



Opposition Slams 3-Day Assembly Session, Demands More Time For Goa Issues

■ Borkar, Sardesai, Venzy And Yuri Raise Section 39A, Roads, Jobs And Unplanned Development; CM Says 13 Bills To Be Tabled

Team Goemkarponn

PANAJI: Opposition MLAs have strongly objected to the three-day Goa Assembly session, demanding sufficient time to debate pressing issues concerning the state and its people.

MLA Viresh Borkar said the Speaker had earlier spoken about the need for a 30-day Assembly session, but the



government's decision has now resulted in a three-day sitting. He said the opposition questioned the limited legislative business listed for the session.

Borkar said the opposition specifically

demanding a detailed discussion on Section 39A, an issue over which he had earlier undertaken a hunger strike. He said the Speaker assured the BAC that time would be allotted for a discussion

on the matter, though the opposition sought adequate time to debate it in detail.

He said issues such as the destruction of villages and Goa's carrying capacity need to be debated inside the Assembly, adding that the opposition should be given sufficient time to raise concerns and seek corrective action.

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Goa Oppn Steps Up Alliance Efforts Ahead Of 2027 Assembly Elections

Congress reaches out to RGP and AAP as parties weigh unity, while GFP keeps Congress talks on hold



Team Goemkarponn

PANAJI: With the 2027 Goa Assembly elections approaching, opposition parties have stepped up efforts to explore a broader political understanding, but differences over the timing and terms of an alliance continue to remain.

Congress leader Viresh Borkar said the party has invited the Goa Forward Party (GFP) for alliance discussions and that talks are being held at a preliminary level. He said issues such as a Common Minimum Programme and seat-sharing would be taken up after the party completes its ongoing internal restructuring and reconstitutes its committees.

Congress is also looking beyond the GFP.

Leader of Opposition Yuri Alemao said the party has initiated talks with the Revolutionary Goans Party (RGP) and the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) as part of efforts to bring opposition forces together.

"We are the principal opposition party, and it is our duty to take the initiative," Alemao said, stressing the need for opposition unity in the larger interest of Goa.

However, the GFP has maintained a cautious position. Party president Vijai Sardesai said there is no change in the decision to suspend alliance talks with Congress.

"It is our party's decision. There is no change as of now. The GFP has suspended alliance talks with Congress."

▶ CONTD TO PAGE 06



Somali Pirates Hijack Cargo Ship Carrying Turkish Weapons, Six Indian Crew Members On Board

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NEW DELHI: A cargo ship carrying Turkish weapons and military equipment has been hijacked by pirates off the coast of Somalia, with six Indian nationals among the 10 crew members on board. The Cameroon flagged vessel, M/V LUTUF, was seized earlier this week near Puntland's Eyl district and later taken towards Somalia's Nugaal coast. The ship was transporting weapons, communications systems and satellite equipment destined for a military training facility in Mogadishu. Authorities said the crew included six Indians, one Turkish national, one Georgian and two Serbian security guards. The condition of the crew and the status of the cargo remain unclear. According to Somali officials, the vessel was intercepted just a few nautical miles from the Puntland coastline by a group of eight armed pirates believed to be linked to an earlier hijacking in April.

Yuri Alemao Raises Alarm Over Drug Trade In Goa

■ LoP Questions Drug Supply, Alleged Political-Police Links And Jail Security

Team Goemkarponn

PANAJI: MLA Yuri Alemao has raised serious concerns over the alleged sale and circulation of drugs in Goa, questioning how narcotics continue to reach the state despite enforcement measures.

Alemao alleged links between some Colvale Jail inmates, police



personnel and politicians, and questioned whether proper checking is being carried out at the jail.

He said the issue of drugs and the wider law-and-order situation will be raised in the Assembly, calling for strict action

against those involved.

Alemao also alleged that unofficial check posts continue to function in Goa and urged Chief Minister Dr Pramod Sawant to look into the alleged corruption.

On the pothole issue, Alemao said the campaign would be taken forward and that whatever is required in the interest of Goa would be done.

India Launches Historic Trial In Absentia Against Hafiz Saeed, 5 Others In 26/11 Mumbai Terror Case

■ Nearly 18 years after the attacks, Mumbai court begins legal proceedings against six Pakistan based accused who remain absconding

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NEW DELHI: In a landmark move nearly 18 years after the 26/11 Mumbai terror attacks, India has formally initiated trial in absentia proceedings against six Pakistan based accused, including Lashkar-e-Taiba founder Hafiz Saeed, Zaki-ur-Rehman Lakhvi, and Sajid Mir. The proceedings mark a significant step in bringing the alleged



masterminds of one of India's deadliest terror attacks under the country's judicial process despite their continued absence. The other accused named in the case are Abu Al-Qama, Asim alias Abu Qahafa, and Major Abdul Rehman Pasha. All six are believed to be in

Pakistan and have not appeared before Indian courts. Mumbai Police, along with investigating agencies, officially began the legal process on Monday. Special Public Prosecutor Ujjwal Nikam is expected to submit a proclamation report seeking permission from the court to proceed against the absconding accused under provisions allowing trial in absentia for fugitives evading justice.

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Kharge's Opposition Unity Call Faces a Trust Deficit in Goa

Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge has once again called for all like-minded parties to come together to defeat the Bharatiya Janata Party. On paper, the proposition sounds logical. If the BJP is to be challenged effectively, Opposition parties cannot afford to divide the anti-BJP vote. But in Goa, the bigger question is not whether an alliance is desirable. It is whether the Congress has the political discipline and internal trust required to make such an alliance work.

