



Anti-Conversion Bill Draws Broad Opposition in Goa

■ Congress, GFP, civil society and church bodies question the need for the proposed legislation and seek greater scrutiny before Assembly debate

Team Goemkarponn

PANAJI: The Goa Government's decision to introduce the Goa Prohibition of Unlawful Conversion of Religion Bill, 2026 has triggered a broad political and civil society response, with the Congress, Goa Forward Party (GFP), Citizens for Democracy-Goa and church organisations questioning the necessity of a separate anti-conversion law and cautioning against



provisions they fear could be open to misuse. The legislation, cleared by the State Cabinet for introduction in the forthcoming Assembly session, has emerged as a fresh point of political contestation in the state, with its opponents arguing

that Goa has not demonstrated a significant problem of forced or fraudulent religious conversions warranting such

a law.

Congress president Amit Patkar accused the government of using the proposed legislation to shift attention away from issues confronting the state. He called on Chief Minister Pramod Sawant to make public the data

on religious conversions before seeking legislative approval for the bill. "When the government fails, diversion tactics are used. To divert from the main issues, they are bringing the anti-conversion bill. I condemn it. The CM should first show the figures of conversions," Patkar said. Congress Aldona MLA Adv. Carlos Alvares Ferreira said the party would oppose the legislation when it reaches the Assembly.

Opposition Questions 500-Metre Drug-Free Zone Directive, Demands Statewide Action

■ Congress Leaders Say Schools Cannot Be Expected To Police Drug Networks, Call For Stronger Enforcement Across Goa

Team Goemkarponn

PANAJI: The Education Department's directive to schools across Goa to maintain a 500-metre drug-free zone around their campuses has triggered strong opposition, with Congress leaders questioning whether the measure can effectively address the State's growing drug menace.

The Directorate of Education has directed schools to ensure that the area within a 500-metre radius of their



campuses remains free from drugs, following recommendations from the Narcotics Control Bureau. School heads have been asked to take necessary steps for immediate compliance.

However, opposition leaders have questioned the practicality of placing responsibility

on educational institutions to prevent drug activity in areas surrounding schools, arguing that enforcement against

drug trafficking and peddling must remain the responsibility of the competent law-enforcement agencies.

Goa Pradesh Congress Committee President Girish Chodankar said the Government should focus on making the entire State drug-free instead of

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Schools To Report Drug Activity, Not Take Action: Education Director

Team Goemkarponn



PANAJI: Education Director Shailesh Zingde has clarified

that schools will not be responsible for taking enforcement action against drug-related activities under the

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'Murgaocho Raja' Demolition Put Off Amid High Drama At Sada

Authorities Back Down As Devotees Threaten Self-Immolation; MMC Chief Officer Absent Despite HC Direction



Team Goemkarponn

VASCO: The proposed demolition of the iconic 'Murgaocho Raja' Sarvajanik Ganesh pandal shed at Headland-Sada was postponed on Friday following a tense standoff between authorities and devotees, with some locals threatening self-immolation if the demolition was carried out. A demolition team, accompanied by heavy police security, reached the site to execute the High Court's direction, but faced stiff opposition from devotees and local residents who gathered in large numbers and appealed for the structure to be allowed to remain until this year's Ganesh

Chaturthi celebrations.

The operation was to be overseen by Mormugao Municipal Council (MMC) Chief Officer Siddhivinayak Naik, who had been directed by the High Court to remain present at the site and identify the structure for demolition. However, Naik was reportedly hospitalised after experiencing chest pain and was not present during the operation. His absence became a major point of contention, with residents demanding that either the Chief Officer or Mormugao Port Authority (MPA) Chairman Dr N Vinod Kumar, representing the complainant authority, visit the site and hear their concerns.

Nepal Flood Death Toll Hits 469, 178 Indians Among Missing as China Warns of Fresh Flood Threat

■ Barrier lake near Nepal China border raises fears of another devastating flood as rescue operations continue

Team Goemkarponn

KATHMANDU: The death toll from the devastating flash floods that swept through parts of Nepal has risen to at least 469, while around 1,500 people remain missing. Chinese authorities have also reported additional deaths on their side of



the border, pushing the combined toll across the affected region to more than 470. Indians account for the largest group of missing foreign nationals.

Data from Nepal's tourism authorities indicates that 178 Indians are currently unaccounted for, while 11 Indian nationals have been rescued.

Several foreign tourists are among those missing, including trekkers in Nepal and Hindu pilgrims travelling towards Mount

Kailash in Tibet. The disaster has caused extensive destruction along the Nepal China border. Satellite imagery indicates that the Rasuwagadhi border crossing between Tibet and Nepal has been completely destroyed, with floodwaters and debris sweeping across the valley.

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Govt canteens cannot serve poor hygiene along with food

The closure of three canteens operating in government offices in Goa after inspections by the Food and Drug Administration should not be treated as routine enforcement. Instead, it should force the government to ask a rather uncomfortable question: how did establishments operating within government premises reach a point where basic kitchen hygiene and structural deficiencies became serious enough to warrant closure?

