



Goa CM Orders Crackdown On **Illegal** Tourism Units

■ WARNS Of More Arrests In Birch Fire Case.

Team Goemkarponn

PANAJI: Chief Minister Pramod Sawant said the government will shut down any tourism business operating without a fire NOC or essential safety systems, adding that the Joint Enforcement and Monitoring Committee has already started on-site inspections and immediate action will follow wherever violations are found. Chief Minister Pramod Sawant and Tourism Minister Rohan Khaunte on Wednesday chaired a high-level meeting with district officials, police, and tourism stakeholders



following the Arpora nightclub fire tragedy. Sawant also confirmed that two of the three suspended government officials Shamila Monteiro

and Siddhi Halankar have appeared before investigators in the Birch by Romeo Lane fire case. However, Arpora-Nagoa Village Panchayat

Secretary Raghuvir Bagkar has still not recorded his statement. The Chief Minister warned that Bagkar would be arrested if he continues to evade police. Updating on the probe, Sawant said six arrests have been made so far and assured that every individual linked to the nightclub blaze will face action. He noted that the Birch establishment operated without construction licenses and relied only on a trade license issued by the panchayat. The Chief Minister added that police are coordinating **CONTD TO PAGE 06...**

Goa Still Safe & Welcoming, Says Min Khaunte

Team Goemkarponn

PANAJI: Tourism Minister Rohan Khaunte has urged that Goa should not be projected in a negative light following the recent Birch by Romeo Lane fire incident. Describing the tragedy as unfortunate, he said the state's tourism sector has earned decades of trust and continues to stand on its reputation of being safe, welcoming, and open to visitors. Khaunte emphasised that there will be no compromise on safety standards and that the government is committed to restoring confidence among travellers. With December being the



peak tourist season, he said Goa must quickly regroup and ensure a secure environment for all visitors. Reiterating that Goa remains a dependable and hospitable destination, the minister stressed that the focus now is on strengthening safety protocols while continuing to support the state's tourism industry.

Patkar-Sardesai Plot to Weaken RGP, Claims Manoj Parab

■ "RGP chief accuses Congress and Goa Forward leaders of sabotaging ZP alliance, acting on BJP's instructions.

Team Goemkarponn

PANAJI: Revolutionary Goans Party (RGP) President Manoj Parab on Wednesday launched a scathing attack on Congress and Goa Forward leaders, alleging that a coordinated attempt was made to sabotage the Zilla Panchayat (ZP) poll alliance and weaken the RGP. Parab said that



AICC observer Manikrao Thakre arrived in Goa "completely unaware" that sitting Congress members from Santa Cruz intended to contest again. "Our alliance wasn't broken by

us; Vijai Sardesai broke it," he asserted, adding that the "Bhatkars Vijai Sardesai and Amit Patkar cannot run our Bahunjan Samaj RGP." Parab **CONTD TO PAGE 06...**

PM Modi, Rahul Gandhi Meet To Decide Next Chief Information Commissioner

■ Panel to also select eight Information Commissioners amid backlog of over 30,000 RTI cases.

New Delhi: Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Union Home Minister Amit Shah, and Lok Sabha Leader of the Opposition Rahul Gandhi are holding a closed-door meeting to finalise the appointment of the next Chief Information Commissioner (CIC). The panel is also expected to decide



on filling eight vacant positions for Information Commissioners at the



Central Information Commission (CIC). **CONTD TO PAGE 06...**

Centre Cuts IndiGo Routes By 10 Percent As CEO Elbers Meets Aviation Minister

■ Aviation minister reviews disruptions, directs faster refunds and strict compliance with passenger-care measures.

Team Goemkarponn

New Delhi: The Centre has ordered IndiGo to reduce its overall flight operations by 10 percent following a week of nationwide disruptions that caused widespread delays, cancellations and passenger grievances. The decision came after



Civil Aviation Minister Ram Mohan Naidu Kinjarapu met IndiGo

CEO Pieter Elbers to review the airline's **CONTD TO PAGE 06...**

Birch Fire Probe Widens; Luthra Brothers Move For Anticipatory Bail

Team Goemkarponn

PANAJI: The Luthra brothers — owners of the Goa nightclub Birch by Romeo Lane — have filed an anticipatory bail plea, which the Sessions Court is expected to take up today, their legal team confirmed. This comes even as Goa Police arrested the driver of Saurabh Luthra, widening the investigation into



the Arpora inferno that claimed 25 lives last week. Meanwhile, district authorities have begun demolishing structures linked to the brothers,



including portions of the Romeo Lane restaurant in Vagator. Officials say the establishment stood on government land and **CONTD TO PAGE 06...**

When Civil Servants Fail, Goa Pays the Price

Goa has weathered many storms over the years, but few have shaken public confidence like the recent revelations about senior civil servants meddling in serious investigations. The tragedy linked to the Birch nightclub has forced a deeper reckoning. At the heart of it lies a painful truth. When those entrusted with power choose convenience over duty, a state's soul begins to erode.