Before Kharge begins stitching together a national Opposition coalition, the Congress needs to look within its own house in Goa.

The party has three MLAs, Yuri Alemão, Altone D'Costa and Carlos Alvares Ferreira. Yet, at times, the statements coming from the three appear to be heading in different directions. The state Congress president Girish Chodankar has his own political messaging. Instead of presenting a united political narrative, the party often gives the impression of several Congresses operating simultaneously.

This lack of coordination has been one of the biggest weaknesses of the Goa Congress. An alliance requires trust, communication and a common strategy. If Congress leaders cannot speak with one voice within their own party, convincing smaller parties to trust them will be an uphill task.

Then comes the biggest contradiction.

Congress has revived its Fatorda bloc at a time when it is supposed to be strengthening its relationship with Goa Forward Party. Fatorda is not an ordinary constituency. It is the political backyard of GFP president Vijai Sardesai, who has repeatedly positioned himself as an important Opposition force in Goa.

If Congress is genuinely interested in an alliance with Sardesai, why create a political structure that can

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be interpreted as a direct challenge to him in his own constituency?

Politics is ultimately about signals. The revival of the Fatorda bloc sends a signal of competition, not cooperation.

Then there is the complicated Congress-AAP relationship. At the national level, AAP leaders, including Arvind Kejriwal, have often been sharply critical of the Congress and Rahul Gandhi. In Goa, meanwhile, AAP has two sitting MLAs, Captain Venzy Viegas and Cruz Silva, both of whom have been the subject of speculation about their political future and their proximity to Congress.

This creates another uncomfortable question. Is Congress looking for a genuine alliance with AAP, or is it simply waiting for AAP's political space in Goa to collapse and its MLAs to move elsewhere?

An alliance cannot be built on assumptions that the partner will eventually disappear.

And then there is the Revolutionary Goans Party.

Congress must first decide which RGP it wants to deal with. Is it the faction associated with MLA Viresh Borkar, or the faction represented by former party president Manoj Parab? The RGP has gone through considerable internal turmoil and appears to have lost much of the political momentum it once enjoyed.

Yet Congress cannot approach alliances as an exercise in collecting names. An alliance is meaningful only when every partner brings organisation, votes, credibility and a clearly defined political constituency.

The BJP benefits enormously when its opponents remain divided. But defeating the BJP cannot simply become a slogan repeated before every election. It requires painstaking seat level negotiations, clarity over leadership, a common minimum programme and, most importantly, the willingness to sacrifice seats for the larger objective.

Kharge's call is therefore politically correct but insufficient.

Congress must first repair its own internal communication. It must decide whether Goa Forward is a partner or a competitor. It must clarify its relationship with AAP. It must understand whether RGP remains a viable political force and, above all, stop sending contradictory signals to potential allies.

The 2027 Goa Assembly election will not be won merely by adding Opposition parties on paper. It will be won by building trust among them.

At present, the Congress has a bigger problem than finding allies. It has to convince existing and potential allies that it can be trusted. Until that happens, Kharge's grand Opposition unity formula may remain more of a Delhi strategy than a workable Goa reality.

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Congress Must Look Into Its Own Backyard

The Congress party's allegations against the BJP over the construction of Chanda Bhavan raise questions, but before pointing fingers at others, the Congress should also look into its own backyard.

Goa has witnessed several controversies involving the mining sector, particularly during the period from 2007 to 2012 when illegal mining allegations reached their peak. The Congress was in power during much of this period. If the party had the political will and organisational commitment, it could have strengthened its party infrastructure substantially during those years.

Instead, the Congress today finds itself struggling even to maintain its own party office in Panjim. The condition of the Congress headquarters is a visible reminder of the party's organisational decline. A political party that cannot maintain its own house should be cautious before questioning how another party builds and manages its infrastructure.

The Congress should answer a simple question. During the years when mining activity was at its peak, what did the party do to strengthen its organisation across Goa? Why was the party unable to build a strong financial and organisational base?

Allegations of corruption and financial irregularities must certainly be investigated wherever they arise, irrespective of which party is involved. But political parties cannot selectively demand accountability.

The BJP should answer for its decisions, but Congress must also answer for its own past.

Instead of turning every issue into a political slugfest, both parties should be transparent about their sources of funding, expenditure and assets. Goa deserves accountability from everyone, not convenient allegations against opponents.

- Sandesh Palkar, Bicholim

Gen Z Is No Excuse for Disrespect

The controversy surrounding a tourist's outburst at an Army checkpoint in Ladakh, where she invoked "Gen Z" while questioning security restrictions, is a reminder that freedom of expression must go hand in hand with responsibility. The incident reportedly led to a retired Army officer offering to crowdfund her salary if she was willing to spend a month at Siachen, highlighting the harsh conditions in which soldiers serve.

As a Goan, I strongly believe that tourism is about experiencing a place, not demanding that the place adjust itself to our convenience. Goa welcomes millions of tourists every year, and we understand the importance of hospitality. But we also expect visitors to respect our people, culture, laws and institutions.

The same principle applies when Indians travel to sensitive border areas. Security restrictions may sometimes inconvenience tourists, but they exist for reasons that ordinary citizens may not fully understand. Questioning authority is not wrong, but the manner in which we question it matters.

Gen Z should not become a shield for arrogance, impatience or entitlement. At the same time, one individual's behaviour should not be used to stereotype an entire generation. The tourist has reportedly apologised to the Army, which should also be seen as an opportunity to close the controversy with maturity.