The FDA inspection found serious structural deficiencies and poor kitchen hygiene at three government office canteens. The units have been directed to stop operations until compliance is verified. The Health Minister has also indicated that a special drive will cover canteens operating in government and private institutions across the state.

This is welcome action, but the larger issue goes beyond these three canteens.

Government offices are places where thousands of employees, visitors and members of the public spend their working day. Canteens inside these premises are not luxury facilities. For many employees, they are the most convenient and affordable source of lunch, breakfast or refreshments during working hours. When such facilities fail to maintain basic standards of cleanliness, the consequences can directly affect public health.

There is also a basic principle involved here. The government cannot expect private restaurants, hotels, roadside eateries and small food vendors to comply with food safety regulations while facilities operating under its own roof escape scrutiny. In fact, government establishments should set a higher standard. The FDA action therefore deserves appreciation. But enforcement should not stop with shutting down three kitchens. The government must now conduct a comprehensive audit of every canteen functioning in government buildings across Goa.

The question is also about accountability. Who is responsible for ensuring that these canteens remain hygienic? Is it the contractor who operates the facility, the department that allotted the premises, or the officer responsible for supervising the contract? There must be clarity.

Often, government canteens

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Often, government canteens are handed over to contractors through tenders and then effectively forgotten until a complaint or inspection brings the problem to light.”

are handed over to contractors through tenders and then effectively forgotten until a complaint or inspection brings the problem to light. This cannot be the system. Contracts must contain clear hygiene and food safety conditions, and compliance must be checked periodically rather than only after something goes wrong.

There must also be proper infrastructure. A contractor cannot maintain a hygienic kitchen if the building itself has structural defects, inadequate drainage, poor ventilation, water supply problems or insufficient waste disposal

arrangements. Hygiene is not merely about sweeping floors and washing utensils. It begins with the physical design and maintenance of the kitchen.

Regular inspections should therefore become mandatory. Inspection reports should be documented, deficiencies should be clearly recorded and contractors should be given a defined period for rectification. Serious violations should result in immediate suspension. Repeat offenders should not simply be allowed to reopen after paying a penalty.

The government should also consider displaying the latest food safety inspection status prominently outside every government canteen. Employees and visitors have a right to know whether the facility serving them food has passed the required standards.

There is another important aspect. Food safety should not become an occasional headline generated by surprise inspections. It has to become part of everyday administrative culture. Kitchens must maintain proper storage, cleanliness, pest control, waste management and safe food handling practices every single day.

The current action also comes at a time when food hygiene is receiving greater public attention. Recent enforcement drives in other parts of the country have exposed shocking conditions in commercial kitchens. Goa must ensure that it does not wait for food poisoning outbreaks or viral photographs of filthy kitchens before acting.

Ultimately, the issue is simple. Government employees and ordinary citizens who use government canteens are entitled to safe food. They should not have to choose between an affordable meal and their health.

The closure of three canteens should therefore be the beginning, not the end, of the exercise. The government must inspect every institutional canteen, publish the findings, enforce compliance and hold contractors and supervising authorities accountable.

If the government wants private establishments to maintain high standards, it must first demonstrate that the same standards apply within its own walls. A government canteen may serve subsidised food, but there can be no subsidy on hygiene.

OPED

SHASHIKALA KAKODKAR WAS A VERY ABLE ADMINISTRATOR

Iz and I had the privilege of attending the book launch of 'Tai- Smruti Sugandh' -a tribute to our late Shashikala Kakodkar, Goa's only lady Chief Minister, penned by her younger sister Jyoti Bandekar. The function at the Panjim Gymkhana was spectacular and very well organised. Son Sameer Kakodkar spoke from the heart, with facts that are far-fetched in today's Goa; it was simply the truth and left a lot to introspect and soul-search.

After the sudden demise of Goa's first Chief Minister, our late Dayanand Bandodkar in 1973, his daughter Shashikala Kakodkar succeeded him. As a student at the time, I was privileged to be close friends with her very down-to-earth sons Yatin, Sameer and Abhay. As childhood friends, we played together at their bungalow in Porvorim, Carrom being the favourite.

Given my very close association with the then Chief Minister, she was so very kind when I visited her residence that she would personally serve lunch to her sons and me. Even though as the Chief Minister at the time and having a close friendship with Tai, when the students of Goa revolted to demand 50% concession for students travelling in buses, I firmly stood by my fellow students during that agitation, a decision of utmost priority for the welfare of students. Even on other issues I raised against her government, Shashikala Kakodkar was fair and never ever vindictive. The student community also had a friend by the way of then Development Commissioner Dr. J.C.

Almeida, who went on to be the Chief Secretary of Goa, was painstakingly was always concerned about the welfare of the student community. Granting the students of Goa 50% bus concession was one of the many landmark decisions taken by Shashikala Kakodkar as Chief Minister.

The very glamorous Shashikala Kakodkar always remained a friend and was privileged to have her raise the toast at my 50th birthday celebration at Ribandar on 24th May 2010. Very warm memories of our dear Tai will never fade away. She was an Iron Lady with a Golden heart.

- Aires Rodrigues, Ribandar & UK

Yuri Alemao finally reaches Karapur

It is good to see Leader of Opposition Yuri Alemao and his Congress colleagues finally reaching Karapur and standing with villagers protesting against the proposed House of Abhinandan Lodha project. But the question that many people in Goa will ask is simple: where were they all these months?

