

PM meets Goa mining team, blames Oppn for impasse

**Rajeev Jayaswal and
Gerard de Souza**

■ letters@hindustantimes.com

NEW DELHI/PANAJI: Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Wednesday told a delegation from Goa that the government may not immediately amend an existing law to restart iron ore mining in the state because of frequent disruptions in parliamentary proceedings caused by the opposition.

The mining dependents, represented by Goa Mining People's Front (GMPF) and MPs from Goa, including Narendra Sawai-
kar and Shripad Naik, met the Prime Minister in New Delhi to seek resumption of the iron ore extraction in the coastal state.

"The delegation met PM for about 15 minutes and sought his intervention to save the liveli-

hood of about 3 lakh people of the state directly and indirectly involved in the mining sector. PM said 'parliament is not functioning well,' Puti Gaonkar, a member of the delegation, said. Iron ore mining came to a halt in March after the Supreme Court ruled that the renewals of 88 mining leases by the state government in 2015 were illegal. The industry has sought an amendment to either the Mines and Minerals (Development and Regulation) (MMDR) Act or the Goa Daman and Diu (Abolition of Concession and Declaration as Mining Leases) Act, 1987 to restart iron ore extraction and avoid auctions now mandated by the MMDR Act.

South Goa Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) MP Narendra Sawai-
kar, who too was part of the dele-

gation, said Modi assured the delegation that "we will all have to work together to try and find a solution to the issue." "We have explained to him the situation and he has also said he's aware that the situation has arisen because of the Supreme Court judgement," Sawaikar said. Goa's town and planning minister Vijai Sardesai warned that if mining does not resume in the state, people will "react" in the coming Lok Sabha polls.

Union AYUSH Minister Shripad Naik, Goa BJP chief and Rajya Sabha MP Vinay Tendulkar, South Goa Lok Sabha member Narendra Sawaikar and representatives of Goa Mining People's Front (GMPF) made a presentation to the prime minister in Delhi over issues plaguing the industry.