The allegations that senior IPS and IAS officers interfered with routine enforcement work are not minor administrative lapses. They represent a dangerous breach of public trust. Goa's policing and governance machinery depends on a chain of responsibility where every officer, no matter how senior, is expected to protect the public interest.

Once top officials begin shielding violators or blocking action, the system becomes skewed toward privilege. Ordinary citizens are left powerless. People in Goa have seen this pattern repeat itself. Illegal constructions mushroom with ease, often on fragile environments. Nightclubs operate far beyond permitted norms. Safety rules are treated as optional. Violations continue for years until disaster strikes or public anger becomes impossible to ignore. The Birch episode has simply laid bare how far the decay has spread. Civil servants often claim to be custodians of the law and the conscience of the state. Many live up to that duty. But when a few choose to meddle, obstruct or protect vested interests, they tarnish the entire service.

The actions of a handful cast a long, dark shadow over institutions meant to uphold integrity. Goa's image suffers, not because of a nightclub or a businessman, but because those in uniform and those in high offices failed to act when they should have.

The most troubling part is the sense of impunity. When the

People in Goa have seen this pattern repeat itself. Illegal constructions mushroom with ease, often on fragile environments. Nightclubs operate far beyond permitted norms. Safety rules are treated as optional. Violations continue for years until disaster strikes or public anger becomes impossible to ignore. The Birch episode has simply laid bare how far the decay has spread.

Civil servants often claim to be custodians of the law and the conscience of the state. Many live up to that duty. But when a few choose to meddle, obstruct or protect vested interests, they tarnish the entire service. The actions of a handful cast a long, dark shadow over institutions meant to uphold integrity. Goa's image suffers, not because of a nightclub or a businessman, but because those in uniform and those in high offices failed to act when they should have.

public hears that warnings were ignored, compliance notices went nowhere and junior officers felt pressured into silence, it raises an alarming question. Who really runs enforcement in Goa? Is it the law or is it influence? When senior officers step in not to strengthen an investigation but to dilute it, the law becomes negotiable.

And that is a crisis no modern state can afford. Goa's Chief Minister has promised action. He has said that senior officers who interfered will not be spared. Words, however, are easy.

Real accountability demands the political will to follow through even if it means unsettling powerful networks within the bureaucracy. Goa needs not another statement but a firm demonstration that rank does not grant immunity. The public mood is shifting. People are tired of hearing about probes that drag on and committees that gather dust. They want decisions. They want clarity.

Above all, they want to know that such a collapse of governance will not happen again. That requires more than individual punishment. It requires systematic reform. First, Goa must overhaul the way enforcement decisions are recorded and supervised. Every refusal to act, every unusual intervention and every deviation from procedure must leave a documented trail open to scrutiny. Second, political leadership must set a clear tone that interference from the top will not be tolerated. Third, civil servants must be reminded that their careers depend not on pleasing power centres but on upholding the law. Goa is not merely another state on India's map. It is a place whose reputation carries enormous weight both nationally and internationally. A single scandal reverberates far beyond its borders. When high-ranking officers compromise the system, they are not just bending rules. They are staining the image of a state that relies heavily on public confidence, tourism and a perception of safety. The time for polite warnings has passed. Goa needs accountability.

It needs transparency. And it needs civil servants who remember why they entered public service in the first place. If the state wants to reclaim its dignity, it must ensure that no officer, no matter how influential, can treat the law as a personal instrument. Only then can Goa begin to rebuild trust that has been deeply shaken.

EDITOR'S SPEAK

Time for Goa to Clear the Mess

-By Suraj Nandrekar

Goa has reached a turning point. The fire at Birch by Romeo Lane was not a random misfortune. It was the final blow delivered by years of unchecked illegal construction, weak regulation and a culture of looking away when rules were broken in the name of nightlife and quick profit. The tragedy shook the state not only because lives were lost, but because it revealed how deeply compromised the system had become. In the days that followed, the bulldozers arrived. Illegal portions of the property were pulled down. Authorities promised swift action and the hunt began for the club owners who fled abroad. These steps were necessary, but they feel like a hurried reaction rather than the outcome of a responsible and vigilant administration.

A state that had ignored violations for years suddenly discovered urgency only after disaster struck. This is where the real problem lies. Everyone knew what was happening. Notices were served. Complaints were filed. Violations were visible even to the untrained eye. Yet the club continued to grow, expand and operate as if it were immune to scrutiny. That kind of confidence does not come from good business sense. It comes from a belief that enforcement is negotiable. Goa has paid the price for such negligence many times before. Illegal hill cutting, haphazard coastal construction and unregulated shacks are recurring themes. The Birch fire has simply become the most painful reminder that the state can no longer treat violations as routine inconveniences.