The residents of Karapur and Sarvan have been protesting for months, raising concerns about the project's impact on water resources, groundwater recharge, sewage, traffic, hill cutting and the carrying capacity of the area. Their agitation is not something that started yesterday. The villagers have repeatedly demanded scrutiny of the project and its permissions.

Against this background, the sudden political interest in the issue, particularly with the 2027 Assembly elections approaching, naturally invites questions. Congress has now promised that if it forms the government, it will scrap the project. Such a promise may sound reassuring to the protesters, but people need more than election promises.

If Congress genuinely believes the project is harmful to Goa, its legislators should raise the matter forcefully in the Assembly, demand that all permissions and environmental clearances be examined, and insist that the government make the findings public.

The people of Karapur do not need politicians to merely visit their protest site, take photographs and make declarations. They need sustained political support and concrete action.

Yuri Alemao and company may have finally woken up. But the villagers have been awake for months. The real test is whether this awakening lasts beyond the 2027 election campaign.

- Francis D'Souza, Mapusa



Hutatma Smruti Smarak

Honouring the Spirit of Goa's Liberation

The inauguration of the Hutatma Smruti Smarak at Patradevi marks an important moment in Goa's effort to preserve and honour the history of its liberation movement. Inaugurated on August 26, 2026, by Union Defence Minister Shri Rajnath Singh in the presence of Chief Minister Dr Pramod P. Sawant and other dignitaries, the memorial stands as a lasting tribute to the martyrs who sacrificed their lives for Goa's freedom.

Patradevi holds a special place in the history of the Goa Liberation Movement. On August 15, 1955, thousands of volunteers from across India participated in a peaceful satyagraha against Portuguese rule. The first group of satyagrahis entered Goa through Patradevi carrying the Indian flag. They were met with Portuguese machine gun fire, resulting in the deaths of several volunteers.

The sacrifice at Patradevi was part of a larger struggle in which people from different parts of India came together with a common objective: to end Portuguese rule in Goa. Around 74 satyagrahis lost their lives during the movement. Their courage became an important chapter in Goa's liberation story and in India's larger struggle against colonial rule.

The new memorial gives this



history a permanent physical presence. More than a structure, it provides a dedicated space where citizens, students and future generations can learn about the men and women who stood against repression and made the ultimate sacrifice.

The inauguration also underlines the Government of Goa's commitment to preserving the state's historical legacy. The participation of Union Defence Minister Rajnath Singh, Chief Minister Dr Pramod Sawant, Union Minister of State for Power Shri Shripad Y. Naik, Rajya Sabha MP Shri Sadanand Shet Tanavade, Pernem MLA Shri Pravin Arlekar, Mandrem MLA Shri Jit Arolkar and Chief Secretary Dr V. Candelou added significance to the

occasion.

For Goa, remembering the liberation movement is not merely about looking back. It is about ensuring that the values of courage, unity and sacrifice remain relevant for future generations. The Hutatma Smruti Smarak at Patradevi now provides a permanent place for that remembrance.

As visitors walk through the memorial, the story of those who gave their lives for Goa's freedom can continue to inspire a deeper appreciation of the hard fought journey that led to liberation.

The memorial therefore belongs not only to the martyrs and their families, but to every Goan and every Indian who values the history of freedom.



Department of Information and Publicity

GCZMA Clarifies Path For Pre-1991 Homes In Goa's CRZ Areas

■ Old residential structures could be considered for regularisation, but post-1991 constructions will require Authority scrutiny

Team Goemkarponn

PANAJI: A large number of old residential structures in Goa's coastal belt could get a clearer route towards regularisation following a decision by the Goa Coastal Zone Management Authority (GCZMA) on how CRZ-related cases should be handled. The Authority has said residential dwelling units that were already in existence before February 1991



can be considered for regularisation under the Goa Regularisation of Unauthorised Construction Act, 2016, even when questions arise over their location within Coastal Regulation Zone (CRZ) areas. The

relaxation, however, comes with several conditions. Applicants will have to establish the structure's pre-1991 existence through conclusive documentary evidence. The dwelling must also have the necessary approvals from the concerned authorities and should remain substantially in the same shape and size.

Structures that came up after 1991 have not been covered by the same clarification. The GCZMA

has directed that such cases be placed before the Authority before the competent officer takes a decision on regularisation.

The clarification followed repeated references from Deputy Collectors dealing with applications submitted under the 2016 regularisation law. Officials had sought guidance in cases where the properties involved were situated within, or were suspected to fall within, CRZ areas.



