

GOA SPEAKER TO JOIN INDIAN DELEGATION AT 68TH COMMONWEALTH PARLIAMENTARY CONFERENCE IN BARBADOS

Panaji : October 03, 2025

The Speaker of the Goa Legislative Assembly, Dr. Ganesh Gaunker, will represent Goa as a distinguished member of the Indian Parliamentary Delegation led by the Speaker of the Lok Sabha, Shri Om Birla, at the 68th Commonwealth Parliamentary Conference (CPC) to be held in Bridgetown, Barbados, from October 5 to 12, 2025.

The conference is organized by the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association (CPA), the annual CPC is one of the most important international forums bringing together Speakers, Presiding Officers, Members of Parliament and legislators from across 56 Commonwealth nations to deliberate on key issues of governance, democracy, development, and global cooperation. This year's conference will be held under the central theme "The Commonwealth - A Global Partner."

As part of the conference agenda, Dr. Gaunker will participate in Workshop D, titled "Climate Change and its Threat to Global Health - Finding Sustainable Solutions." This high-level session will examine how climate change is exacerbating public health crises across the world, how vulnerable regions are coping with new environmental health challenges, and how legislative institutions can respond effectively. With Goa facing serious environmental pressures from coastal erosion and rising sea levels to changes in rainfall patterns and vector-borne disease risks - Dr. Gaunker's participation is expected to highlight how smaller coastal states can lead with innovative policy interventions, strengthen public health systems and integrate sustainability into legislative planning.

The Goa Speaker will also participate in Workshop E, "Building Trust and Transparency in Democracy: Financial Transparency in Parliaments and Elections." This workshop will focus on how democratic institutions can rebuild public trust by enhancing accountability, ensuring transparent financial practices and safeguarding the integrity of electoral processes. The session will address global concerns about the erosion of trust in democratic systems and explore how parliaments can adopt stronger oversight mechanisms, disclosure norms and ethical standards. Dr. Gaunker is expected to share Goa's experience in promoting legislative transparency and underline the importance of collaboration among commonwealth democracies to strengthen institutional credibility and public confidence.

Dr. Gaunker's presence in Barbados also holds symbolic significance for the global Goan community. With a large and influential Goan diaspora in many Commonwealth nations, the Speaker's participation will serve to strengthen these enduring people-to-people connections and reinforce Goa's reputation as a dynamic

and globally engaged state. It is also expected to enhance cooperation in areas such as environmental resilience, democratic innovation, and institutional capacity-building, which are vital to the state's long-term development.

The 68th Commonwealth Parliamentary Conference will feature plenary sessions, panel discussions and thematic workshops on a wide range of contemporary issues, including the future of multilateralism, the evolving role of parliaments in the digital era and the promotion of inclusive governance. Dr. Gaunker's contributions on behalf of Goa will not only enrich the deliberations but also help build stronger legislative networks across continents. His participation underlines Goa's continuing commitment to democratic values, parliamentary excellence and constructive global engagement.

Participation in the Commonwealth Parliamentary Conference offers Goa an opportunity to project its perspectives on global platforms and contribute meaningfully to international policy conversations. It also reinforces the importance of subnational legislatures like the Goa Assembly in shaping responses to transnational challenges. Through its interventions on climate action, sustainable governance, and democratic accountability, Goa will demonstrate how smaller legislative bodies can play a significant role in advancing the Commonwealth's shared values and goals.

Goa holds a special place in the history of the Commonwealth. In 1982, it hosted the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM), a landmark event that significantly strengthened India's diplomatic engagement with the Commonwealth family and showcased Goa's global hospitality. That legacy continues to resonate more than four decades later. Today, Goa remains deeply connected to the Commonwealth through its vibrant and widespread diaspora in countries such as the United Kingdom, Canada, Australia, and other member states, where people of Goan origin have contributed immensely to their adopted societies while maintaining strong cultural and emotional links with their homeland.

The Commonwealth Parliamentary Conference provides an unparalleled platform for legislators to exchange ideas, share best practices and develop coordinated responses to common challenges. It addresses emerging issues affecting democracies, including climate change, sustainable development, technology and governance, gender equity, youth empowerment and parliamentary reforms. For India, and particularly for smaller states like Goa, participation in such a forum is an opportunity to contribute to the shaping of global policy discourse and to learn from diverse legislative experiences that can be adapted to local context.

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