework face a far more uncertain future.

In Bihar, former Chief Minister Shri Nitish Kumar's Janata Dal (United)

eventually found itself with little option but to remain aligned with the BJP, effectively accepting the role of a junior partner. In Karnataka, former Prime Minister Shri H.D. Deve Gowda's Janata Dal (Secular) similarly sensed the prevailing political mood and chose to align itself with the BJP in what many viewed as a move driven by political survival.

Meanwhile, in West Bengal, there is growing speculation about potential cracks within Mamata Banerjee's Trinamool Congress, drawing comparisons with the fragmentation witnessed within the NCP in Maharashtra. In Tamil Nadu, the political dynamics are more complex, but even there national and regional equations continue to evolve around the BJP's expanding influence.

Recent political developments across India appear to suggest a recurring pattern. Regional parties increasingly face a stark choice: align with the BJP or risk gradual political decline, regardless of their historical legacy, grassroots networks or decades of accumulated public goodwill.

What happens when the BJP cannot directly weaken a regional party or even the Congress? Critics argue that the strategy then shifts towards identifying influential mass leaders within those organisations, bringing them into the BJP fold and thereby weakening their parent parties from within. Assam and, to some extent, West Bengal are often cited as examples of this approach.

The experience of leaders who have directly challenged Shri Modi also raises important questions.

Arvind Kejriwal's Aam Aadmi Party, once seen as a formidable alternative force, has witnessed a series of setbacks. Mamata Banerjee, despite her electoral victories in West Bengal, continues to face relentless political pressure from the BJP. The broader question, therefore, is not merely about the fortunes of individual leaders or parties. It is about the future character of India's democracy itself.

Are we gradually moving towards a political system dominated by a single party at the national level? Can regional parties continue to survive and thrive in such an environment? Will democratic competition remain robust, or will political diversity steadily diminish?

These are questions that do not yet have definitive answers. Only time will reveal whether India is witnessing the natural consolidation of a dominant political force or the emergence of a political order that fundamentally reshapes the country's democratic landscape.



Goa Assembly: Long Debates, Limited Scrutiny

Suraj Nandrekar

Goa's Legislative Assembly may have met for fewer days than the national average in 2025, but when it did convene, lawmakers spent significantly longer hours in debate and discussion. A new report by PRS Legislative Research offers a detailed snapshot of the functioning of state legislatures across India and highlights both strengths and shortcomings in Goa's legislative performance.


The annual report, which analyses Assembly functioning, laws passed, ordinances promulgated and budget discussions across states, places Goa in an interesting position. While the Assembly sat for only 21 days during the year, below the national average of 24 days, legislators compensated through extended working hours and more detailed budget discussions than most states.

The findings raise an important question: Is legislative effectiveness determined by the number of sitting days alone, or by the quality and depth of

PRS Report Reveals Goa's Distinctive Legislative Record in 2025









GOA ASSEMBLY: LONG DEBATES, LIMITED SCRUTINY

PRS Report 2025 reveals Goa's legislative performance – strong on debate and budget scrutiny, but gaps remain in legislative oversight









Dr. Pramod Sawant
Chief Minister, Goa



KEY POINTS

-  Goa Assembly met for 21 days in 2025, below the national average of 24 days.
-  Average daily sitting time was 8 hours, significantly higher than the prescribed 4.5 hours.
-  The Assembly passed 28 Bills during the year.
-  Nearly 30% of Bills were passed within one day of introduction.
-  Only 7% of Bills were referred to legislative committees.
-  Five ordinances were promulgated by the Governor when the House was not in session.
-  Goa spent 15 days discussing the state budget, almost twice the national average of eight days.
-  Goa was among only three states to discuss the budgets of all departments before voting on expenditure demands.

KEY LEGISLATIVE HIGHLIGHTS IN 2025

-  Amended laws to regularise unauthorised constructions and reduce timelines for building permits and licences.
-  Enacted a law prohibiting the breeding, import and ownership of dangerous and violent animal breeds.
-  Enacted a law to regulate outdoor advertising through an Advertisement Regulatory Committee.
-  Amended the Factories Act, 1948 to permit workers to work a maximum of 10 hours a day.
-  Amended a law to prohibit dumping garbage in public places, including water bodies and sewage systems.
-  Five ordinances were promulgated by the Governor during the year.

