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Goa deputy
CM dropped
from Cabinet

ABHIJIT MULYE @ Mumbai

BARELY a week after he was sworn in as one of the two deputy chief ministers in Goa, Maharashtrawadi Gomantak Party leader Sudin Dhavalikar was dropped from the Cabinet on Wednesday.

The development came hours after two of his party MLAs — Manohar Ajgaonkar and Dipak Pawaskar — joined the BJP, which leads the coalition government. With this, the BJP's strength has increased from 12 to 14 in the 36-member House. The Congress, the principal opposition party, also has 14 MLAs.

According to sources, it will bring more stability to the BJP-led government and also increase the party's prospects in the Assembly by-polls in three constituencies on April 23.

The decision to drop Dhavalikar from the Cabinet was taken by CM Pramod Sawant. Ajgaonkar currently holds transport portfolio in Sawant's cabinet, while Pawaskar is expected to be inducted in the Cabinet soon.