Respect must work both ways. Citizens deserve dignity, while those protecting the country deserve our understanding.

- Rohan Naik, Goa

Online Gambling Raid In Colva; Three Arrested, Gadgets Worth ₹13 Lakh Seized

■ Police Seize 11 Laptops, 30 Mobile Phones And Other Items During Raid

Team Goemkarponn

COLVA: Colva Police conducted a raid on an alleged online gambling den at a house in Colva on Wednesday evening, August 20, and arrested three persons for allegedly accepting illegal online bets.

According to police, the raid was carried out between 7:30 pm and 9:30 pm at a premises in the 3rd Ward of Colva, following information about gambling activities.

The accused have been identified as



Jitendrasinh Chauhan (24), Narendrasinh Rathod (25), and Rahul Patel (33). Police said the three

were allegedly caught red-handed while accepting online bets and operating computer-based and

estimated at around ₹13 lakh.

Further investigation into the case is underway.

online games from the premises.

During the raid, police seized 11 laptops, 30 mobile phones and other items allegedly linked to online gambling. The total value of the seized material has been



CEC Gyanesh Kumar to visit Goa on Sept 2 & 3

■ Election Commission to review poll preparedness, electoral rolls and voting procedures across all 40 constituencies

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PANAJI: Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) Gyanesh Kumar will visit Goa on September 2 and 3 to review preparations for the upcoming Assembly elections.

During his two-day visit, the CEC will guide election officials on electoral rolls, voting procedures and handling queries related to the electoral process. He will also hold key meetings with poll officials covering all 40 Assembly constituencies. The Election Commission of India has scheduled a

Regional Conference on "ELC and ECINET" in Goa as part of the visit. Around 500 Booth Level Officers (BLOs) are expected to participate in the programme on September 2.

On September 3, the conference will cover all 40 Assembly constituencies and is expected to involve around 1,000 participants, including representatives from educational institutions.

The meetings are aimed at strengthening coordination among election officials and ensuring preparedness for the forthcoming electoral exercise.



Babush Monserrate Says He Will Back BJP Candidate In Santa Cruz

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PANAJI: Goa Revenue, Labour and Waste Management Minister and Panaji MLA Atanasio "Babush" Monserrate has reiterated that he will support the candidate chosen by the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) for the Santa Cruz constituency.

Speaking to the media on the possibility of candidates contesting from Santa Cruz, Monserrate said that in a democracy, every individual has the right to contest elections and that nobody can be prevented from entering the electoral fray.

However, he made it clear that his political support would remain with the BJP's official candidate.

"We are part of the BJP, so we will support whichever candidate the BJP chooses," Monserrate said, stressing that the party's decision would be respected.

His remarks come amid growing political discussions over the Santa Cruz constituency ahead of the 2027 Goa Assembly elections.

Vijai Sardesai Questions Taxi Meter Pricing, Raises Concerns Over ESG Tender

■ Goa Forward Chief Questions Taxi Meter Costs And Alleges Political Funding Angle In IFFI Projects

Team Goemkarponn

PANAJI: Goa Forward Party chief Vijai Sardesai has questioned the pricing of taxi meters in Goa, pointing to a significant difference between their online price and the amount being charged in the state.

Sardesai said a taxi meter costing around ₹1,200 online is being sold for ₹11,234 in Goa.



He also pointed out that the annual tax charge is ₹4,450.

With around 35,000–40,000 taxis operating in the state, Sardesai estimated that the total cost could amount to nearly ₹40 crore.

On the Entertainment Society of Goa (ESG), Sardesai alleged that the Governor has floated a tender for three IFFI-related projects.

He questioned the move, alleging that the government is attempting to raise funds for the upcoming elections in the name of the three IFFI projects. He further claimed that the process is already underway.

Godinho Announces Rent-A-Cab SOPs, Reviews Panchayat Survey Framework

■ Transport department completes audit of rent-a-cab sector; Panchayat department weighs specialised agencies for mapping and surveys

Team Goemkarponn

PANAJI: Goa Transport and Panchayat Minister Mauvin Godinho has outlined a series of measures aimed at streamlining transport operations and improving the process of panchayat-level mapping and surveys across the state.

On the rent-a-cab sector, Godinho said the government has



completed an audit of operations and is preparing to introduce new Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs). The proposed framework is aimed at bringing greater structure and transparency

to the sector while addressing unauthorised operations.

Godinho said the new guidelines are intended to ensure that rent-a-cab operations function within a clearly defined regulatory framework, with the government seeking to streamline the sector and improve compliance. Meanwhile, in his capacity as Panchayat Minister, Godinho said the government is examining

the process for conducting surveys and mapping of panchayat areas. He said specialised agencies may be appointed for the exercise, taking into account differences in terrain and geographical conditions across various regions of Goa. While some panchayats have reportedly attempted to conduct surveys independently, the government is currently collecting information from

the local bodies before taking a final decision. Godinho indicated that the government wants to assess the practical requirements before finalising the survey framework. He also stressed that policy decisions are not taken by an individual minister alone, but are part of a collective government process under the leadership of Chief Minister Pramod Sawant.

Pernem Police Seize Suspected Hashish Oil Worth ₹1 Lakh

■ 26-year-old arrested after 93.52 grams of suspected narcotic substance allegedly found hidden in scooter

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PERNEM: Pernem Police have arrested a 26-year-old man after allegedly catching him with 93.52 grams of a blackish semi-liquid substance suspected to be hashish oil during a narcotics raid at Chonwada, Dhargal.

