

CARES LEADS THE WAY: ATAL NIRNAY IGNITES GOA'S GREEN INNOVATION MOVEMENT

Panaji: February 20, 2026

The 'ATAL Nirnay – Goa Codes 2026' competition has been conceptualised to address the pressing environmental challenges faced by the State, particularly issues related to pollution and waste management. The term Nirnay, meaning decision, reflects the core philosophy that meaningful change begins with responsible and conscious decisions at the individual level.

The competition empowers students from Classes VI to IX to become active participants in environmental transformation through innovation, technology, awareness, and community engagement. Phase I – the School Level Selection Round – commenced on February 2, 2026 with statewide orientation sessions for Heads of Institutions. The competition is structured as a 28-day challenge, encouraging sustained participation rather than one-day activities.

It is widely recognised that approximately 21 days are required to build a habit - to instil consistent waste segregation practices, encourage long-term environmental responsibility, create sustained awareness at home, school, and community levels, and build a culture of accountability and cleanliness. The focus is not merely on conducting activities, but on nurturing lasting environmental values and habits. The competition integrates eco-awareness, robotics, innovation, and community participation through five structured events i.e. the Smart Waste Solution Challenge (Eco-Tech Advancement), Garbage Awareness Campaign – From Home to Community, Clean Goa Action Drive, Digital Awareness Campaign, and Study and Documentation. Through these activities, students identify real waste management issues, develop innovative models and prototypes, conduct awareness campaigns, engage with local communities, and document measurable environmental impact.

'ATAL Nirnay – Goa Codes 2026' aligns with the Chief Minister, Dr Pramod Sawant sustained efforts to reduce waste generation and strengthen environmental management systems across the State, contributing towards the larger vision of a Garbage-Mukt Goa. At the national level, it resonates with the Prime Minister, Shri Narendra Modi's emphasis on Swachh Bharat, sustainable development, responsible citizenship, and youth-driven innovation.

By integrating technology with environmental awareness, the initiative reflects a strong commitment to both local priorities and national goals. The competition is organised by the Project Management Unit (PMU) under the CARES Scheme, Directorate of Technical Education, Government of Goa, in association with the Goa Waste Management Corporation (GWMC). A total of 688 teams from schools across

the State have registered for the competition, demonstrating widespread participation and enthusiasm.

GWMC will facilitate infrastructure for the collection and disposal of waste gathered during the cleanliness drives. Also, the PMU will share details of identified 'Black Spots' — areas where waste repeatedly accumulates — with GWMC, which will take necessary steps for monitoring and eliminating such sites. This coordination ensures that student-driven activities are connected to real governance mechanisms.

Teach for Goa - Fellows (TFG-Fs) Mentors are actively guiding participating schools by providing technical support and overall coordination. Teachers and students have also been trained to use Robotics Hardware Kits (RHKs) provided to schools under the CARES scheme, enabling practical innovation and eco-tech solution development. This approach ensures that environmental awareness is effectively combined with technological skill-building.

To encourage active and meaningful participation, attractive cash prizes have been announced for the competition. The winning teams at the State Level will receive ₹50,000 for the First Prize, ₹40,000 for the Second Prize, and ₹30,000 for the Third Prize. Consolation prizes of ₹10,000 each will also be given to recognise special efforts. In addition, Taluka - Level winners will receive ₹8,000 and ₹6,000 respectively. The prize money will be awarded to the respective schools. ATAL Nirnay is designed to bring positivity and cleanliness across Goa, beginning from small, manageable areas such as homes, classrooms, and neighbourhoods. The philosophy behind the initiative is simple: small actions at the individual level can create extraordinary impact at the community level. Even a small "area of positivity" can inspire wider behavioural change across society.

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