

## Ripples in Goa as Kejri says no coalition with Congress

Team Herald

**PANJIM:** The political rift between Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) and Congress appears to be widening, with AAP's Goa unit backing party chief Arvind Kejriwal's categorical declaration in Ahmedabad that the alliance with the Congress is over. This has drawn guarded responses from Congress leadership in the State, exposing the fragility of Opposition unity post-Lok Sabha elections.

Speaking in Ahmedabad on Thursday, Kejriwal said the INDIA Bloc – the Opposition front formed to take on the BJP – was "only for the Lok Sabha elections" and that AAP has no alliance with the Congress going forward. He accused the Congress of tacitly helping the BJP during the recent Visavadar bypoll in Gujarat, where the Congress finished third.

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**"If there was any alliance, why did they (Cong) contest the bypoll in Visavadar (in Gujarat)? They were sent by the BJP to cut AAP's votes. The Congress has failed as an opposition and is indirectly aiding the BJP"**  
– Arvind Kejriwal, AAP supremo

**"What Kejriwal is saying is right. Congress refused to ally with AAP in the Haryana Assembly elections. Even here in Goa, after the Lok Sabha results, Congress leaders started distancing themselves. When it suited them, they spoke of unity. Now, they talk about going solo"**

– Amit Palekar, AAP Goa chief

**"Arvind Kejriwal is AAP's national convener and it is their internal matter. As far as Congress is concerned, the INDIA Bloc was formed for the Lok Sabha elections and the High Command will decide policy and alliance matters going forward"**

– Manikrao Thakare, AICC General Secretary in charge of Goa

why did they contest the bypoll in Visavadar? They were sent by the BJP to cut AAP's votes. The Congress

has failed as an opposition and is indirectly aiding the BJP," Kejriwal charged, while launching his par-

ty's 'Gujarat Jodo Abhiyan' ahead of the 2027 Assembly polls.

Reacting to the remarks,

AAP Goa State President Adv Amit Palekar fully endorsed Kejriwal's statement, asserting that Congress treats alliances as tools of convenience.

"What Kejriwal is saying is right. Congress refused to ally with AAP in the Haryana Assembly elections. Even here in Goa, after the Lok Sabha results, Congress leaders started distancing themselves. When it suited them, they spoke of unity. Now, they talk about going solo," Palekar said.

Palekar also confirmed that AAP is preparing to contest the 2027 Goa Assembly elections independently, adding that the party has already started strengthening its grassroots network in the state.

"It's too early to talk about alliances in Goa, but we are moving forward on our own strength," he added.

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## Pune techie raped at home by man posing as delivery agent

**PTI, PUNE:** An unidentified man allegedly raped a 22-year-old IT professional after entering her flat in Pune city by posing as a courier delivery executive, and was yet to be nabbed nearly 24 hours after the crime.



He clicked a selfie using the woman's phone in which her back and a part of his face are seen, and left a message warning that he had taken her pictures and would release them on social media if she reported the incident, police said.

"I will come again," the message read, according to police.

The incident took place at a housing society in Kondhwa area of the city at around 7.30 pm on Wednesday, said Deputy Commissioner of Police (Zone 5) Rajkumar Shinde.

The woman, who works in a private firm, was alone at home as her brother had gone out of town, the official said. The accused told her he was a courier delivery person and showed her what looked like a bank-related document, she told police.

He asked for a pen to sign a document, and as she turned her back on him, he stepped inside the apartment and latched the door before forcing himself on her, as per the complaint.

The woman told police that she passed out at this point.

"She does not remember anything (after this) as she gained consciousness around 8.30 pm. She then informed her relatives and the police were alerted," DCP Shinde said.

The man clicked a selfie with the woman's phone while she was unconscious. He also left a message on her phone that he had taken her photos, and if she reported the incident, he would circulate them on social media.

Police were probing if any kind of spray was used to make her unconscious, the DCP said.

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## Second pontoon arrives to salvage sunk ferry

**With improved equipment, a full-scale recovery operation could begin soon at Chorao**

Team Herald

**PANJIM:** A second pontoon, equipped with an additional crane, has arrived at Chorao to aid the ongoing effort to recover the stranded ferry Betim, fuelling hopes that a full-scale salvage operation is finally set to begin.

The ferry has remained partially submerged at the Chorao Island ramp since July 23, when one of its tanks became flooded. While three parked bikes that sank along with the vessel were recovered the same evening, the ferry itself has posed a far greater challenge for the River Navigation Department (RND), which has now been battling the situation for over 10 days.

According to RND sources, the operation to secure the ferry to the pontoon has



The ferry Betim still submerged at Chorao

been repeatedly hampered by poor underwater visibility. Divers tasked with fastening chains to the submerged vessel struggled, as the chains kept slipping off during multiple attempts.

RND Director Vikram Rajee Bhosale explained that the vessel could only be secured from beneath the surface — something that only divers can do — but murky waters rendered it impossible to complete the task.

The arrival of the second

pontoon is being seen as a major step forward. Local resident Eusebio D'Silva voiced cautious optimism: "Finally, a second pontoon has arrived, increasing the possibility of lifting the ferryboat soon. What I've learnt is that once it's secured, pumps will be deployed to drain water from the engine room. That should allow the ferry to float again. Probably this will happen tomorrow," he said.

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## Delhi fuel ban for old vehicles revoked

**PTI, NEW DELHI:** The Delhi government has written to the Commission for Air Quality Management (CAQM), arguing the fuel ban on overage vehicles is not feasible due to technological challenges and has requested the pan-

el to put it on hold with immediate effect.

Addressing a press conference here, Delhi Environment minister Manjinder Singh Sirsa on Thursday said that there was discontent among people due to the move

and the government stood with them.

Sirsa also said the Delhi government is trying to find out a solution to the ban on end of life vehicles (EOL) including 10-year and older diesel and 15-year-old petrol

vehicles.

"We are trying to ensure that the vehicles are not banned according to their age rather on the basis of pollution caused by them," Sirsa said.

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