According to the state complaint filed by PSI Vivek H. Halarnkar of Pernem Police Station, the raid was conducted on August 19 between 3.10 pm and 7.05 pm near a



banyan tree on the service road of NH-66, close to Kaloji Wine Stores.

The accused has been identified as Nagraj S/o

Virappan alias Hirappa Badrapur, a resident of Bhutwadi, Virnoda, Pernem.

Police said the

suspected hashish oil, weighing 93.52 grams and valued at approximately ₹1 lakh, was allegedly concealed in the dickey of his Yamaha Fascino scooter bearing registration number GA-11-J-9348.

The accused was arrested at around 9.37 pm on August 19 and is currently kept in the police station lock-up.

Further investigation is being conducted by PSI Vivek H. Halarnkar of Pernem Police Station.



Five Unknown Persons Assault Man Near Ribandar

■ 32-year-old allegedly attacked and bitten, ₹35,000 sunglasses damaged over video recording dispute

Team Goemkarponn

PANAJI: Ribandar Police have registered an offence following a complaint by 32-year-old Mohammad Sadik, who alleged that he was assaulted by five unknown persons near V2 Mall on the Kadamba Highway at Ribandar on August 19. According to the complaint, the incident took place at around 3.40 pm when the accused allegedly assaulted Sadik with slaps, fist blows and kicks over an issue related to video

recording.

Police said four of the accused allegedly caught hold of Sadik's hands while another person, wearing a light grey T-shirt and shorts, allegedly bit him on the left shoulder.

The complainant further alleged that the accused damaged his sunglasses, valued at around ₹35,000, during the incident.

Ribandar Police registered the offence at around 11.33 pm on August 19. PSI Manohar Dhulapkar is conducting further investigation.



INDIAN NATIONAL CONGRESS

GOA PRADESH CONGRESS COMMITTEE

Congress Constitutes 29-Member Political Affairs Committee for Goa

Team Goemkarponn

PANAJI: The All India Congress Committee (AICC) has approved the constitution of a 29-member Political Affairs Committee (PAC) for the Goa Pradesh Congress Committee (GPCC), with immediate effect. The decision was communicated through a press release issued by AICC General Secretary K.C. Venugopal on August 20. AICC leader Manikrao Thakare has been appointed Chairman of the newly constituted committee. The PAC includes GPCC President Girish Chodankar, Leader of Opposition Yuri Alemiao, AICC Co-in-charge Dr. Anjali Nimbalkar, and several senior Congress leaders and party functionaries from across Goa. The committee also includes former Union Minister Eduardo Faleiro, former MP Francisco Sardinha, former minister Ramakant Khalap, Congress MLA Amit Patkar, M.K. Shaikh, Carlos Alvares Ferreira, Alton D'Costa, Sunil Kawthankar, Datta Naik and Ramakant Angle, among others.

Prohibited Trimble GPS Device Detected In Passenger's Baggage At Mopa Airport

■ Jaipur resident was travelling to Delhi when device was detected during domestic security screening

Team Goemkarponn

PANAJI: Mopa Airport Police have registered an offence against a 44-year-old Jaipur resident after a prohibited Trimble GPS device was detected in his baggage during security screening at Manohar International Airport on August 18.

According to the complaint filed by CISF personnel Shantanu Pramanick, the passenger, identified as Kailash Chand Yadav, was



scheduled to travel to Delhi on Air India Express flight IX-1490, which was scheduled to depart at 3.05 pm.

At around 1.50 pm, during screening at the Domestic Security Hold Area, the ATRS-G system allegedly detected

a Trimble GPS device in Yadav's baggage.

Police said the device is prohibited in India and that Yadav could not produce any licence or permission from the competent authority for possessing it.

Yadav was summoned and served notice under Section 35(3) of the Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita (BNSS) on August 19.

Three Booked After Labourer Falls To Death At Agonda Construction Site

■ *Canacona Police allege safety lapses, evidence tampering and threats to workers following fatal third-floor fall

Team Goemkarponn

CANACONA: Canacona Police have registered an offence against three persons in connection with the death of a labourer who allegedly fell from the third floor of an under-construction building at Agonda on August 17. According to the state complaint filed by PSI Vishal Velip of Canacona Police Station, the accused



have been identified as Pramod Raikar of Curchorem and Badal Naik Gaonkar and Barsat Naik Gaonkar, both residents of Agonda. Police allege that the accused, who were contractors/building

owners, acted with common intention and failed to provide safety equipment or take necessary precautionary measures for the deceased labourer and other workers at the construction site. The deceased has been identified as Chandra Prakash Jaunpur, a native of Uttar Pradesh. Police said he died after allegedly falling from the third floor of the under-

construction building. The complaint further alleges that the accused subsequently attempted to destroy evidence and fabricate false information regarding the incident. Police have also alleged that the accused intentionally failed to provide information about the offence despite being legally bound to do so, provided false information to the investigating officer.

Calangute Panchayat Seals Four Saunta Vaddo Clubs Over Alleged Lack Of Permissions

Team Goemkarponn

CALANGUTE: The Village Panchayat of Calangute on Thursday sealed four business establishments at Saunta Vaddo, alleging that they were operating without valid documents and permissions from the Panchayat or other competent authorities.

The action was taken against Legion VIII Roman Speakeasy Bar, Karma, Cape Town Café/ Downtown, and Haveli By Club Miami.