Ozarim Villagers Seek Removal Of Panchayat Secretary, Threaten Peaceful Protest

■ Ozari Shetkari Nagarik Kruti Samiti cites repeated grievances and Gram Sabha resolution; protest planned at Panchayat office on August 28

Team Goemkarponn

OZARIM: The Ozari Shetkari Nagarik Kruti Samiti has urged the Director of Panchayats, Goa, to intervene in what it describes as serious and continuing grievances over the functioning and conduct of the present Secretary of the Village Panchayat of Ozarim. In an urgent memorandum submitted through the Block Development Officer, Pernem, the committee said villagers had repeatedly raised their concerns during several Gram Sabha meetings since the present Secretary took charge. The villagers, according to the memorandum, feel that their grievances

have not received the appropriate attention and clarity expected from the Panchayat administration. The committee alleged that villagers are not always provided clear answers to their queries at the first instance and are not given proper guidance about required documents. It further claimed that villagers are subsequently asked to produce different documents, affidavits or additional requirements, resulting in repeated visits to the Panchayat office. The manner of communication with some villagers has also been perceived as disrespectful and discouraging, the memorandum states.

TERMINATED

Tiswadi Mamlatdar Terminates Lease of Teen Manas Sluice Gate

Team Goemkarponn

PANAJI: The Office of the Mamlatdar of Tiswadi Taluka has terminated the lease agreement for the Teen Manas Sluice Gate, following a summary inquiry initiated by the Managing Committee of the Santa Cruz Tenant Association against the existing lessee, Elson Jose Braganza.

The order, issued by Tiswadi Mamlatdar Dattaprasad S. Toraskar, directs Braganza to remove all fishing nets, equipment and personal belongings from the sluice gate and the bundh within 24 hours.

The Mamlatdar has further directed that in the event of non-compliance, the Managing Committee of the Santa Cruz Tenant Association may proceed to remove the fishing apparatus and submit a compliance report to the revenue authorities.

As part of the arrangements following termination of the lease, the Santa Cruz Tenant Association has been instructed to keep a close watch on the site and prevent any unauthorised activity.

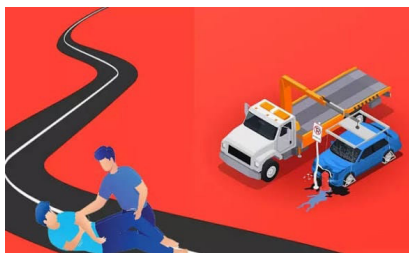
North Goa Sets Monthly Reviews To Clear Hit-And-Run Compensation Claims

■ Collector Ankit Yadav says administration targets zero district-level pendency as three more cases remain under process

Team Goemkarponn

PANAJI: The North Goa district administration has decided to hold monthly review meetings to ensure speedy processing of compensation claims for victims of unidentified hit-and-run accidents, Collector Ankit Yadav said.

The move comes after North Goa processed its first two cases under the Central government's compensation scheme for victims of hit-and-run motor accidents.



Compensation cheques were handed over on Thursday to the family of a person who died in a hit-and-run incident and to another victim who suffered injuries.

The administration said three additional claims are currently being

processed and will be expedited. Yadav said regular reviews would be conducted to ensure that claims do not remain pending at the

district administration level. Under the compensation scheme, victims of hit-and-run accidents where the offending vehicle cannot be identified are entitled to ₹2 lakh in the event of death and ₹50,000 for grievous injury.

Food Safety Drive: 105 Kg Motichur Laddus Destroyed In Margao

■ Sweets Manufacturing Unit At St. Jose De Areal Found Operating Without Valid FSSAI Licence And Under Unhygienic Conditions

Team Goemkarponn

MARGAO: Food safety authorities intensified their festive season surveillance drive in Goa, checking interstate buses in Margao to verify the safety and compliance of food products entering the state.

As part of the inspection drive, a sweets manufacturing unit at St. Jose de



Areal, IDC Nessai, was also inspected. The unit was found operating without a valid FSSAI licence and under unhygienic and unsanitary conditions.

During the inspection, around 105 kg of Motichur Laddus valued at ₹23,220 was detained and subsequently destroyed in the interest of public health.

Authorities said the festive season

surveillance drive will continue to ensure that only safe and compliant food products reach consumers across Goa. The inspections are aimed at preventing the sale and distribution of unsafe food products, particularly during the festive season when demand for sweets and other food items increases.

Life Imprisonment, ₹1.5 Lakh Fine for Accused in Sankval Murder Case

■ Kanhaiya Lal Yadav Convicted for Murder of Sanjay Yadav, Whose Body Was Found Buried Near Meta Strips in 2022

Team Goemkarponn

MARGAO: Kanhaiya Lal Yadav has been sentenced to life imprisonment and fined ₹1.5 lakh after being convicted for the murder of 35-year-old Sanjay Yadav, whose body was found buried in an isolated area near the Meta Strips company in Sankval in December 2022.

Sanjay Yadav, a resident of Zuari Nagar who worked as a daily-



wage labourer at a scrap yard, was found buried under construction debris in an isolated location opposite the Meta Strips company in Sankval.

Following the

discovery, Verna police launched an investigation and established the identity of the deceased. Kanhaiya Lal Yadav, a resident of

Sankval and originally from Uttar Pradesh, was arrested within a few hours of the incident.

According to the investigation, Yadav allegedly killed Sanjay

Yadav by striking him on the head with a heavy object. The accused was then alleged to have dumped the body in a hilly area near Meta Strips and attempted to destroy evidence. Verna police registered a case under Sections 302 and 201 of the Indian Penal Code. After hearing the case, the court found Kanhaiya Lal Yadav guilty of murder and sentenced him to life imprisonment along with a fine of ₹1.5 lakh.