Whether the culprits are influential businessmen or inattentive officials, the pattern is the same. Safety rules are weakened, processes are manipulated and complaints are ignored until lives are lost or public outrage becomes too big to brush aside. The families who lost loved ones deserve more than well-rehearsed condolences. They deserve complete clarity on who failed them. Was it the owners who neglected basic safety. Was it officials who looked the other way. Was it a system that treats paperwork as a mere formality. Accountability cannot stop at the demolition of one property. It must extend to those who failed to act when they were supposed to. More importantly, Goa cannot allow the tragedy to fade from memory once the headlines change. If this moment does not transform the way nightlife, tourism and construction are regulated, then nothing would have been learned. The state needs a transparent system where every licence, safety clearance and inspection is recorded, tracked and available for public scrutiny. Nightclubs and restaurants must meet strict standards.

Surprise inspections must become routine, not symbolic. And no business, no matter how connected, should feel untouchable. Goa's appeal has always been its mix of freedom and charm. But freedom does not mean lawlessness. A thriving tourism economy cannot be built on structures that are unsafe and authorities who are indifferent. The state owes its people and its visitors a safer environment than what the Birch fire exposed. It is time for Goa to clean up the mess it allowed to build up for too long. It must rebuild a culture where rules matter, where safety comes first and where accountability is not selective. The tragedy should become a turning point, not another chapter in a long list of avoidable failures. Only then can Goa begin to restore faith in its institutions and reclaim the reputation it has long enjoyed.

198 sq mts of Romeo Lane's Vagator structure demolished

Team Goemkarponn

PANAJI: The Department of Tourism, Government of Goa, on Tuesday carried out enforcement action against an unauthorized structure operating under the name "Romeo Lane" at Vagator beach. The action pertained to an encroachment identified within the Department's jurisdiction. Upon inspection, officials confirmed that the structure violated applicable regulations, prompting demolition in strict accordance with the law. It is noteworthy that the same structure had been subjected to demolition in 2024 for similar violations.



Despite prior enforcement, the unauthorized portion was reconstructed without approval, necessitating fresh action by the authorities. The Department clarified that while it serves as the registering authority for private shacks, it does not function as a licensing

authority. The Vagator structure falls under its jurisdiction as it is located on the beach. However, the establishment "Birch by Romeo Lane" at Arpora, site of the recent fire incident, lies outside the scope of the Tourism Department's regulatory

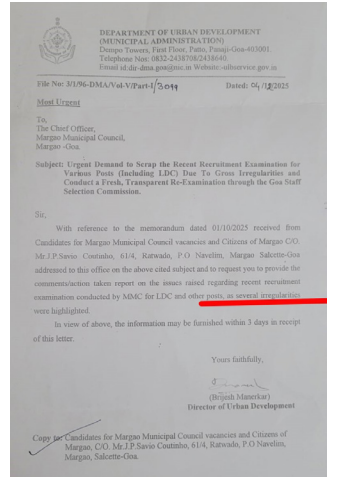
authority. Tourism Minister Shri Rohan A. Khaunte said, "The Department of Tourism has a clear mandate in areas that fall within its jurisdiction. Enforcement actions such as this are part of our ongoing drive against illegal structures, unauthorized activities, touts, and other practices that damage Goa's tourism credibility. These are routine governance measures aimed at ensuring tourism operates in an orderly, lawful, and responsible manner." Director of Tourism Shri Kedar Naik added that the action was carried out fully within the legal framework.

Irregularities in Margao Municipal Council Recruitment Raise Alarm

Team Goemkarponn

MARGAO: The recruitment process for Lower Division Clerk (LDC) posts by the Margao Municipal Council (MMC) has come under scrutiny after complaints from candidates and citizens alleging serious irregularities.

The Director of Municipal Administration, Brijesh Manerkar, has directed the Chief Officer of MMC to submit an action taken report within three days in response to the complaints. Candidates and citizens alleged that nearly 50% of eligible applicants were excluded from the written examination held on August 23rd and 24th, 2025, due to lapses in



communication regarding admit cards and exam details. They claimed that the examination, conducted internally by MMC without involving the Goa Staff Selection Commission (GSSC), raised questions about impartiality and transparency.



Man in women's underwear vandalises St Anthony's Chapel in New Vaddem

Team Goemkarponn

NEW VADDEM: A bizarre and disturbing late-night incident has left New Vaddem residents shocked after St Anthony's Chapel was found vandalised, with its donation box broken and the statue of St Anthony damaged in the early hours of Wednesday. The vandalism came to light when local residents opened the chapel in the morning and saw the desecration. According to residents, CCTV footage from the chapel area captured a middle-aged man roaming outside around 1.15 am wearing only women's underwear and a bra. He is suspected to have broken open the donation box and taken the cash before

damaging the statue. The man's unusual behaviour and the sacrilegious act have sparked outrage in the locality. The matter was reported to Vasco police, who visited the site, examined the damage, and collected the CCTV footage as part of the investigation. Police have begun efforts to identify and trace the suspect. Local ward councillor Sudesh Bhosle, who resides in the same area, said that some residents initially assumed the man seen half-clothed at night was mentally unstable and did not anticipate that he would cause damage. "People realised only in the morning that the statue had been vandalised and the donation box broken with money taken.

