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Goa CM Sawant asks 3 coalition mantris to quit

Decides To Accommodate 4 New Ministers

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Panaji: Goa chief minister Pramod Sawant on Friday asked three ministers from Goa Forward Party (GFP), including deputy chief minister Vijai Sardesai, and an independent minister Rohan Khaunte to resign from his cabinet, paving way for the swearing-in of four new ministers on Saturday.

"As per the instruction of the central leadership, I have conveyed the message to Sardesai and Khaunte that they should resign as ministers," Sawant told TOI from Delhi. TOI was the first to report in its Thursday edition that Sawant would drop all four coalition ministers from his cabinet.

Sardesai, who played a key



role in forming the BJP-led coalition under former chief minister Manohar Parrikar, said he was surprised by the developments and his party would take appropriate steps after talks with the central leadership of BJP.

The four new ministers who would be inducted into the cabinet include Panaji MLA Atanasio Monserrate, Quepem MLA and former leader of opposition Chandrakant Kavalakar, Velim MLA Filipe Neri Rodrigues—all former Congress MLAs—and deputy speaker and BJP's Calangute MLA Michael Lobo.

GFP, the post-poll ally of BJP after the 2017 assembly elections and a constituent of

The move for a cabinet reshuffle comes after 10 MLAs belonging to Congress joined BJP on Wednesday, taking the saffron party's strength in the 40-member House to 27, while Congress has been reduced to five

NDA at the Centre, had three members—all ministers.

Besides Sardesai, who was holding the portfolios of town and country planning, agriculture, forests and factories and boilers, the other two are water resources minister Vinod Palienkar and housing and ports minister Jayesh Salgaonkar.

"There was no provocation from us nor was there any threat to the government. We are with NDA. They should tell us what is the reason for this development," he said. Sardesai, who is also his party's president, said there was no indication from the BJP central leadership that they would be dropped from the government.