DTE Releases Final Merit List, NEET And Pharmacy Admission Round From August 25

■ Admission Round For NEET-Based Courses And Pharmacy Scheduled From August 25 To 28

Team Goemkarponn

PORVORIM: The Directorate of Technical Education (DTE), Goa, has displayed the final merit list on its official website.

The DTE has also announced that the admission round for NEET-based courses and Pharmacy will be conducted from August



25 to 28, 2026.

The detailed admission schedule has been made available on the DTE website for students and applicants.

Students seeking admission to NEET-based courses and Pharmacy are advised to check the DTE website and follow the schedule for the respective admission rounds.



South Goa District Electricity Committee Reviews RDSS Progress

■ Committee Reviews Infrastructure Development, Smart Metering And Power Supply Improvements

Team Goemkarponn

MARGAO: The Electricity Department, Government of Goa, convened a District Electricity Committee (DEC) meeting for South Goa District, chaired by Lok Sabha MP Capt. Viriato Fernandes, in the presence of Velim MLA Cruz Silva, South Goa Collector and District Magistrate Ms Eгна Cleetus, and senior officials of the Electricity Department. The meeting reviewed the progress of the Revamped Distribution Sector Scheme (RDSS), with discussions focusing on power infrastructure development, prepaid smart metering and the financial and operational performance of the electricity distribution system. The committee also took note of

improvements in power supply availability. Officials reported that supply availability has reached 23.84 hours per day in rural areas and 23.88 hours per day in urban areas. Officials reaffirmed their commitment to completing pending RDSS works within the extended implementation timeline up to FY 2027-28. The meeting also stressed the need for stronger coordination between the Electricity Department and the local administration to ensure timely implementation of the scheme and achieve its intended objectives. The committee's review comes as the State continues to focus on strengthening electricity distribution infrastructure, improving service reliability.



Velsao Social Worker Seeks Strengthening Of Verna Police Station

Team Goemkarponn

VERNA: Velsao social worker and former Velsao Village Panchayat member Roquezinho D'Souza has urged the State Government to urgently strengthen the Verna Police Station, citing a shortage of 34 personnel and growing policing demands in the region.

D'Souza submitted a representation to Chief Minister Dr Pramod Sawant, the Director General of Police and the Inspector General of Police, stating that the Verna Police Station has a sanctioned strength of 110 personnel, against which only 76 are currently in position. He also handed over a copy of the representation to Verna Police Inspector Anand Shirodkar on Thursday morning.

D'Souza said the issue extends beyond filling existing vacancies, as the sanctioned strength was fixed years ago when the population, industrial activity, traffic and overall development of the area were considerably lower.

Rane Reviews Goa's Cancer Care Infrastructure And Screening Initiatives

■ Health Minister Holds Meeting With Doctors, Focuses On Chemotherapy, AI-Powered Screening And State Cancer Hospital

Team Goemkarponn

PANAJI: Goa Health Minister Vishwajit Rane chaired a meeting with doctors and healthcare staff to review and strengthen the state's cancer care infrastructure and ongoing initiatives for early detection and treatment.

Rane said discussions focused on enhancing chemotherapy and day-care facilities at district hospitals, expanding the Cancer Screening Abhiyan and providing free, AI-powered screening to



support early detection of cancer.

He also reviewed the continuation of regular healthcare camps aimed at taking healthcare services to people across all talukas of the state.

Detailed discussions were held on the upcoming State Cancer Hospital, including the facilities to be

provided, the roadmap for its development and measures to establish it as a state-of-the-art institution for cancer care in Goa.

Rane said the initiatives were part of the Goa Model of Healthcare, with an emphasis on accessible, technology-driven and citizen-centric healthcare.

Congress Targets BJP Over Delay In Goa ST Political Reservation

■ Chodankar says Rajiv Gandhi's legacy of social justice makes delay in implementing ST reservation unacceptable

Team Goemkarponn

PANAJI: The Goa Pradesh Congress Committee (GPCC) on Thursday sharpened its attack on the BJP government over the delay in implementing political reservation for the Scheduled Tribe (ST) community in Goa, using the birth anniversary of former Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi to highlight the issue.



Speaking at a programme organised to commemorate Rajiv Gandhi at the Congress headquarters in Panaji, GPCC President Girish Chodankar said the former

Prime Minister would have been "deeply saddened" to see the continued delay in granting the ST community its constitutional rights in Goa. Chodankar alleged

that despite the passage of several years, the BJP government had failed to implement ST political reservation and accused it of "playing with the sentiments" of the tribal community.

He recalled the steps taken by the UPA government in 2013 under then Prime Minister Dr Manmohan Singh towards providing ST reservation in areas with a sizeable tribal population.

Youth Congress Raises Concerns Over Dengue Patient Conditions At South Goa District Hospital

Team Goemkarponn

MARGAO: Youth Congress office-bearers visited the South Goa District Hospital amid a reported rise in dengue cases to take stock of the situation and assess the facilities available for patients.

After inspecting the hospital, Youth Congress leaders addressed the media at the hospital entrance and alleged that some dengue patients were being treated on stretchers and even on the floor due to a shortage of beds.

Elon Musk Says Starlink Can Bring Internet to India's Most Remote Villages

SpaceX chief highlights rural connectivity gaps as Starlink awaits regulatory approval for commercial rollout in India

Team Goemkarponn

NEW DELHI: Elon Musk has renewed his push for Starlink's entry into India, saying the satellite internet service could play a crucial role in connecting the country's least served communities, particularly those living in rural and remote regions.

Responding to a post on X about India's digital connectivity gap, Musk said Starlink would help provide internet access where traditional mobile infrastructure remains limited. His remarks come as India continues working on the regulatory framework for satellite communication services.