FOCUS ON BUDGET SCRUTINY

-  Goa spent 15 days discussing the annual budget.
-  One of only three states (Haryana and Tamil Nadu) to discuss the budgets of all departments before voting on expenditure demands.

Source: PRS Legislative Research – Annual Report on State Laws, 2025

deliberations?

According to PRS Legislative Research, Goa Assembly's prescribed daily sitting duration is 4.5 hours. However, the House functioned for an average of eight hours per sitting in 2025, nearly double the mandated duration. This suggests that while sessions were relatively few, lawmakers were spending considerable time conducting business.

The contrast with many other states is striking. Across India, Assembly sittings ranged from just seven days in Nagaland to 43 days in Odisha. Goa's 21-day calendar places it below average, but its extended daily sessions indicate a legislature that is attempting to maximise limited meeting time.

Yet experts often argue that fewer sitting days can affect legislative oversight. The

Assembly's role extends beyond passing laws. It is also responsible for scrutinising government decisions, holding ministers accountable and examining public expenditure. Fewer sitting days can restrict opportunities for opposition parties and legislators to raise concerns on governance issues.

The report also sheds light on the legislative

output of the Goa Assembly. During 2025, the House passed 28 Bills. While this demonstrates a fairly active legislative agenda, the speed at which some laws were enacted raises questions about scrutiny.

Nearly 30 per cent of Bills were passed within a day of introduction. Fast-tracking legislation is not uncommon, especially when governments enjoy comfortable majorities.

However, legislative experts have consistently argued that rapid passage of Bills can limit opportunities for public consultation, stakeholder engagement and detailed debate. The committee system, considered one of the most important tools for legislative scrutiny, was used sparingly. Only seven per cent of Bills were referred to committees before passage. Committees often allow lawmakers to examine legislation clause by clause, seek expert opinions and identify potential implementation challenges. A low referral

rate suggests that many Bills moved directly through the legislative process without extensive examination.

The laws enacted during the year reveal several priorities of the state government.

Among the most significant were amendments to laws aimed at regularising unauthorised constructions and reducing approval timelines for building permits and licences. These changes are likely to have substantial implications for urban development, planning and real estate activity in Goa, a state that continues to grapple with tensions between development and environmental conservation.

The Assembly also enacted a law prohibiting the breeding, import and ownership of dangerous and violent animal breeds. The legislation seeks to address public safety concerns while establishing a regulatory framework around ownership of potentially dangerous animals.

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Lower water levels combined with the decomposition of organic matter reduce dissolved oxygen levels. This creates anaerobic conditions that generate gases such as hydrogen sulphide and methane, which are responsible for unpleasant smells. Reservoir sediments contain accumulated organic matter, nutrients, heavy metals and bacteria. As water levels approach dead storage, these sediments can become disturbed and contaminate the remaining water.

During summer, reservoirs often develop distinct layers of water. The deeper layers become oxygen deficient and may contain elevated concentrations of iron, manganese, ammonia and harmful microorganisms. Experts have also repeatedly expressed concern about the reduction of effective storage capacity due to siltation and catchment degradation around the

reservoir. Previous studies have highlighted the need for continuous monitoring of reservoir performance and environmental impacts.

In general, water from dead storage is not considered safe for drinking unless it undergoes advanced treatment and disinfection. Dead storage refers to the portion of reservoir water lying below the normal outlet level and is not intended for routine drinking water supply. Such water typically contains higher concentrations of sediments, lower dissolved oxygen levels, increased organic decomposition, nutrient accumulation that promotes algal growth, elevated iron, manganese and ammonia levels, and larger numbers of pathogenic microorganisms. Although dead storage water may be used during emergencies, it requires intensive treatment before it can be safely supplied

for human consumption.

Low-level reservoir water may contain bacterial contaminants such as Total Coliforms, Faecal Coliforms, Escherichia coli (E. coli) and Enterococcus species. It may also contain algae and cyanobacteria such as Microcystis, Anabaena and Oscillatoria. Certain cyanobacteria produce toxins that can affect liver function, the nervous system, skin and the gastrointestinal tract.

