

## WALKOUT DRAMA LAYS BARE OPPN DISUNITY

Ruckus marks Day One of Assembly session, but is the Oppn serious about keeping the govt under scrutiny?



A section of the Opposition members led by LoP Yuri Alemao stage a walk out on the first day of the Assembly session. (Right) Fatorda MLA Vijai Sardesai raises a placard protesting against the curtailed session

Team Herald

**PORVORIM:** Stormy scenes marked the first day of Goa's two-day Assembly session on Thursday, with several Opposition MLAs staging a walkout during Governor PS Sridharan Pillai's address. Apart from the curtailed session, they were protesting against the destruction of greenery and scandals like the cash-for-jobs scam.

However, what stood out amid the ruckus was the lack of floor coordination among the Opposition parties during the protest. Initially, most of the Opposition MLAs walked out, but within a short while, some of them had come back – Congress's Carlos Alvares Ferreira, AAP's Venzy Viegas and Cruz Silva, and RGP's Viresh Borkar. In contrast, Leader of the Opposition, Congress's Yuri Alemao, and party MLA Altona D'Costa did not return. Goa Forward Party MLA Vijai Sardesai remained in the Assembly throughout, holding a placard on is-

sues like the job scam. Even as Goa reels under multiple scandals, the Opposition disunity raises questions about their seriousness in putting the government performance under scrutiny. The commotion began as soon as the Governor began his address, with Alemao criticising the reduced duration of the Assembly session, saying, "The Kerala Assembly meets for an average of 50 days a year, while Goa's average is only 26 days. This is the bulldozing of democracy." Alemao's statement was interrupted by the

“When there are so many burning issues, the opposition wanted to ask the Governor whether he would address them in his speech. When they refused to address these issues, we walked out. They are pushing bills without giving us enough time to study them

– Yuri Alemao, Leader of the Opposition

“Is it possible to have 'Sabka Saath (everybody's support), Sabka Vikas (everybody's development), Sabka Vishwas (everybody's trust) and Sabka Prayas' (everybody's attempt) in a session of one day? I condemn the government for trying to show this is development for all

– Venzy Viegas, AAP MLA

“Members of the cabinet do not want to give answers, which is why the session has been called for just a day. There is a need to fix dates on the calendar for the Assembly session and also the number of days it will be held

– Vijai Sardesai, Goa Forward Party MLA

Speaker, after which he and the other opposition MLAs left the House.

The opposition also raised objections to the first report of the Business Advisory Committee (BAC) for 2025, presented by Chief Minister Pramod Sawant. The opposition argued that the report failed to incorporate their written objections regarding the shortened session. Despite the opposition's refusal to accept the report, it was passed by a voice vote and accepted by the House.

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## WARRIORS FOR A GREEN CAUSE



Citizens and eco-warriors under the banner of Save Goa Environment protest against the destruction of the state's green cover at Azad Maidan in Panjim, on Thursday More on Pg 5 >>

## Cash-for-jobs scam: Ponda Police file chargesheet

**PONDA:** The Ponda Police have filed their first chargesheet in the high-profile cash-for-jobs scam, naming mastermind Deepashri Sawant, her accomplice, suspended constable Sagar Naik, and Sunita Sawant. The chargesheet, running over 600 pages, includes nine witnesses and details a recovery of Rs 10 lakh.

The case stems from a complaint filed by Trupti Prabhu, who alleged that Naik had cheated her out of Rs 15 lakh with a promise of securing a teaching job at Marcel School. The investigation later led to the arrests of Sunita and Deepashri. The police have seized vehicles and bank accounts linked to the accused.

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## Don't turn Goa into concrete jungle, SC tells State govt

Apex Court dismisses govt petition challenging High Court's construction ban in North Goa

Team Herald

**PANJIM:** Don't turn Goa into a concrete jungle – that was the message from the Supreme Court on Thursday as it dismissed the State government's Special Leave Petition (SLP) challenging the High Court's order to impose a construction ban in several areas covered by the Outline Development Plan (ODP).