The discussion was sparked by data showing that 11,256 villages in India still lacked 4G coverage as of May 2026. Although the country had 1.093 billion internet subscriptions by March 2026, only 440.87 million were in rural areas.

Rural internet subscription density stood at 48.31 per 100 people, compared with 126.80 in



urban India, highlighting the significant digital divide.

Starlink, operated by SpaceX, delivers high speed internet through a constellation of low Earth orbit satellites. The technology is designed to provide connectivity in areas where laying fibre or building mobile towers is difficult, including mountainous regions, islands, border areas and locations affected by natural disasters.

The company is currently awaiting

regulatory approvals to begin commercial operations in India. It has submitted a fresh application after an earlier proposal for its Gen 2 satellite network was rejected over technical and spectrum related compliance issues. The updated application is being reviewed as the government finalises policies governing satellite spectrum allocation.

Starlink executives have confirmed that discussions with Indian

authorities are ongoing, signalling continued interest in launching services in one of the world's largest internet markets.

At the same time, the global satellite internet race is intensifying. Chinese company SpaceSail has secured nearly \$1 billion in funding to expand its low Earth orbit satellite constellation, positioning itself as a major competitor to Starlink in the rapidly growing space based broadband sector.

No New SIM Cards After 9 Connections: Centre Orders Telecom Companies to Enforce Limit

■ DoT directs operators to block fresh mobile connections from August 24 using its Digital Intelligence Platform

Team Goemkarponn

NEW DELHI: The Department of Telecommunications (DoT) has instructed all telecom service providers to stop issuing new SIM cards to individuals who already have nine mobile connections registered in their name. The new rule will come into effect from August 24, 2026, as part of the government's efforts to strengthen subscriber verification and curb misuse of mobile connections.

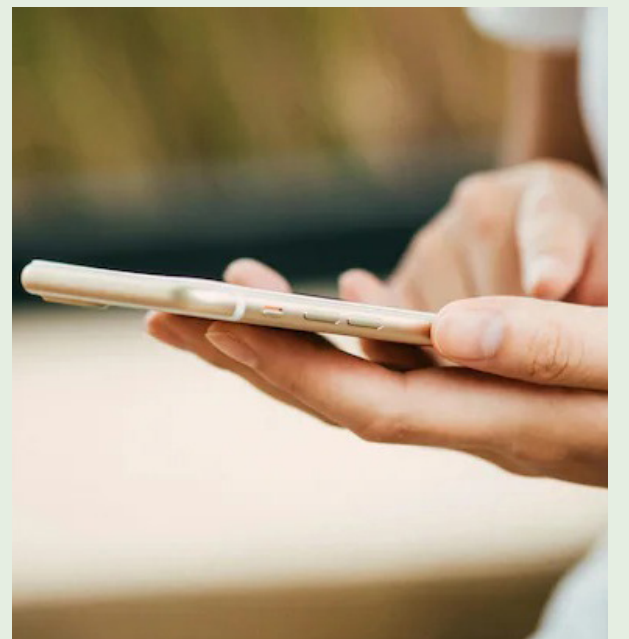
Under the directive, telecom operators must introduce technical and organisational systems to identify customers attempting to obtain a tenth SIM. If a subscriber has already reached the permitted limit, the operator must refuse the new connection and inform the customer that the maximum number of mobile connections has already been exhausted. The verification process will be carried out through the Digital Intelligence Platform (DIP), a central database maintained by the DoT using subscriber records

submitted by telecom companies. The platform already contains details of users who have exceeded or reached the prescribed limit.

To make identification more accurate, the DoT will begin providing representative photographs of subscribers who have reached the nine SIM threshold on the Digital Intelligence Platform from August 23. This will help telecom companies verify the identity of applicants before activating a new connection.

The department has asked operators to fully integrate their systems with the Digital Intelligence Platform by November 30, 2026. Until then, any mobile connection activated beyond the prescribed limit will be suspended immediately if detected during post activation verification, pending resolution of the issue.

The latest measure is aimed at preventing fraudulent SIM issuance, strengthening telecom security and ensuring that mobile connections are issued only within the limits permitted under government regulations.



Goa Oppn Steps Up Alliance Efforts Ahead Of 2027 Assembly Elections

We will announce any development," Sardesai said.

Sardesai also cited public concerns over the possibility of Congress repeating its "hat-trick" of defections, indicating that questions over political stability and credibility could influence the alliance debate.

GPCC president Girish Chodankar said Congress respects the GFP's decision and remains ready to resume talks whenever the party is prepared.

"As GFP has halted the alliance talks, we have to respect their decision. We are waiting for GFP to restart the talks. We are ready," Chodankar said.

The developments point to a wider opposition realignment taking shape in Goa, with

Congress seeking to build a common front while individual parties weigh their own political interests, organisational priorities and electoral strategies. The key challenges ahead are expected to include seat-sharing, a Common Minimum Programme and building trust among alliance partners.

Opposition Slams 3-Day Assembly Session, Demands More Time For Goa Issues

Fatorda MLA Vijai Sardesai said he raised three key issues — the poor condition of roads, unemployment and unplanned development — during discussions with the Chief Minister and Speaker.