Possible health impacts include diarrhoea, vomiting, stomach cramps, skin irritation, eye irritation, fever and, in severe cases, liver damage. Children, elderly persons and individuals with weakened immune systems are particularly vulnerable.

Scientific studies have consistently shown that microbiological contamination, particularly from coliform bacteria, requires proper treatment and disinfection before water becomes potable.

Where reservoir levels are critically low, water should generally undergo raw water screening, pre-chlorination or oxidation, coagulation using alum or similar chemicals, flocculation, sedimentation, rapid sand filtration, activated carbon treatment to remove taste and odour, advanced treatment for algal toxins where required, final chlorination and continuous laboratory monitoring of bacteriological and chemical parameters.

Citizens are entitled to transparent information regarding daily raw water quality reports, algae and cyanobacteria levels, residual chlorine values, bacteriological test results and whether the water supplied conforms to BIS drinking water standards.

From a water quality perspective, both controlled pumping from selected elevations above the reservoir bed and direct withdrawal through bottom outlets pose challenges when

water levels reach dead storage. Bottom layers typically contain maximum sediment concentration, decomposed organic matter and higher levels of iron, manganese and ammonia. Opening bottom outlets may further disturb settled sediments and worsen water quality. Where dead storage itself is severely contaminated, both approaches require intensive treatment before distribution. The choice of withdrawal method should be guided by water quality profiling at different depths, reservoir stratification studies and recommendations from water quality experts.

The current situation exposes significant shortcomings in long-term water resource planning and management. While demand for drinking water has risen substantially due to population growth and urbanisation, no major supplementary storage appears to have been developed to support the nearly four-decade-old

Anjunem reservoir.

The Government should immediately publish daily water quality reports, conduct independent testing through accredited laboratories, assess reservoir sedimentation and effective storage capacity, investigate causes of excessive water losses, prepare an emergency water security plan, develop supplementary reservoirs and alternative water sources, and establish a permanent coordination mechanism between the Water Resources Department and the Department of Drinking Water.

Safe drinking water is a fundamental necessity. Citizens cannot be expected to consume foul-smelling and discoloured water while departments shift responsibility. Immediate corrective measures, scientific monitoring and complete transparency are essential to protect public health and ensure water security.

Goemkarponn desk

PANAJI: Film and Tv actor and finalist for the VelixaVerse Mrs Universe 2026 pageant, Poonam Dasgupta will wear a Kunbi outfit for the main international event to be held in Goa, in August this year. According to the organisers, several Bollywood celebs as well as international participants will be present in Goa for the pageant to be held at a South Goa resort.

More about the Kunbi fabric and Kunbi saree

The traditional craft of weaving Kunbi fabric in Goa is facing a serious decline, with only a handful of skilled artisans continuing the practice today. Recognizing the need to preserve this valuable cultural heritage, Poonam Dasgupta joined hands with the NGO Goemcho Goenkar to support and revive the centuries-old weaving tradition. The organization, which is dedicated to promoting Goa's traditional crafts and occupations, roped in artisans from Canacona, Sattari and Sanguem regions to participate in the initiative. The project receives financial backing from Poonam Dasgupta and aims to ensure that the

Film & Tv actor Poonam Dasgupta promotes Goan Kunbi fabric at the VelixaVerse Mrs Universe pageant

Goan Kunbi fabric to shine at VelixaVerse Mrs Universe

craft survives for future generations.

The Kunbi saree holds a special place in Goa's cultural history. Traditionally worn by women belonging to the Kunbi and Gawda communities, the saree reflects a way of life closely connected to agriculture and rural traditions. For generations, these communities have relied on the textile not only as everyday attire but also as a symbol of their identity and heritage.

In earlier times, Kunbi weaving was practiced across several parts of Goa, especially in villages inhabited by tribal



communities. The fabric is widely recognized for its distinctive checkered design and earthy color palette. Shades of red, yellow, black, and maroon

are commonly associated with authentic Kunbi textiles. These colors were originally derived from natural sources available in the local environment.

For example, the red hue was often obtained from iron-rich laterite soil, which is abundant in Goa.

Over time, however, traditional dyeing methods began to disappear as imported dyes became more accessible.

This shift led to a gradual decline in local knowledge and reduced opportunities for artisans engaged in the production of natural dyes. As a result, many aspects of the traditional weaving ecosystem were lost.