South Goa District Magistrate Imposes 60-Day Ban on Indoor Fireworks, Pyrotechnics After Safety Concerns

Team Goemkarponn

MARGAO: In a decisive move prompted by mounting safety fears, the South Goa District Magistrate has issued a 60-day ban on the use of indoor fireworks and pyrotechnic devices across all tourist and entertainment establishments in the district. The order, issued under Section 163 of the Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita (BNSS), 2023, comes into force from December 9, 2025. The directive follows a report submitted by the



Superintendent of Police (South), highlighting the "serious and imminent risk" posed by the use of fireworks, sparklers, flame/smoke effects, and similar devices inside enclosed venues such as nightclubs, bars, restaurants, hotels,

guesthouses, beach shacks, temporary event structures and other entertainment spaces. According to the police report, indoor deployment of such devices significantly increases the chances of fires, stampede-like

situations, dense smoke accumulation, disruption of public order, injuries, and obstruction to safe evacuation—necessitating immediate preventive action. District Magistrate Egna Cleetus, IAS, noted that the circumstances warranted urgent intervention to prevent potential danger to human life and property. The order prohibits bursting, ignition or operation of any pyrotechnic or fire-generating devices inside tourist or entertainment establishments throughout South Goa.

Goa Congress Expels 2 Leaders for 'Serious Anti-Party Activities'

Team Goemkarponn

PANAJI: The Goa Pradesh Congress Committee (GPCC) has expelled two of its leaders — Pradip Raghunath Dessai, a PCC Executive Member, and Devendra Prabhu Dessai — after concluding that both were involved in serious

and repeated anti-party activities.

The action follows a directive issued by the AICC In-Charge Secretary. According to the order signed by GPCC president Amit S. Patkar, an examination of their conduct revealed that the two leaders had acted in total violation of

the discipline, principles and interests of the Indian National Congress. The GPCC stated that their behaviour amounted to deliberate and repeated



anti-party conduct, which the party said could not be condoned under any circumstances. With immediate effect, both leaders have been expelled from the Indian National Congress and will no longer hold any posts, responsibilities or membership at any level of the organisation.

Birch Fire Case: 5 Arrested, Key Accused Detained in Delhi as Police Widen Probe; 21 Bodies Sent Home

■ Cause of Death Linked to Toxic Gas Inhalation

Team Goemkarponn

ANJUNA: The Anjuna Police have intensified their probe into the tragic Birch by Romeo Lane fire, registering Anjuna PS Cr. No. 134/2025 under Sections 105, 125, 125(a), 125(b), 287 read with 3(5) of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita, 2023. Multiple arrests, fresh detentions, post-mortem findings and scrutiny of government officials marked major developments in the fast-moving investigation.



Police confirmed that four senior staffers of Birch by Romeo Lane — Rajiv Modak (49), Corporate General Manager; Priyanshu Thakur (32),

Gate Manager; Rajveer Singhania (32), Bar Manager; and Vijay Singh (27), General Manager — were arrested and remanded to six

days' police custody till December 13. Accused Bharat Koli was earlier detained in Delhi, brought to Goa, and produced for remand. In a significant new development, Goa Police has detained accused Ajay Gupta in New Delhi. A Look Out Circular (LOC) had been issued against him earlier. When the police team visited his residence, Gupta was found absconding, prompting the police to secure an arrest warrant.

Joint Enforcement Committee Begins Fire Safety Inspections Across South Goa

Team Goemkarponn

MARGAO/CANACONA: The Joint Enforcement and Monitoring Committee, constituted by the Government of Goa under Order No. 1-179-2025-CS dated December 9, 2025, has launched a series of inspections across South Goa district to assess fire safety readiness and statutory compliance in tourism-related establishments. Acting under the guidance of the South Goa District Collector, the committee carried out inspections in



key locations including Salcete and Canacona. The teams examined critical safety systems, emergency preparedness measures, and adherence to mandatory norms prescribed for commercial and tourism establishments.