75-Year-Old Injured In Road Accident At Bastora

■ Car Driver Booked For Rash And Negligent Driving While Overtaking Scooter

Team Goemkarponn

BASTORA: A 75-year-old man sustained serious injuries, including grievous head injuries, in a road accident near Belekar Open Air Hall, Bastora, Bardez, on August 5.

According to the complaint filed by Tome Piedade Fernandes, son of late Eugenio Fernandes, a resident of Quitla, Aldona, the accident occurred at around 10 am when he was riding scooter bearing registration number GA-03-J-4641 from Moira towards Aldona. Police said the accused, Maruti Arjun Jadhav, a resident of Madel, Thivim, was driving vehicle bearing

registration number GA-07-T-2555 from Aldona towards Mapusa via Bastora. The accused allegedly drove in a rash and negligent manner and, without exercising due care and caution, attempted to overtake the complainant's scooter near Belekar Open Air Hall.

During the overtaking manoeuvre, the vehicle reportedly collided with the scooter, resulting in the complainant sustaining serious bodily injuries, including grievous injuries to his head. The complaint was registered on August 26, 2026, at 8:24 pm. Further investigation is being conducted by IO HC 4881 Satish Thakur.



Property Dispute Turns Violent At Palolem; Three Booked For Assault

Team Goemkarponn

PALOLEM: A property dispute allegedly turned violent at Palolem, Canacona, with three persons booked for allegedly assaulting a local man on the night of August 25.

According to the complaint filed by Sandip Pagi of Canacona, the incident took place at around 10 pm when accused Swastik Pagi, Vasu Pagi and Geeta Pagi, all residents of Canacona, allegedly acted with a common intention and assaulted him over a property dispute.

Police said accused No. 1, Swastik Pagi, allegedly assaulted the complainant on his head with a koita. Accused No. 2, Vasu Pagi, allegedly accompanied him carrying a wooden danda and assaulted the complainant with it. The complainant further alleged that accused No. 3, Geeta Pagi, bit him on his right hand, causing injuries.

Further investigation into the case is being carried out by HC 6976 Diptesh Gaonkar of Canacona Police Station.

₹75,000 Worth Personal Care Products Stolen From Nuvem Store

■ Two Maharashtra Residents Booked For Alleged Theft Following Criminal Entry

Team Goemkarponn

NUVEM: Two persons have been booked for allegedly stealing personal care products worth approximately ₹75,000 from a store at Goa Bagayatdar Sahakari Kharedi Vikri Saunstha Maryadit in Nuvem.

According to the complaint filed by Sakshi Naik of Margao, the alleged thefts took place on May 13, 2026, and August 1, 2026, at the store premises in Nuvem. The accused have been identified as Hitesh Gerela and Akash



Sundrani, both residents of Maharashtra. According to the complaint, the accused allegedly criminally entered the store and committed theft of various personal care products, with the

total value of the stolen items estimated at around ₹75,000. Further investigation is being conducted by LPSI Veronica Coutinho of Maina Curtorim Police Station.

Khelo India Dialogue Puts Focus On Fitness, Sports And Drug-Free Communities

■ Shripad Naik Says Meaningful Engagement With Youth Can Inspire Healthier, Stronger Generation

Team Goemkarponn

PANAJI: The need to keep young people physically active and away from drugs took centre stage at the Khelo India Dialogue held at St. Xavier's College, Mapusa, where Union Minister of State for Power and New Renewable Energy Shripad Naik said sustained engagement with



the youth can play an important role in building healthier communities. Naik participated in the programme along

with Rajya Sabha MP Sadanand Shet Tanavade, during which Prime Minister Narendra Modi interacted

virtually with students and encouraged them to embrace sports and fitness. The interaction placed emphasis on the

wider role of sports beyond physical activity, highlighting fitness, healthy lifestyles and positive peer networks as important tools for building drug-free communities. Speaking after the interaction, Naik said meaningful engagement with young people can give them the confidence and motivation to set bigger goals and make healthier choices.

Ai+ Smartphone Announces Nova 2 Power through Project Open Review 2.0, Unveiling a Bold New Design and Powerful Performance

Team Goemkarponn

NEW DELHI: Gurugram, August 2026: Ai+ Smartphone announced Nova 2 Power, the newest addition to its Nova 2 Series, through Project Open Review 2.0, revealing the device's design, colourways and chipset ahead of its market debut. The programme invites reviewers, creators, journalists, technology enthusiasts and ethical hackers to independently put Nova 2 Power to the test before it reaches consumers.

Building on the first edition of Project Open Review, which drew more than 700 registrations, Open Review 2.0 expands participation to include ethical hackers for the first time, reflecting Ai+'s commitment to building Trust through Transparency before the product reaches the end consumer.

With Nova 2 Power, Ai+ Smartphone is introducing a smartphone built around two defining ideas - "Design that inspires and Power that outlasts." The design story comes to life through two striking dual Colour Fusion finishes: Golden Blue Fusion, which brings



together muted gold and deep navy blue in a fluid gradient that shifts from understated warmth to a deeper, bolder tone; and Blue Fusion, which transitions from cool ocean blue to vivid sunset orange for a younger, more expressive visual identity.

