

Chodankar accuses BJP of trying to discredit Goy Rakhonn Yatra

■ Congress leader says growing public response has unsettled BJP; fifth day of yatra passes through Aldona

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ALDONA: Goa Pradesh Congress Committee President Girish Chodankar on Saturday alleged that the BJP government was attempting to discredit the Congress-led Goy Rakhonn Yatra, claiming that the growing public response to the campaign had unsettled the ruling party. Chodankar said the yatra had become a recurring subject in speeches by BJP leaders and Chief Minister Pramod Sawant because, according to him, the BJP was unable to accept the response the campaign was receiving. He also alleged that attempts were being made to create a false narrative about participation in the yatra. "People are allegedly being sent into our Yatra after being paid, while certain pre-arranged media platforms are being asked to interview the same individuals and portray them as outsiders. This is a deliberate attempt to malign the Goy Rakhonn Yatra," Chodankar alleged. He said the yatra was not merely a political programme but an expression of concerns among Goans relating to land, development, the environment, heritage and the future of the state. "We are a political party and the BJP is our political opponent. But



when senior citizens like Justice Ferdino Rebello are compelled to build a people's movement such as 'Enough is Enough', it demonstrates the depth of public concern about the Government's functioning. The BJP should understand that the Congress has today become the voice of what is in the hearts and minds of Goans," Chodankar said. The fifth day of the Goy Rakhonn Yatra entered the Aldona Assembly constituency in Bardez on Saturday. The

day's programme began with Congress leaders and workers hoisting the party flag at Pomburpa Panchayat, followed by an awareness march through the locality. Party workers interacted with residents and explained the objectives of the yatra. The main foot march began at 3 p.m. from Moira and proceeded towards Tercena in Aldona, where a public meeting, or Maand, was held. Congress leaders addressed the gathering and raised various issues

concerning Goa while criticising the policies and functioning of the BJP government. Addressing the gathering, AICC Goa in-charge Manikrao Thakare alleged that the BJP had resorted to horse-trading despite the mandate given by Goan voters. "Those who have betrayed not only their political party but also the voters and their deities will not be taken back by us," Thakare said. He appealed to voters to give the Congress a clear majority in the forthcoming Assembly elections. AICC Goa co-in-charge Dr Anjali Nimbalkar criticised Chief Minister Pramod Sawant and the BJP's social media team for focusing on the yatra instead of addressing issues concerning the people. "Our fight is for the people of Goa. Instead of responding to issues of development and governance, they are resorting to criticism of the Yatra. Ironically, in their attempt to attack the Yatra, the BJP's own social media team is giving it publicity," she said. Nimbalkar said the repeated references to the yatra by BJP leaders showed the attention it was receiving across Goa. Leader of Opposition Yuri Alemao thanked the people of Haldone for electing Aldona MLA Carlos Alvares Ferreira, whom he described as a committed, knowledgeable representative.



RGP appoints eight official spokespersons to strengthen party

■ New spokespersons authorised to represent the party's official positions and engage with media

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PANAJI: The Revolutionary Goans Party (RGP) has appointed eight official spokespersons with immediate effect to represent and communicate the party's official positions, policies and views to the media and the public. The newly appointed spokespersons are Neeraj Dhamaskar, Prashant Pagi, Vipin Naik, Licio Roncon, Melvin Da Silva, Manila Shirodkar, Tushar Gawas and Premanand Gaude. According to the party, the spokespersons will be authorised to communicate RGP's official position on matters concerning Goa and engage with the media and the public on issues of public importance.

The party said the appointments are aimed at strengthening its communication structure, ensuring effective public engagement and facilitating greater interaction with the people of Goa. RGP expressed confidence that the newly appointed spokespersons would contribute to furthering the party's vision and communicating its policies and positions to the people. Sheikh said the party had already extended an invitation and was waiting for Sardesai to take the next step. On the possibility of AAP joining a broader opposition arrangement, Sheikh said any such proposal would have to be formally placed before the Congress leadership.

Five booked for alleged ₹88,000 holiday package fraud in Candolim

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CANDOLIM: Five persons associated with OsDia De Festa Vacation Private Limited have been booked following a complaint alleging that a Rohtak resident was cheated of ₹88,000 through a holiday package offered at a resort in Candolim. According to the complaint filed by Piyush Sachdeva, a resident of Rohtak, Haryana, the alleged incident took place on December 1, 2024, between 1 pm and 4 pm at the company's office at Hotel Whispering Palms Beach Resort, Candolim, Bardez.

AAP leaders slam BJP over overcrowding at South Goa District Hospital

■ Roque Mascarenhas calls for ₹10 lakh annual health insurance for every Goan family, citing AAP's Punjab healthcare model

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PANAJI: Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) leaders on Saturday criticised the BJP government over the reported overcrowding and deteriorating conditions at South Goa District Hospital (SGDH), alleging that patients were being forced to sleep on the floors due to inadequate facilities. AAP Goa Vice President Roque Mascarenhas

said the situation reflected what he described as the government's failure to provide adequate healthcare facilities to people in the state. Mascarenhas called on the BJP government to introduce ₹10 lakh annual health insurance coverage for every Goan family, citing the AAP government's healthcare initiatives in Punjab as a model. He said such insurance would enable people to access private

healthcare facilities closer to their homes when public hospitals are unable to provide timely or adequate treatment. The AAP leader also urged the government to examine healthcare practices implemented by the AAP government in Punjab and take steps to improve access to quality healthcare for Goans. The numbers in the Forest Department's annexure represent trees linked to individual offence cases

and should not be read as an overall assessment of mangrove loss across Goa. The department has reported collecting Rs 90,890 in penalties in six cases. Individual amounts ranged between Rs 6,050 and Rs 29,800, with the records showing the full amount recovered and no dues pending. The same annexure marks recovery action and convictions as "NA" in each of the six cases where penalties

were imposed. The Assembly response also highlights a gap in restoration framework. The government said the Goa Preservation of Tree Act, 1984, contains no provision for issuing a specific "restoration order". No figures have been provided on the area of mangroves restored or on monitoring of restoration undertaken in connection with the cases.