Former Talaulim Deputy Sarpanch Defa Fernandes Joins AAP, Alleges Congress Rift and Ticket Irregularities

Team Goemkarponn

TALULIM/NAVELIM: Former Deputy Sarpanch of Talaulim Panchayat, Defa Fernandes, formally joined the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) on Tuesday in the presence of Benaulim MLA Venzy Viegas, Velim

MLA Cruz Silva, and Navelim Zilla Panchayat candidate Beatrice D'Souza. Addressing a press conference, Viegas said the political developments indicate deep internal turmoil within the Congress. "When Congress karyakartas



themselves are accusing their own party, it becomes evident that Congress is

the real B-Team of the BJP. In many constituencies, they have even imported

candidates from the BJP. It is time for the people of Goa to vote for the right opposition, which is AAP," he remarked. Explaining her decision to switch sides, Fernandes claimed she was initially the front-runner for the Congress ticket in Navelim, and that

party leaders had assured her of candidature. She further alleged that "Congress is internally supporting the BJP. Two members of the party even demanded cash in lakhs for the ticket. That's when I felt disturbed and decided to join AAP.

PWD Minister Digambar Kamat Inaugurates Key Urban Infrastructure Projects in Margao

Team Goemkarponn

MARGAO: In a major boost to the city's urban development, PWD Minister and Margao MLA Digambar Kamat on Wednesday inaugurated a series of crucial public infrastructure projects aimed at upgrading connectivity and modernising key market hubs. Kamat launched



the construction of a new promenade linking the rear section of the Margao Railway Station to the Power House Circle junction. The project is

expected to significantly improve pedestrian access and streamline connectivity in the busy transit zone. At the Margao Municipal Market, the minister unveiled several improvement works, including the laying of new pipelines, installation of a fire-hydrant system, extensive repair and maintenance upgrades, and Galvulim sheet roofing.

Ponda Residents Booked for Alleged Misappropriation of Cash and Gold in Criminal Breach of Trust Case

Team Goemkarponn

PONDA: Police in Ponda have registered a case against five individuals for allegedly misappropriating a bag containing ₹8,80,000 in cash and approximately 750 grams of gold ornaments that had been entrusted to them for safe custody. The case was filed following a complaint by Prema

Shetty of Upper Bazar, Ponda. According to the complaint, prior to November 29, 2025, the complainant's daughter had handed over the valuables to the accused B. Gayathri Shridhar Naidu, B. Damodar Naidu, B. Kishor Shridhar Naidu, B. Mohana Kumar

Naidu and Amarnath, all residents of Ponda — for keeping them securely at their residence. However, the accused persons, acting with common intention, allegedly misappropriated the valuables for their personal use and failed to return them, amounting to criminal breach of trust.



Rash Riding Accident in Cuncolim Leaves Motorcyclist Seriously Injured

Team Goemkarponn

CUNCOLIM: Police have registered a case following a complaint lodged by HC 6985 Sandesh Gaonkar of Cuncolim Police

Station regarding a road accident that occurred on November 13, 2025, at around 8:25 am near Goa Steel Yard at Panzorconi. According to the complaint, Saieel Dessai, a resident

of Culwada, Cuncolim, was riding a Bajaj Pulsar 220 allegedly in a rash and negligent manner, endangering human life. While overtaking, Dessai reportedly collided with a



Bajaj Pulsar 125 travelling in the same direction. The impact caused the rider of the Pulsar 125, Vinod Bhoyee, a resident of Belagavi, Karnataka, to fall onto

the road along with his motorcycle, sustaining grievous injuries. Further investigation is being conducted by HC 6985 Sandesh Gaonkar of the Cuncolim Police Station.

Kannadiga leader Rajesh Shetty files nomination as independent from Sancoale ZP constituency

Team Goemkarponn

SANCOALE: BJP Karnataka cell member and prominent Kannadiga leader Rajesh Shetty filed his nomination papers on Tuesday as an independent candidate from the Sancoale constituency for the upcoming Zilla Panchayat elections, setting the stage for an intense electoral contest. Shetty, known for his active involvement with the Kannadiga community in Mormugao taluka, arrived at the Mormugao Block office with supporters before submitting his papers to the



returning officer. Speaking after the filing, Shetty said that his decision to contest independently was driven by strong appeals from various sections of society. "There was a lot of pressure from the Kannadiga

samaj, local organisations, and several residents from different sections of the constituency. They felt I should step forward and take responsibility, and their confidence in me pushed me to contest as an independent," Shetty said, adding that the nomination was not a political move but a response to the community's expectations. He emphasised that development would remain his primary agenda if elected. "Sancoale has immense potential, but several areas have been waiting for basic improvements.



Joint Inspection Held at Hughes Precision Magazine in Betul

Team Goemkarponn

BETUL/QUEPEM: A joint inspection team, led by Quepem Sub-Divisional Magistrate Manohar Karekar, carried out a detailed review of the Hughes Precision Magazine at Betul, the site of a major fire incident earlier this year.

The inspection primarily assessed fire safety systems, adherence to safety protocols, and compliance with all prescribed terms and conditions. Officials issued necessary directions to the management to ensure strict observance of safety measures and prevent any recurrence.