Rather than treating colour as a surface-level addition, the design language brings contrasting tones together in a dual flowing finish, giving Nova 2 Power a distinctive and recognisable identity. The approach is designed for consumers who increasingly see their smartphone not just as a technology device, but as an extension of their personal style.

Under the hood, Nova

2 Power runs on the MediaTek Dimensity 7100, built on a 6nm process designed to deliver a balance of sustained performance and power efficiency.

Madhav Sheth, CEO, Ai+ Smartphone and Founder, NxtQuantum Shift Technologies, said, "Nova 2 Power represents the next evolution of the Nova Series bringing together performance and a design identity that is distinctly its own. The Dimensity 7100 gives it the performance foundation, while our new Colour Fusion finishes allow the device to stand out beyond specifications. But we also believe a product should earn confidence before it asks consumers for it. With Project Open Review

2.0, we are putting the Nova 2 Power to test before it reaches the end consumer"

Under Project Open Review 2.0, participants will get early, independent access to evaluate Nova 2 Power across all the specs and overall user experience.

The process is entirely unscripted, with no expectation of a favourable verdict. Nova 2 Power runs on NxtQuantum OS, Ai+ Smartphone's mobile operating system, and extends the Nova Series into a more performance and design-led territory.

Further details on Nova 2 Power, including additional specifications, pricing and availability, will be announced closer to its consumer launch.

"Goa's Startups Are Building Solutions Beyond the State": Nine Ventures Shine at IdeaBaaz 2026

■ Goan startups showcase innovation, AI, healthcare and tourism solutions at national startup festival in New Delhi

Team Goemkarponn

PANAJI: Nine startups from Goa are showcasing their products and innovative solutions at the IdeaBaaz Startup Fest 2026, being held at Bharat Mandapam in New Delhi from August 26 to 30.

The five day festival has brought together startups, investors, industry leaders, mentors and ecosystem enablers from across India, giving emerging businesses an opportunity to present their ideas, build partnerships and explore investment and market opportunities.

The participating Goan startups include Bizzigo, Gelo, MajheApp, Innovease India Private Limited, Burraa, MyOwnBrews, Artine Technologies LLP, TAWAI Studio and Dumfries Visionostics. Their areas of work range from home and property services and event technology to commerce, healthcare, tourism, consumer products, artificial intelligence, computer vision, automation and MedTech. The participation is being supported by the Goa government through the Department of Information Technology, Electronics and Communications and its Startup and IT Promotion Cell. The initiative aims to give Goa based startups greater national visibility while helping them access investors,

customers, markets and potential collaborators.

Tourism, IT, Electronics and Communications Minister Rohan A. Khaunte highlighted the growing potential of Goa's startup ecosystem, noting that several ventures from the state are developing solutions with applications beyond Goa. He encouraged the participating founders to use the festival to establish new investor, market and networking connections. Artine Technologies founder and CEO Janhavi Sawal also highlighted the importance of taking Goa's technology ventures to a national platform. She said the event could create opportunities for partnerships, pilot projects and customers in areas such as computer vision, healthcare AI and government technology. Five additional Goa based startups, KAVACH Infra Solutions, Reclevo Infotech, BARSCALE, Vindaloo Entertainment and MYPET OPD, have been selected for the IdeaBaaz Startup Competition. They will pitch their ventures before investors and a jury during the festival. With more than 300 curated startups and over 150 investors participating, IdeaBaaz 2026 is providing Goa's entrepreneurs with a platform to expand their reach and strengthen their presence in India's growing startup ecosystem.



Schools To Report Drug Activity, Not Take Action: Education Director

government's 500-metre drug-free zone circular.

Zingde said the initiative is on similar lines to the existing 200-metre tobacco-free zone around educational institutions, which is implemented across the country.

Clarifying the responsibilities of schools, he said headmasters and school authorities will neither be expected nor authorised to take direct action against persons involved in suspected drug-related activities.

Instead, schools will focus on awareness and reporting. Educational institutions will be

required to display boards creating awareness about the drug-free zone and the dangers of substance abuse.

If school authorities notice any suspicious activity relating to drugs in the vicinity, they are expected to report it to the police, who will be responsible for verification, investigation and necessary legal action.

Opposition Questions 500-Metre Drug-Free Zone Directive, Demands Statewide Action

restricting its approach to designated zones. "Protecting our children from drugs is non-negotiable. But the Government

must answer a simple question—why only 500 metres? What happens at 501 metres?" Chodankar questioned. He said the drug menace cannot be addressed by drawing geographical boundaries around schools and called for action against the networks involved in the supply and distribution of drugs.

"Don't draw a 500-metre circle around the problem. Destroy the drug network across Goa," Chodankar said. Chodankar further questioned whether the directive risks creating an impression of action while placing responsibilities on school authorities that they are not equipped or legally empowered to discharge. He said children require protection not only around schools but also in their neighbourhoods, playgrounds, colleges, villages and cities.