The High Court's ruling, issued on January 23, 2025, specifically restrained any construction in the ODP zones of Calangute, Candolim, Arpora, Nagoa, and Parra. The Goa government had filed a Special Leave Petition against this on January 30

addressing the government's counsel, remarked, "Please don't turn Goa into a concrete jungle", a stern warning against unchecked urbanisation.

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A division bench of the

Supreme Court, comprising Justices B V Nagarathna and Satish Chandra Sharma, summarily dismissed the Goa government's SLP, filed on January 30, 2025, without granting relief.

The High Court's order followed a thorough hearing led by Justices M S Karnik and Nivedita P Mehta, who directed the State to impose a construction freeze in the five ODP villages in the Bardez taluka. This was in response to a PIL filed by the NGO Goa Foundation, highlighting illegalities within two ODPs: the Calangute-Candolim plan (2018) and the Arpora-Nagoa-Parra plan (2020).

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## UGC slaps show cause notices on 18 colleges

**PTI, NEW DELHI:** The University Grants Commission (UGC) has issued show-cause notices to 18 medical colleges for not complying with anti-ragging regulations, officials said on Thursday.

### ANTI-RAGGING NORMS

The defaulter colleges include two each in Delhi, Tamil Nadu, Assam and Puducherry; three each in Andhra Pradesh and Bihar; and one each in Madhya Pradesh, Telangana, West Bengal and UP. "It was found that these colleges had not complied with the mandatory requirements set forth in the Anti-Ragging Regulations, 2009 for curbing the menace of ragging. Specifically, it has come to our notice that the institutions failed to obtain the anti-ragging undertakings from students as required by the said regulations," UGC Secretary Manish Joshi said.

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## JOURNEY OF SHAME

## Handcuffed on flight, deportees' plight raises a storm in Lok Sabha

Govt engaging with US for 'fair treatment', says Jaishankar

**PTI, NEW DELHI:** Opposition parties on Thursday forced repeated adjournments in the Lok Sabha over the deportation of Indians living illegally in the US, even as External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar asserted India was engaging the Trump administration to ensure that deportees were not mistreated during flights.

The Lok Sabha was adjourned on four occasions as Opposition members trooped into the Well of the House and raised slogans over the handcuffing of deportees from the US for the duration of their flight to India.

A US military aircraft carrying 104 illegal Indian immigrants landed at the Amritsar airport on Wednesday. This was the first batch of Indians to be deported by the Donald Trump administration as part of a crackdown against illegal immigrants.

Jaishankar read a statement in the Lok Sabha amid noisy protests by the Opposition. The Lok Sabha was scheduled to take up a discussion on the Union Budget presented by Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman on February 1.

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## Rules allow for use of chains: EAM

**PTI, NEW DELHI:** Making a statement in the Upper House, Jaishankar asserted that the process of deportation has been ongoing for several years and is not new.

He said deportations by the US are organised and executed by the Immigration and Customs Enforcement authorities and "the standard operating procedure for deportations by aircraft used by ICE that is effective from 2012, provides for the use of restraints".

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## SHORTCUT TO AMERICAN DREAM TURNS NIGHTMARE

**PTI, KURUKSHETRA / AHMEDABAD / HOSHIARPUR:** With hopes of a bright future and a better life for their families back home, they undertook perilous journeys to the US, only to return in shackles and with huge debts, stories of untold hardship and extortion – both at home and in the land of their dreams.

On Thursday, the men and women returned home, thankful their ordeal was over and wondering anxiously what tomorrow will bring.

Many of them had traversed treacherous 'dunki' routes, crossing several rivers and forests of South American nations while facing extortion and getting roughed up, to illegally enter the US.

Becoming popular in common parlance following the release of Shah Rukh Khan's 'Dunki' in 2023, it refers to illegal immigration that



Gujarat natives deported from US being brought to the Ahmedabad, on Thursday

involves crossing borders through covert stops in multiple countries, mostly facilitated by agents.

Recounting the horror faced by 27-year-old Robin Handa, who was among the deportees, his father Manjit Singh said his son travelled

across Guyana, Brazil, Peru, Colombia, Ecuador and Guatemala, crossed a sea and passed through jungles, staying hungry for days, to reach the Mexico-US border.

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