Last Date for Tax Arrears Waiver Under GRATIPOS Scheme Is Dec 31

Team Goemkarponn

PANAJI: The Office of the Commissioner of Commercial Taxes has issued a trade circular announcing a final opportunity for dealers and individuals to settle outstanding tax arrears under the GRATIPOS Act, 2023, through a newly inserted Section 8A. The amendment provides relief to those who either failed to apply under the original 2023 settlement scheme or whose dues could not be settled earlier for various reasons. Under the new provision, applicants must pay 100% of the tax demanded or



due by December 31, 2025, and subsequently submit online Form IA to seek waiver of interest, penalty, and post-assessment interest. The form is available on the department's official website. However, authorities clarified that excess amounts resulting from settlement will not be refunded, and dealers must exercise extreme caution when generating e-challans.

BJP, Congress–GFP Alliance and Rebel Candidates File Nominations for Khola and Poinguinim ZP Seats

Team Goemkarponn

CANACONA: Canacona BDO office saw a flurry of political activity, with candidates from the BJP, Congress–Goa Forward Party (GFP) alliance and even a Congress dissident filing their nomination papers for the Khola (22) and Poinguinim (23) Zilla Panchayat constituencies. Congress leader and Quepem MLA Altone D'Costa arrived with supporters to accompany Congress candidate Sumitra Pagi as she filed her papers for the Khola ZP seat. Around the same



time, BJP candidates Ajay (Ajit) Loliencar for Poinguinim and Tejal Pagi for Khola submitted their nominations in the presence of Minister for Sports, Tribal Welfare and Arts & Culture Ramesh Tawadkar, former Deputy Chief Minister Chandrakant

(Babu) Kavlekar, and a strong contingent of party karyakartas. GFP candidate Prashant Naik, representing the Congress–GFP alliance, became the first to file his nomination before Returning Officer Vipul Naik Gaunkar. Naik was accompanied by

former minister and ex-Deputy Speaker Isidore Fernandes, whose recent entry into the GFP has reportedly unsettled some in Congress ranks, said to be contributing to delays in finalising the alliance. Brushing aside the speculation, Isidore asserted that Congress workers and his supporters were united behind Naik, ensuring a "comfortable win". A twist followed with Congress dissident and former Khotigao sarpanch Daya Gaonkar, a tribal leader, filing his nomination as well.

BJP's Poinguinim ZP Candidate Opens Campaign Office; Minister Ramesh Tawadkar Inaugurates

Team Goemkarponn

CANACONA: The BJP formally kicked off its campaign in the Poinguinim Zilla Panchayat constituency, with Minister for Sports, Tribal Welfare and Arts & Culture Ramesh Tawadkar inaugurating the campaign office of the party's ZP candidate Ajay (Ajit) Loliencar at Poinguinim Bazaar. Earlier in the day, Loliencar submitted his

nomination papers before the Returning Officer at Chaudi. Following the filing, Minister Tawadkar, along with a large BJP entourage, proceeded to Poinguinim where he cut the ribbon to declare open the centrally located campaign office. Poinguinim, once the headquarters of the now-defunct 40th Assembly segment, continues to remain the focal point of the Zilla



Panchayat constituency (Poinguinim–23). Party leaders said the office will act as a hub for karyakartas to plan

campaign strategies and coordinate outreach across the four village panchayats Poinguinim, Loliem-Polem, Khotigao

and Gaondongrim. Addressing party workers, Loliencar assured full cooperation in planning and executing campaign

decisions. "We will work to win the people, not earn wealth for ourselves," he said. The event saw the presence of Loliem-Polem Sarpanch Nisha Chari, Deputy Sarpanch Ashutosh Bandekar, Chandrakant Sudhir, Poinguinim Sarpanch Savita Tawadkar, Deputy Sarpanch Sunil Paingankar, Panch Satish Loliencar, BJP Canacona Mandal President Prabhakar Gaonkar and several karyakartas.

'Your Money, Your Right': PM Modi Encourages Citizens to Claim Unclaimed Savings

■ PM Modi Calls on Citizens to Reclaim Over Rs 1 Lakh Crore in Unclaimed Funds.

New Delhi: Prime Minister Narendra Modi has called on Indians to actively check and claim unclaimed financial assets, noting that more than Rs 1 lakh crore remains dormant across banks, insurance companies, mutual funds, and dividend accounts. In a detailed LinkedIn post, he highlighted the scale of unclaimed funds, describing it as "startling" given that these amounts represent the hard-earned savings of Indian families. According to the Prime Minister, Indian banks currently hold around Rs 78,000 crore in unclaimed deposits, insurance companies have Rs 14,000 crore lying untouched, mutual fund houses account for nearly Rs 3,000 crore in unclaimed investments, and unclaimed dividends total approximately Rs 9,000 crore. To tackle this issue, the government launched