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“Head to Safety”: Dam Breaches in Tibet as Nepal Faces Fresh Flood Threat

■ Rescue operations suspended after barrier lake overflows, raising fears of another wave of flooding along the Nepal China border

Team Goemkarponn

KATHMANDU: Authorities have suspended rescue operations near the Nepal China border after a barrier lake on the Tibetan side reportedly breached its banks, triggering fears of renewed flooding in areas already devastated by deadly flash floods.

Nepalese security forces issued an urgent



warning to rescue personnel, security teams and residents involved in

relief operations, asking them to immediately move to safer locations. The

development comes just two days after a massive glacial collapse and flash flood killed at least 469 people and left hundreds missing.

Authorities in Nepal temporarily halted rescue operations for around 90 minutes as water levels in the river began rising. Helicopter missions were also suspended because of the renewed danger.



“Pakistan Was Desperate to Find S-400s”: Ex-Air Marshal Reveals Spy Network During Operation Sindoor

■ Retired Air Marshal Jeetendra Mishra says Pakistan used intelligence networks and satellite support to locate India’s S-400 air defence systems

Team Goemkarponn

NEW DELHI: Pakistan made extensive efforts to locate India’s S-400 air defence systems during Operation Sindoor, including activating suspected spies and sleeper cells, according to retired Air Marshal Jeetendra Mishra. Mishra said the Russian made S-400 systems played a crucial role in preventing Pakistani aircraft from approaching within around 200 kilometres of the Indian border during the military operation in May 2025. According to Mishra, Pakistan considered the S-400 its most significant aerial threat and tried

various methods to identify the locations of the systems. He also claimed that Pakistan received satellite based assistance from other countries to gather information about Indian military positions. The S-400, known in India as the “Sudarshan Chakra”, is a mobile, long range surface to air missile system designed to counter multiple types of aerial threats. Its ability to detect and engage targets at long distances makes it a key component of India’s air defence network. Mishra further claimed that Pakistani aircraft attempting to operate in the area faced the threat of S-400 interception.



“Very Worrying”: Assam CM Himanta Biswa Sarma Flags New Myanmar Drug Route

Team Goemkarponn

GUWAHATI: Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma has raised concern over the emergence of a new drug trafficking corridor linking Myanmar with Assam through Arunachal Pradesh’s Changlang district and Tinsukia.

Sarma said the development was a serious concern for Upper Assam, particularly as drug networks appear to be changing their routes in response to intensified enforcement. Investigations following the arrest of several suspected drug peddlers reportedly revealed the new corridor.

Previously, narcotics entering India from Myanmar were commonly associated with the Moreh route in Manipur. Authorities are now focusing greater attention on the Changlang corridor, which provides another potential entry point from Myanmar into northeastern India.

Amit Shah: “Gandhi’s Ideas Will Remain Relevant Even After 100 Years”

■ Home Minister urges Gujarat Vidyapith graduates to carry forward Gandhi’s principles of truth, wisdom, self reliance and social responsibility

Team Goemkarponn

AHMEDABAD: Union Home Minister Amit Shah said Mahatma Gandhi’s principles would continue to remain relevant for generations, describing them as deeply connected with India’s values, traditions and way of life. Addressing the 72nd convocation of Gujarat Vidyapith in Ahmedabad, Shah urged graduating students to carry Gandhi’s teachings



into their personal, professional and public lives. He said Gandhi’s message was not borrowed from outside but emerged from India’s longstanding knowledge and cultural traditions. Shah recalled that Gandhi

founded Gujarat Vidyapith in 1920 with the vision of developing an education system rooted in Indian languages, culture, labour and national purpose. He described the institution as a place where education was connected with practical life, with farms, workshops, villages and society serving as classrooms. According to Shah, meaningful education must develop the hand, heart and mind together.

PM Modi to Meet Putin on Monday at SCO Summit in Bishkek

■ India and Russia leaders set to review bilateral ties as Modi begins four day Central Asia visit

Team Goemkarponn

NEW DELHI: Prime Minister Narendra Modi is scheduled to meet Russian President Vladimir Putin on Monday on the sidelines of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) Summit in Bishkek, the Ministry of External Affairs has confirmed.

The meeting is expected to provide an opportunity for the two leaders to review the



wide ranging India Russia relationship, including recent developments in economic cooperation and other areas of bilateral engagement.

The announcement comes shortly after External Affairs Minister S

Jaishankar held talks with Putin in Moscow during his recent visit to Russia. Jaishankar conveyed Modi’s greetings to the Russian President and discussed the outcome of the latest India Russia Inter Governmental

Commission meeting.

During that interaction, Jaishankar also indicated that Modi was looking forward to meeting Putin at the SCO Summit. He further highlighted plans for Putin’s visit to India for the upcoming BRICS Summit, followed by the annual India Russia summit at a mutually convenient time. Putin reciprocated the message and expressed his expectation of meeting Modi during the SCO gathering. The two leaders

are expected to discuss the broader trajectory of bilateral relations as India and Russia continue to maintain close diplomatic and economic engagement.

Modi’s Central Asian tour will begin with a visit to Uzbekistan from August 29 to 30 at the invitation of Uzbek President Shavkat Mirziyoyev. He will then travel to Bishkek from August 31 to September 1 to attend the 26th SCO Summit.

