

Congress reaffirms commitment to caste-based census, OBC empowerment

Promises equity in governance by giving voice, visibility to the underrepresented people

Team Herald

PANJIM: Goa Pradesh Congress Committee (GPCC) President Amit Patkar, has reiterated the party's firm support for a nationwide caste-based census, echoing the stance of Leader of the Opposition in the Lok Sabha, Rahul Gandhi, who has consistently advocated for the census being the cornerstone of equality, social justice, and true representation.

Speaking after receiving a memorandum from the Bhandari Samaj, Patkar—accompanied by Leader

“The Congress Party stands in unwavering solidarity with the OBC community in their rightful demand for a caste-based census. This is not merely a demand, but a necessity for ensuring that every section of society receives its due share in resources, representation, and opportunities”

— Amit Patkar, GPCC President

of the Opposition Yuri Alemo and GPCC OBC Department Chairman Sharad Chopdekar—stated, “The Congress Party stands in unwavering solidarity with the OBC community in their rightful demand for a caste-based census. This is not merely

a demand, but a necessity for ensuring that every section of society receives its due share in resources, representation, and opportunities.”

Patkar emphasised that, under the leadership of Rahul Gandhi, the Indian National Congress

has committed to restoring balance and equity in governance by giving voice and visibility to the 90% of the population that remains underrepresented.

The memorandum submitted by the Bhandari Samaj highlights the growing sentiment among backward communities for recognition, dignity, and data-driven policies. The Congress Party, both at the national and state level, pledges to carry forward this demand and continue the struggle for justice and empowerment.

Political analyst slams BJP for neglecting ST community

Team Herald

PANJIM: Political analyst Trajano D'Mello and social worker Mariano Rodrigues on Friday slammed the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) for neglecting the rights of the Scheduled Tribes (ST) community, coastal communities, and broader state priorities, accusing the central government of treating Goa as an afterthought in national policy making.

Speaking to reporters, Trajano and Rodrigues highlighted three major areas where the BJP-led NDA government has allegedly failed the people of Goa. Trajano

noted the unjustified delay in the ST Reservation Bill, despite the ST community constituting around 12 per cent of Goa's population.

Alleging that Goa was being treated as a low priority in Parliament, they criticised the BJP for fast-tracking other legislative matters while consistently sidelining crucial bills concerning Goa, particularly the pending ST Reservation Bill. “Even after our MPs pushed for it in the Business Advisory Committee, there has been no progress,” said Trajano, expressing disappointment over the continued neglect.

Porvorim police bust IPL betting racket, 3 arrested

Team Herald

PANJIM: In a major crackdown on illegal betting, Porvorim Police have arrested three individuals allegedly operating an Indian Premier League (IPL) betting racket from a villa in Socorro, Bardez. Authorities seized seven mobile phones, one laptop, and other accessories, collectively valued at Rs 2.10 lakh.

The accused have been identified as Vijay Kumar Manwani, 45 and Sudesh Kumar Otvani 25, both hailing from Madhya Pradesh and Musa Shaikh, 29 from West Bengal. Police said the trio was caught red-handed while placing and accepting bets via mobile phones and online platforms during the IPL

Authorities seized seven mobile phones, one laptop, and other accessories, collectively valued at Rs 2.10 lakh

match between Delhi Capitals and Royal Challengers Bangalore.

The operation was being run from Villa No. 29, Sun Escora Residential Complex, located in Socorro, Bardez.

An official offence has been registered, and investigations are currently being led by PSI Sanket Talkar, under the supervision of PI Rahul Parab, Porvorim Police Station, along with SDPO Vishvesh Karpe and SP North, Akshat Kaushal, IPS.

CM warns p'yat secretaries over house repair permission delays

Team Herald

BICHOLIM: Chief Minister Pramod Sawant has warned that panchayat secretaries failing to issue house repair No Objection Certificates (NOCs) within three days of application may face immediate suspension.

Speaking during inauguration of a private farmhouse at Adwalpal, Sawant said, complaints against such officials must be made to the Director of Panchayats and strict action, including removal from office, should follow.

“The government has already started tightening laws. Those posing hurdles in government work will not be tolerated,” Sawant warned.

He said that the village panchayats should support good deeds in the village. “We will not tolerate any officer bringing obstructions while doing the people's work and we will not hesitate to suspend such officers. For me development of village is important,” Sawant said.

The Chief Minister disclosed that in future an industrial estate will be developed at Latambarcem in Bicholim taluka and only food and beverages units will be permitted there.

The Chief Minister praised Tulshidas Gaonkar for starting his own enterprise in the village which he said, will help to promote tourism. He called upon others to emulate Gaonkar and to start their own enterprise.