the 'Aapki Poongi, Aapka Adhikaar – Your Money, Your Right' programme in October 2025. The initiative aims to simplify the process of identifying and reclaiming old deposits, policies, and investments. Dedicated digital platforms have been rolled out to help citizens easily locate unclaimed amounts in banks, insurance policies, mutual funds, and dividend accounts. Since the launch, significant progress has been made. As of December 2025, facilitation camps have been organised in 477 districts, covering both urban centres and remote

regions. These camps, run jointly by government departments, regulators, banks, and financial institutions, have already returned nearly Rs 2,000 crore to rightful claimants. Calling the campaign a "movement" that needs to grow further, Modi urged all citizens to verify if they or their family members have unclaimed funds and to use the online portals and local camps. He stressed that reclaiming forgotten financial assets can unlock meaningful opportunities and contribute to a "transparent, financially empowered and inclusive India."

Global Firms Announce Over 65 Billion Dollars to Power India's AI Future

■ India attracts record tech investments as Microsoft, Google, Amazon and Intel expand cloud, semiconductor and AI capabilities.

New Delhi: India's technology landscape is set for a major transformation as several of the world's largest tech companies have announced unprecedented investments aimed at accelerating the country's artificial intelligence capabilities, cloud infrastructure and digital innovation. Microsoft confirmed its largest-ever investment in Asia, pledging 17.5 billion dollars between 2026 and 2029. The plan includes setting up a new hyperscale data centre region in Hyderabad, expanding cloud capacity, strengthening sovereign digital infrastructure and doubling AI skilling efforts for millions of Indians by 2030. The company highlighted India's crucial position in the global AI ecosystem and its potential to shift from digital public infrastructure to AI public



infrastructure in the coming decade. A major part of the investment will support the new India South Central cloud region, expected to go live in mid-2026. This data centre cluster will enable faster, more secure computing within India's borders, particularly for sensitive government and financial data. Microsoft also emphasised that tools like Microsoft 365 Copilot will begin processing data locally by late 2025. Alphabet, Google's parent company, has also committed 15 billion dollars to establish a large AI data

hub in Visakhapatnam. The project places India as a vital node in its global network of AI development sites and enhances local access to advanced computing resources. Together, these moves underline the country's growing importance as an AI proving ground. With vast linguistic diversity, a large developer community and a rapidly digitising population, India is seen as a high-impact market for next-generation AI applications across healthcare, education, agriculture and governance.

...CONTD FROM PAGE 01

Goa CM Orders Crackdown On Illegal Tourism Units

closely with central agencies and expect the absconding accused to be tracked down soon. He further said the government will consider ordering a judicial inquiry after

the Magisterial report is submitted. If the findings indicate wider responsibility, notices will be issued to additional officials. Sawant reaffirmed that all illegal constructions will be

demolished and that strict measures are being rolled out across the tourism sector to avoid safety lapses, crowd-related issues, and road accidents during the peak season.

Patkar-Sardesai Plot to Weaken RGP, Claims Manoj Parab

accused Congress president Amit Patkar and Goa Forward chief Vijai Sardesai of acting at the behest of the BJP in a "masterplan" aimed at destroying the RGP.

"This was a deliberate attempt to finish our party," he alleged. Countering Sardesai's claim that RGP was never serious about an alliance, Parab said the party had even given

up a major seat for the Congress during alliance talks. "If this does not show our intent, nothing will. Vijai Sardesai has no right to say we didn't want an alliance," he stated.

Centre Cuts IndiGo Routes By 10 Percent As CEO Elbers Meets Aviation Minister

stabilisation efforts. The minister said recent disruptions were the result of internal lapses linked to crew rostering, flight scheduling

and inadequate communication. He noted that while an inquiry is underway, the scale of inconvenience required immediate intervention.

Elbers was called to the ministry to provide a status update, confirming that all refunds for flights affected until December 6 had been processed.

Birch Fire Probe Widens; Luthra Brothers Move For Anticipatory Bail

had earlier been sealed for violations. The probe remains focused on the catastrophic fire at Birch by Romeo Lane. Chief Minister Pramod Sawant

has announced that the beach shack operated by the brothers will also be demolished. Police are examining multiple angles, including possible

negligence. Goa DIG Varsha Sharma confirmed coordination with the CBI and Interpol, adding that a Blue Corner Notice has been issued.

PM Modi, Rahul Gandhi Meet To Decide Next Chief Information Commissioner

The CIC serves as the highest appellate authority for Right to Information (RTI) matters, reviewing complaints and appeals from citizens dissatisfied with government responses. Currently, the commission has only two serving Information Commissioners, Anandi Ramalingam and Vinod Kumar Tiwari, leaving eight positions vacant.

Over 30,000 cases remain pending, highlighting the urgency of completing these appointments. The last Chief Information Commissioner, Heeralal Samariya, retired on September 13 after turning 65. He had been appointed to the CIC on November 6, 2023. Following a May 21 advertisement, the Department of Personnel and Training

(DoPT) received 83 applications for the Chief Information Commissioner post and 161 applications for the vacant Information Commissioner positions. Under the RTI Act, the selection of the Chief Information Commissioner and Information Commissioners is carried out by a committee chaired by the Prime Minister.