Sardesai said potholes remain a common concern across Goa and alleged that the state's

educated youth are struggling to find employment. He also criticised alleged violations of town planning regulations, saying unplanned development is forcing people to protest. AAP Benaulim MLA Venzy Viegas said the opposition sought dedicated time to discuss several critical matters, including Section 39A, power cuts, the Mahadayi water dispute, PWD water supply issues, E20 petrol and land-related concerns. Viegas said he had submitted around 5,500 objection letters relating to land-related decisions and questioned whether a three-day session would provide enough time to raise such public concerns.

Leader of Opposition Yuri Alemao termed the BAC meeting a "mere ritual and formality" and accused the government of denying the opposition adequate legislative time. Alemao demanded discussions on Section 39A, land preservation, carrying capacity, infrastructure and other issues.

...CONTD FROM PAGE 01

PM Modi: India and Japan's Strategic Partnership Is Key to Indo-Pacific Stability

■ Defence cooperation, co production and Make in India take centre stage during talks with Japanese Defence Minister

Team Goemkarponn

NEW DELHI: Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Thursday met Japanese Defence Minister Shinjiro Koizumi in New Delhi and reaffirmed India's commitment to deepening its Special Strategic and Global Partnership with Japan. The discussions focused on expanding defence and security cooperation, with both



sides highlighting the partnership's growing importance in ensuring peace, stability and

prosperity across the Indo-Pacific region. During the meeting, the Prime Minister recalled his

detailed discussions with Japanese Prime Minister Sanae Takaichi during the 16th India-Japan Annual Summit held in July 2026. He welcomed the steady progress made in bilateral defence collaboration and emphasized the need to further strengthen strategic ties between the two nations. A major focus of the talks was defence manufacturing and industrial cooperation.



"Government Deceived Us": Jharkhand Students Slam State After High Court Stays JPSC Exam Cancellation

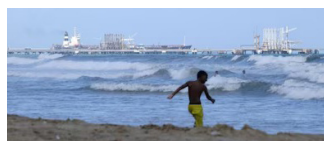
■ Protest leaders accuse the government of failing to defend its decision as the court seeks a reply by September 15

Team Goemkarponn

NEW DELHI: Fresh controversy has erupted in Jharkhand after the High Court stayed the state government's decision to cancel appointments made through the 11th and 13th Jharkhand Public Service Commission (JPSC) examinations. Student leaders have accused the Hemant Soren government of betraying thousands of job aspirants and weakening its own case in court.

The JPSC JSSC Reforms Manch alleged that the government did not effectively defend the cancellation of the recruitment exams during Thursday's hearing. According to the organisation, the absence of senior legal

representation and the lack of arguments supporting the state's decision raised serious questions about the government's commitment to addressing recruitment irregularities. The student movement had gained statewide attention after aspirants staged a 26 day protest at Ranchi's Jaipal Singh Munda Stadium. The agitation was suspended for two months after the government announced the cancellation of 22 recruitment examinations, a move that protesters believed signaled action against alleged corruption and procedural lapses. Following the High Court's interim order, protest leaders claimed that their trust had been misplaced.



India Boosts Venezuela Oil Imports as Hormuz Tensions Push Crude Diversification Strategy

Team Goemkarponn

NEW DELHI: India is expanding its crude sourcing strategy as rising tensions around the Strait of Hormuz threaten oil supplies from West Asia. To reduce the risk of supply disruptions, Indian refiners are increasing imports from distant producers, particularly Venezuela, Brazil and African nations, while continuing to rely heavily on Russian crude. The shift is already reflected in August import data. Venezuela has emerged as India's fourth largest crude supplier, with imports reaching about 444,000 barrels per day. Russia remains the country's largest source at nearly 2 million barrels per day, while supplies from the United States and Iraq stand at approximately 153,000 and 118,000 barrels per day respectively.

The renewed interest in Venezuelan oil follows the resumption of purchases earlier this year. Between April and July, crude from Latin America accounted for 12.7 percent of India's total imports, a sharp rise from 3.5 percent during the same period last year.

Punjab Bandh Disrupts Traffic Across State as Highways Blocked, Security Tightened at Chandigarh-Mohali Border

■ Qaumi Insaaf Morcha's shutdown over the release of Sikh prisoners leads to road blockades, transport disruption and heightened police deployment

Team Goemkarponn

NEW DELHI: A statewide bandh called by the Qaumi Insaaf Morcha brought traffic disruptions across Punjab on Friday, with several major highways blocked and security intensified at the Chandigarh-Mohali border. The shutdown, observed from 7 am to 2 pm, was organised to press for the release of Sikh prisoners who have completed their



sentences but remain in jail. Supporters of the bandh blocked roads at multiple locations, including the Zirakpur-Patiala highway near Jangpura village and the Bathinda-Barnala highway

at Rampur Mau Chowk. In Mohali, protesters gathered outside Gurdwara Sohana Sahib, where traffic movement was affected as police closely monitored the situation. Visuals from Mohali's Phase 7 showed demonstrators stopping vehicles and restricting traffic flow at busy intersections.

Ladakh to Withdraw Cases Against 25 Protesters as Statehood Talks Move Forward

■ Administration says minor cases linked to last year's Leh violence will be closed, while review of remaining investigations continues

Team Goemkarponn

NEW DELHI: The Ladakh administration has announced the withdrawal of cases against 25 people booked in connection with the violent statehood protests in Leh last September, marking a significant confidence-building step as dialogue over the Union Territory's future governance continues.



Chief Secretary Ashish Kundra said that 87 people were booked after the September 24 violence. Following the

investigation, charge sheets have been filed against nine individuals where evidence established their alleged

involvement. The remaining 25, who were booked on minor charges and found to have played little or no active role in the violence, will have their cases closed through reports submitted before the court.