Today, efforts to revive Kunbi weaving focus not only on preserving the weaving techniques but also on reintroducing sustainable practices such as the use of natural dyes. Through collaborative initiatives involving artisans, cultural organizations, and supporters, there is renewed hope that this unique textile tradition will continue to thrive and remain an important part of Goa's cultural legacy.

Who is Poonam Dasgupta?

Poonam Dasgupta is an Indian actress, model and fashionista who has appeared in more than 100 projects. She is known for her roles in Bollywood and South Indian films. She has also acted in Hindi television serials and in plays.

After taking a break from the film industry, she made a comeback with the play Begum Sahiba co-starring Rahul Roy. She has acted in series of Zee Horror Show episodes between 1993 and 1999. She is also an entrepreneur and business woman.

She is best known for her work in Bollywood cinema during the 1990s and early 2000s. She appeared across multiple genres in films, including thrillers and horror titles like the Zee Horror Show.

Filmography: She made her acting debut in regional cinema before transitioning to Hindi, Malayalam, Tamil, and Kannada films. Her film credits include Fauji, Dil Ka Doctor, and several others. Aside from her film roles, she acted in TV serials, episodic anthologies like the Zee Horror Show, and theater productions (such as the play Begum Sahiba).

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Smart Meters Necessary for Communication: CEE

Chief Minister Pramod Sawant represent the politics that has harmed Goa's interests. We believe the state is facing serious challenges due to policies pursued by this government.

Congress intends to provide an alternative vision for Goa.

Suraj: There have been reports of Captain Viriato Fernandes not being consulted during your re-appointment as GPCC chief. Your say.

Girish: Nothing like that the party high command has consulted everyone required and arrived at this decision. I cannot make comment on this unless Captain speaks to me directly.

Suraj: Looking ahead to 2027, will Congress consider alliances with other opposition parties such as the Aam Aadmi Party?

Girish: No final decision has been taken. Such decisions are made collectively by the state leadership and the central leadership.

However, there is widespread public dissatisfaction with the BJP government. People want an alternative. Whether that alternative emerges through alliances or independently will be decided at the appropriate time.

Our immediate focus is organisational strengthening.

Suraj: There are allegations regarding ticket distribution during the 2022 elections and claims that money changed hands. How do you respond?

Girish: These allegations have been repeatedly made but never substantiated.

If there was any evidence, complaints could have been filed with the party leadership. The Congress leadership conducted its reviews and investigations whenever concerns were raised.

If there had been any wrongdoing, I would not have been given further responsibilities by the party. Since then, I have served in important organisational roles, including election responsibilities in other states.

The allegations are politically motivated.

Suraj: Some candidates claimed that

financial capacity was considered during ticket distribution.

Girish: Every political party examines whether a candidate can effectively contest an election. That is different from selling tickets.

A candidate's ability to run a campaign is a legitimate consideration. However, tickets are awarded based on a combination of factors, including public support, organisational work, winnability and commitment to the party.

At no point were candidates asked to pay for tickets.

Suraj: After the defections and betrayals, how can Congress assure voters that elected MLAs will remain loyal if voted to power?

Girish: That is a valid concern. We have faced the consequences of defections repeatedly.

The only answer is stronger political commitment and greater accountability. We are identifying leaders who have demonstrated loyalty and dedication to the party over many years.

Ultimately, voters will judge candidates based on their track record and credibility.

Suraj: You have taken VRS from your teaching profession to focus on politics full-time. Does that reflect your commitment to rebuilding Congress?

Girish: Yes. I have taken VRS because I believe the coming period is crucial for the party. Rebuilding Congress requires full-time attention.

Many senior leaders, district presidents, working presidents and grassroots workers are actively involved. Together, we are creating a stronger organisational structure and preparing for the future.

Suraj: Finally, are you confident that Congress can challenge the BJP in the next Assembly election?

Girish: Yes. The people of Goa are looking for an alternative. There is growing dissatisfaction over governance issues, unemployment, environmental concerns and what many perceive as the sale of Goa's resources and identity.

Congress will present a clear vision for Goa's future. We are rebuilding from the grassroots, reconnecting with people and preparing for the electoral battle ahead. The road ahead is challenging, but we are confident that Congress can emerge as a strong alternative in Goa.