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## Parrikar-groomed, RSS man Sawant picked as Goa CM

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Margao: As 46-year-old Pramod Sawant succeeds Manohar Parrikar as Goa's chief minister, BJP effectively passes the mantle to its GenNext leadership. Sawant is also the only BJP MLA in Goa from the RSS cadre.

He was party spokesperson and Speaker of the state assembly until his elevation to the CM's post.

Sawant belongs to Cotombi, a village in Bicholim. His saffron leanings from his early days grounded him in the Hinduva ideology. His father, Pandurang Sawant, a former zilla panchayat member, was actively associated with Bharatiya Jana Sangh, Bharatiya Mazdoor Sangh and was also recognised as BJP's loyal foot-soldier.

After graduating in Ayurveda medicine, Sawant pursued post-graduation in social work and also studies in 'medico-legal system'.

Sawant plunged into poli-



Pramod Sawant, 46, was party spokesperson and Speaker of the assembly until his elevation

tics on the insistence of BJP leadership in 2008 after the Sanquelim (now Sakhali) assembly seat fell vacant.

Quitting his government job as Ayurveda physician in the north district hospital at Mapusa, Sawant contested the byelection as a BJP candidate, but lost. He, however, triumphed in 2012 assembly polls and in 2017 polls.

After the BJP-led coalition led by Parrikar came to power following the 2017 election, Sawant was elected

Speaker, making him the youngest in the post among all state assemblies at the time. Sawant was in the reckoning for the top post ever since the question of a successor for Parrikar came to the fore following detection of Parrikar's illness. He had also met RSS sarsanghchalak in October last year to pitch for his candidature for the CM's post.

Believed to have been groomed into politics by Parrikar himself, Sawant was also the late CM's preferred choice. Sources said his loyalty weighed in his favour as Parrikar's successor. "Sawant's loyalty to the party is such that he would always put the party before any personal ambition. Besides BJP's requirement of a relatively younger candidate to lead the party for the next 10-15 years worked in his favour, Parrikar's writ that the next CM should be among BJP legislators also prevailed," a party source said.