Kundra added that the Director General of Police has been directed to review the cases of all others still under investigation. The administration will

examine whether additional individuals can be excluded if their involvement in the clashes is not supported by evidence.

The decision comes a day after representatives of the Leh Apex Body (LAB) and the Kargil Democratic Alliance (KDA) held discussions with officials from the Ministry of Home Affairs in Leh.

"Boycott That Brazil Match": Bhaichung Bhutia Questions India's ₹60 Crore Exhibition Game

■ Former India captain says money spent on one 90 minute spectacle should instead strengthen grassroots football and produce future champions

Team Goemkarponn

NEW DELHI: Former India captain Bhaichung Bhutia has issued a strong call to football fans ahead of India's much anticipated friendly against Brazil in Kolkata, urging them to boycott the match and questioning the decision to spend a huge amount on a single exhibition game.

India are scheduled to face five time FIFA



World Cup winners Brazil at Salt Lake Stadium on October 3. Reports have estimated the overall cost of staging the high profile encounter at around ₹60 to ₹70 crore. The decision

to prioritise the Brazil fixture has also drawn attention after the All India Football Federation opted to withdraw India from the FIFA ASEAN Cup. Bhutia argued that the

money could have a far greater impact if invested in developing Indian football infrastructure and supporting athletes over several years. He suggested that funds

earmarked for the match could instead be used to create futsal facilities across Bengal or support athletes preparing for major international competitions. The former India captain acknowledged that a match against Brazil would generate enormous excitement among fans, attract widespread media attention and create a major sporting spectacle.

India-Bangladesh Cricket Series Faces Fresh Uncertainty as BCCI, BCB Rework Dates

■ Six match white ball tour could be shifted again as boards search for a new window before September 3 opener

Team Goemkarponn

NEW DELHI: India's upcoming white ball tour of Bangladesh is once again facing uncertainty, with the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) and Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) discussing possible changes to the schedule. The six match series is currently planned to begin on September 3, but its dates may be shifted as both boards look for a suitable window. India are scheduled to



play three ODIs and three T20Is during the tour. The series had originally been planned for August 2025 before being postponed to September 2026. However, with the proposed opening match now less than two weeks

away, the BCCI has yet to formally confirm the itinerary.

BCB president Tamim Iqbal confirmed that

discussions between the two boards are continuing and indicated that changes to the dates remain possible. The uncertainty has also coincided with the scheduling of Bangladesh's new age group competition, the

Game Development Trophy. The tournament is currently scheduled at the Shere Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur from August 28 to September 9, overlapping with India's proposed visit. However, Bangladesh has indicated that the domestic tournament could be moved if the India series is finalised. The competition could be shifted to the Bashundhara ground, allowing the national team's fixtures to proceed as planned.



Satwik-Chirag and Treesa-Gayatri Storm Into World Championship Quarterfinals, Keep India's Medal Dream Alive

■ Sindhu falls in a thrilling three game battle, while Ayush Shetty's remarkable singles campaign comes to an end

Team Goemkarponn

NEW DELHI: India's hopes of winning a medal at the BWF World Championships now rest on its doubles stars after Satwiksairaj Rankireddy and Chirag Shetty and Treesa Jolly and Gayatri Gopichand booked places in the quarterfinals, while PV Sindhu and Ayush Shetty exited the singles competition. Seventh seeds Satwik and Chirag produced a spirited comeback to defeat Malaysia's Junaidi Arif and Yap Roy King 21-23, 21-19, 21-17 in a gripping pre quarterfinal clash. After receiving a first round bye and a second round

walkover, the Indian pair made a winning tournament debut and moved within one victory of securing a third World Championships medal, having previously won bronze in 2022 and 2025. In women's doubles, Treesa and Gayatri delivered one of the biggest upsets of the tournament by beating Japan's seventh seeded duo Rin Iwanaga and Kie Nakanishi 21-16, 21-12. Their victory makes them the first Indian women's doubles pair to reach the World Championships quarterfinals since 2015 and marks another milestone in their impressive comeback journey.

India's Rock-Solid Defense Holds England to 0-0 Draw, Secures Women's Hockey World Cup Second-Round Spot

■ Goalkeepers Savita and Bichhu shine as India survive late English pressure to advance from Pool D

Team Goemkarponn

NEW DELHI: India booked their place in the second round of the FIH Women's Hockey World Cup after producing a determined defensive display to hold England to a goalless draw in their final Pool D match on Thursday. The result was enough for India to progress after finishing second in the group with one win and two



draws. China topped Pool D following a 5-1 victory over South Africa earlier in the day. India and China

will carry one point each into the next stage. India struggled to find their rhythm in possession, with

passing, ball control and penalty corner execution proving major concerns as the match progressed. They earned six penalty corners but failed to convert any. However, their defensive organisation remained impressive, particularly when England created opportunities from set pieces. India made an aggressive start and earned three penalty corners during the opening quarter. Navneet

Kaur and Deepika were unable to find the target with their efforts. England responded by increasing the pressure and earned their first penalty corner, but goalkeeper Sunelita made a crucial save to deny Sophie Hamilton. India threatened again in the second quarter when Navneet created an opportunity for captain Salima Tete, who found Ishika inside the circle, but the chance went

begging. Lalremsiami later earned another penalty corner, only for England goalkeeper Miriam Pritchard to make an important save. England dominated large periods after the interval and earned 11 penalty corners overall. Savita Punia produced several vital saves, while Sakshi, Salima and the rest of the defensive unit repeatedly blocked England's attacks.