LILIES BY THE HIGHWAY



The St Cruz stretch of the elevated expressway is now a vibrant spectacle, with spider lilies in full bloom on the median, thanks to ample sunshine and regular watering

Goa prepared for summer power demand surge, says Minister

Advances energy transition with induction cooktop distribution and electric cooking initiatives

Team Herald

PANJIM: Power Minister Ramakrishna 'Sudin' Dhavalikar on Friday said that the government has already made provisions for 750 to 850 Megawatts (MW) of electricity to meet the peak power demand during the summer season.

Speaking to media persons on the sidelines of an event at Porvorim, Dhavalikar stated, “On average, Goa's annual power consumption, which is 650 MW, has increased to 750 MW. This year, it may increase by another 50 MW. We have already made provision for it due to the summer season. If we want to be efficient, then we have to work accordingly.”

Earlier, Dhavalikar distributed induc-

tion cooktops to 650 anganwadis from six talukas across the State at a function organised by the Electricity Department in collaboration with the Bureau of Energy Efficiency, held at the Secretariat Seminar Hall, Porvorim.

The Minister emphasised that sources of energy are important and must be conserved and used judiciously. The induction cook-tops were provided under the promotion of the Clean Cooking Programme.

He added that the State is also focusing on a transition to electric cooking through initiatives like the Goem Vinamulya Vij Yevjan and the Electric Mobility Promotion Policy.

Dhavalikar said, “Goa will achieve its set target for renewable energy by 2029. India has set a national target of achieving at least 500 GW of non-fos-

sil power capacity by 2030, Goa is well on track to meet its share a year earlier.”

The anganwadis from six talukas — Sattari, Bicholim, Bardez, Ponda, Salcete, and Quepem — received the benefits of the scheme. The remaining anganwadis from other talukas will be covered in the next phase.

Nodal Officer (State Designated Agency) and Electricity Department Superintending Engineers Mayur Hede and Rajeev Samant, along with CDOs, Mukhyasevikas, and others, were present at the function.

Superintending Engineer (Commercial) Shailesh Burye welcomed the guests, while Assistant Engineer Megha Nadkarni compered the function. Executive Engineer Rajiv Naik proposed the vote of thanks.

With an eye on 2027 polls, BJP red flags duplicate voter entries

Team Herald

PANJIM: With an eye on the 2027 electoral battle, the BJP raised concern over the mushrooming of bogus voters in the State and called on the Chief Electoral Officer (CEO) to initiate action and weed out the duplicates.

Goa BJP President Damu Naik on Friday met the CEO Ramesh Verma and demanded that the official verify and delete bogus voter registrations, particularly in cases where multiple voters are listed under a single house number.

Submitting a formal memorandum, Naik raised concerns over what he de-

scribed as “a malice” affecting the electoral rolls across Goa. He called for a comprehensive verification exercise to weed out duplicate, deceased, and relocated voters.

“The existing drive to link Aadhaar cards with voter names in the electoral roll is a good practice and needs to be expedited, especially with the Goa Legislative Assembly elections scheduled for 2027,” Naik stated. “We request that voters registered under a single house number be grouped for easier verification.”

Highlighting discrepancies that persist despite previous cleanup attempts,

KEY DEMANDS

- Raise concern over duplicate entries of voters in various constituencies, states
- Feel the need to expedite ongoing drive to link Aadhaar numbers with voter ID cards
- Call for deletion of voters who have either moved away or deceased
- Back integration of electoral database with birth, death registry to facilitate updates



he said, “It has been noticed that voters who have moved away from their place of residence continue to appear in the rolls.”

Naik also called for a systematic integration of electoral data with the state's birth and death registry to

ensure that names of deceased individuals are removed promptly.

He stressed the need to tackle duplicate enrolment, saying, “Duplicate voters, if any, remain a serious issue. Some individuals enrol themselves at more than

one location. This verification should not be limited to polling booths but carried out across Goa—and even across Bharat—to identify and eliminate such cases.”

In his memorandum, the BJP State President further insisted that all additions or deletions to the electoral roll be done in consultation with BLA 1 and BLA 2, the Booth Level Agents appointed by political parties, rather than solely at the discretion of Booth Level Officers (BLOs).

“There have been many instances where unilateral decisions are being taken by BLOs. This needs to stop,” he added.

Bloggers, influencers accused of defaming Goa tourism

Team Herald

CALANGUTE: Accusations have emerged from within Goa's tourism sector, alleging that social media bloggers and influencers are deliberately tarnishing the image of the coastal state, purportedly at the behest of rival regions and countries.

“There are bloggers and influencers who are trying to defame Goa and bring down the name of Goa. They're paid by some other states and countries. Because of them, the name of Goa is getting tarnished,” said John Lobo, President of the All-Goa Tourism Stakeholders Association (AGTSA), during a press conference held in Calangute.