“Asian Games Gold Is Now The Target”: India’s Women Finish 5th At Hockey World Cup

■ India records its best Women’s Hockey World Cup finish in 52 years after a memorable campaign in Amstelveen

Team Goemkarponn

NEW DELHI: India’s women’s hockey team ended its 2026 World Cup campaign with a fifth place finish in Amstelveen, its best result at the tournament since 1974. The achievement marked a major step forward for Indian hockey, although the team was left wondering how far it could have gone after narrowly



missing out on a semi final spot. Ranked ninth in the world, India signed off with an impressive 3-1 victory over fifth ranked Germany.

The result capped a campaign in which India lost only once, against defending champions and world number one Netherlands. India began the tournament with a 2-2 draw against China before producing a record

breaking 6-1 victory over South Africa. The team then held England to a goalless draw, a result that helped India progress to the next stage. The biggest challenge came against the Netherlands. India suffered a 2-0 defeat against the hosts, leaving the team needing a positive result against Australia to keep its semi final hopes alive.



“Six Points Down, Still Champion”: Praggnanandhaa Completes Stunning Grand Chess Tour Comeback

■ Indian Grandmaster defeats Fabiano Caruana 15-13 to become the first Indian to win the prestigious Grand Chess Tour Finals

Team Goemkarponn

NEW DELHI: R Praggnanandhaa produced one of the biggest comebacks of his career to defeat Fabiano Caruana and win the 2026 Grand Chess Tour Finals in St. Louis on Thursday. The Indian grandmaster entered the final day facing a six point deficit after Caruana had dominated the opening classical game. Praggnanandhaa had suffered a 6-0 defeat in their first classical encounter, but responded strongly in the second game by securing a 3-3 draw.

With the title seemingly tilted in Caruana’s favour, Praggnanandhaa changed the momentum dramatically in the rapid section. He won both rapid games to erase the deficit and move ahead in the match. The pressure then shifted to Caruana in the blitz games. Praggnanandhaa maintained his advantage by keeping the blitz score level, eventually completing a 15-13 victory and securing his maiden Grand Chess Tour Finals title. The first blitz encounter provided plenty of drama.

“Very Frustrating”: Shubman Gill Gives Honest Verdict After India’s Sri Lanka Test Draw

■ India captain praises his team’s relentless effort but admits the missed win was disappointing as the WTC qualification race continues

Team Goemkarponn

NEW DELHI: India captain Shubman Gill described the drawn second Test against Sri Lanka as “very frustrating” after his team failed to complete a victory despite putting the hosts under sustained pressure. India had Sri Lanka at 229 for six at the end of the fourth day and appeared well placed to force a result. However, Sonal Dinusha produced a remarkable unbeaten 133 on the final day as Sri



Lanka successfully batted through the entire fifth day to secure a draw at the Sinhalese Sports Club ground. Gill acknowledged

that the pitch became increasingly slow as the match progressed, making it difficult for India’s bowlers to create decisive breakthroughs. He also pointed to Sri Lanka’s highly defensive batting approach, which reduced the number of scoring opportunities and made it harder for the Indian attack to force mistakes. Despite the disappointing result, Gill gave his players full credit for their commitment. India’s spinners bowled

long spells across several days, while the fielders were required to remain on the ground for extended periods in challenging conditions. Gill also dismissed concerns surrounding fast bowler Mohammed Siraj, who appeared to operate at a reduced pace during the match. According to the captain, Siraj is not carrying an injury and is still working his way back to full rhythm after returning from a lengthy gap between matches.

“India Is Committed To Becoming A Global Sporting Destination”: Amit Shah Reviews 2036 Olympics Bid

■ Home Minister assesses preparations for India’s 2036 Olympic bid, 2029 Police and Fire Games and 2030 Commonwealth Games

Team Goemkarponn

NEW DELHI: Union Home Minister Amit Shah chaired a high level review meeting in Ahmedabad to assess India’s preparations for hosting major international sporting events, including the country’s bid for the 2036 Olympic Games. The meeting focused on India’s plans to strengthen



its position as a global sporting destination by bringing major international competitions to the country. Shah also reviewed preparations for the 2029 Police and

Fire Games and the 2030 Commonwealth Games. Union Sports Minister Mansukh Mandaviya and Gujarat Deputy Chief Minister Harsh Sanghavi were among those present

during the meeting. Shah emphasised the government’s commitment to developing India as a major international sporting hub and creating an environment capable of hosting events of global significance. Ahmedabad is set to host the 2030 Commonwealth Games, giving Gujarat a major role in India’s sporting ambitions. The Commonwealth Games Flag was formally

handed over to Gujarat representatives following the conclusion of the 2026 Games in Glasgow. The flag was subsequently presented to Gujarat Chief Minister Bhupendra Patel during a state cabinet meeting. It will remain in Gujarat until the 2030 Commonwealth Games and is expected to serve as a symbol of the state’s preparations for the prestigious multi sport event. The Commonwealth

Games Flag represents unity, friendship, equality and sportsmanship among Commonwealth nations. Its arrival in the host state marks an important milestone as preparations gather pace for the 2030 edition. Alongside the Commonwealth Games preparations, India is pursuing its ambitious bid to host the 2036 Olympics.