Lobo laid blame on social media for the noticeable dip in tourist arrivals this season, stating that online personalities often seize upon isolated incidents or underperforming locations to create a negative por-

trayal of the entire state. “There are certain areas where there are fewer tourists and that is portrayed as the whole of Goa which is not true,” he asserted.

Echoing similar concerns, Cruz Cardozo, President of the Shack Owners Welfare Society (SOWS), expressed frustration at the impact of online narratives on public perception. “Everybody is saying tourists are less in Goa. Social media influencers have given us negative publicity for some reason. We request the government to take action against these influencers,” he said.

Calangute MLA Michael Lobo emphasised the importance of cleanliness and tourist safety in reviving the sector, while also pointing to the growing influence of online commentary in shaping perceptions of Goa.

Lobo also raised concerns about Goa's waning appeal to affluent international visitors.

Goa's cashew set for GI tag by year-end, says MLA

Team Herald

PANJIM: In a landmark development aimed at preserving Goan agricultural heritage and protecting local cultivators, Goa's famed cashew nuts are set to receive a Geographical Indication (GI) tag by the end of the year.

The announcement was made by Deviya Rane, Chairperson of the Goa Forest Development Corporation (GFDC) and MLA from Poriem, who confirmed that the GI certification process is expected to be completed by the end of 2025.

“By the end of 2025, Goa's cashew will receive its rightful GI tag,” Rane said. “This will offer it a unique branding and help curb the growing trend of non-Goan cashews being sold as Goan.”

The GI tag will officially recognise the distinc-

GOA CASHEW FEST AT CAMPAL FROM APRIL 25-27

Team Herald

PANJIM: The three-day Goa Cashew Fest 2025 – Season 3 will be held from April 25 to 27 at the Dayanand Bandodkar Ground, Panjim.

This festival is the brainchild of MLA Deviya Rane and an initiative of the Goa Forest Development Corporation (GFDC). Over the years, Goa Cashew Fest has attained the status of a signature State festival, celebrating the rich heritage of cashew cultivation, the hard work of cashew cultivators, its diverse by-products, and the deep-rooted connection between Goan culture and this cherished crop. The three-day extravaganza promises to be bigger and better, featuring a Sundowner set, fashion show, food and beverage stalls, live performances by renowned national and Goan artists, as well as exciting games and spot prizes. Entry to the festival is free.

Stakeholders across the industry have welcomed the move, seeing it as a game-changer that could boost both market value and export potential for the region's cashew produce.

Goa targets Oman through roadshow

Team Herald

PANJIM: The Department of Tourism conducted a successful roadshow in Muscat, Oman, reinforcing its commitment to promoting Goa as a premier tourism destination in the Middle East. The roadshow served as a strategic platform to engage with key travel trade professionals, tour operators, media representatives, and potential investors, while highlighting Goa's diverse tourism offerings and emerging opportunities.

Kuldeep Arolkar, Managing Director of the Goa Tourism Development Corporation (GTDC), along with leading stakeholders from Oman's travel and hospitality industry, was present at the event.

The Goa Tourism delegation was joined by members of the Travel and Tourism Association of Goa (TTAG), led by its President Jack Sukhija, and included charter operators, hoteliers, and travel agents.

The roadshow featured an engaging networking session, during which key discussions focused on Goa's new tourism initiatives—such as regenerative tourism, eco-tourism circuits, and the promotion of niche segments including wellness tourism, adventure tourism, and cultural heritage experiences. Tavishi Bahl, Deputy Chief of Mission at the Embassy of India in Muscat, addressed the gathering with warm remarks, underscoring the growing tourism and cultural ties between Goa and Oman.

In his keynote address, Arolkar emphasised Goa's position as a world-class tourism destination and showcased new initiatives under the Regenerative Tourism model.

As part of the roadshow, Goa Tourism also hosted a special ‘Goa Evening’ at the Crowne Plaza Muscat, where attendees were treated to a glimpse of Goa's vibrant culture.

Happy Birthday

FRANCISCO SILVEIRA

Former Minister of Govt. of Goa, Former MLA St. Andre Constituency, Chairman Goa State Minorities Finance & Development Corporation

Best wishes from:
JOYD CARVALHO, MASHWIN SILVEIRA, FELIX RIBEIRO (Agassaim)

Birthday Greetings

FRANCISCO SILVEIRA

(Ex. Minister Govt of Goa, Ex. MLA St. Andre Constituency, Chairman of Goa State minority Finance Department Corporation Ltd)

From:
SEBY, BOBITA, CRUZ & FLY (MALWARA AGASSAIM)