Putin Recalls India Visit, Lauds Country's 'Unity in Diversity'

■ Russian President highlights cultural diversity and long-standing bilateral ties.

New Delhi: Russian President Vladimir Putin reflected on his recent visit to India, praising the nation's "unity in diversity" and its rich cultural heritage. Speaking on Wednesday, he noted that while around 500–600 million Indians speak Hindi, the rest of the population communicates in numerous other languages, often making

mutual understanding a challenge. Putin emphasized that preserving unity amidst such diversity is a shared principle both nations must uphold. The remarks followed a high-profile two-day visit to New Delhi, where Putin held extensive talks with Prime Minister Narendra Modi. The visit underscored the depth of



India-Russia friendship, reaffirming decades of cooperation even amid shifting global dynamics. It coincided with a period

of heightened economic tension, as the United States recently imposed a 50 percent tariff on Indian purchases of Russian oil.



Yogi Adityanath Orders Full Focus On SIR Drive Across Uttar Pradesh

■ A month-long push launched to strengthen voter list accuracy across Uttar Pradesh.

New Delhi: Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath has directed party workers to place the ongoing Special Intensive Revision of voter lists at the very top of their organisational agenda. Addressing legislators and senior functionaries during a meeting in Gorakhpur, he urged them to dedicate the entire upcoming month to ensuring complete and error-free participation in the exercise.

He called for a ground-level outreach effort, asking workers in every booth to visit households and identify who has submitted the required SIR forms and who still needs assistance. The chief minister stressed that widespread awareness campaigns must be organised

across all districts, with senior workers assigned clear responsibilities to streamline the process. A significant part of his message focused on tracking voter mobility. He highlighted the need to verify the status of families that have shifted to new locations, as well as individuals who have migrated into Gorakhpur for work. Special attention was directed toward newly married women whose names may have been removed from lists at their previous addresses and need to be added at their new residences. He instructed district presidents to form teams of ten workers at every booth, ensuring equal participation from men and women to better reach voters.

US Calls India's Latest Trade Proposals the "Best Ever" in Ongoing Market-Access Talks

■ Washington signals momentum in negotiations across agriculture, aviation and energy.

New Delhi: The United States has stepped up trade negotiations with India, with senior officials describing New Delhi's latest proposals on agricultural access as the most substantial offered to Washington in years. During a Senate Appropriations subcommittee hearing, US Trade Representative Jamieson Greer said the discussions underway in New Delhi were progressing faster and more constructively than in previous administrations. Greer noted that



India had put forward offers aimed at easing entry for several American farm products, including grain sorghum and soy. Although he acknowledged continuing resistance

in certain segments of India's agricultural sector, he described the current talks as unusually open and forward-moving. He added that India's growing demand and shifting global market conditions had positioned it as an alternative destination for US commodities at a time when producers are managing large inventories and fluctuating Chinese demand. Senators highlighted the pressure faced by American farmers and stressed the need to diversify export destinations.

Belgium Supreme Court Rejects Mehul Choksi's Appeal Against Extradition to India

■ Court upholds Antwerp ruling, clearing path for extradition in Rs 13,000-crore PNB fraud case.

New Delhi: Belgium's highest court, the Court of Cassation, has dismissed Mehul Choksi's appeal challenging India's extradition request in connection with the Rs 13,000-crore Punjab National Bank fraud case. The ruling reinforces the earlier decision of the Antwerp Court of Appeal, which had deemed India's extradition request enforceable. Choksi, the fugitive diamond trader, fled India in January 2018, shortly before the



massive scam came to light, and was later spotted in Belgium seeking treatment. India had formally requested his extradition on August 27, 2024, citing arrest

warrants issued by a special court in Mumbai in 2018 and 2021. The Antwerp Court of Appeal had rejected Choksi's claims that he faced a genuine risk of unfair trial, torture, or inhumane treatment if returned to India. It found no legal or factual basis to support his arguments, noting that India had provided assurances regarding his safety, trial procedures, prison arrangements, medical care, and human rights protections.

Assam Air Force Station To Host Air Show Celebrating 54 Years of 1971 War Victory

■ Flying display and commemorative events to mark India's decisive role in Bangladesh liberation.

New Delhi: The Indian Air Force will mark the 54th anniversary of India's victory in the 1971 war with a spectacular air show at Air Force Station Mohanbari in Dibrugarh, Assam, as part of the Vijay Diwas celebrations. Organised by the Eastern Air Command, the event on Wednesday will showcase the operational skill, precision, and professionalism of the IAF. The aerial display will feature a variety of aircraft, including Sukhoi Su-30



fighter jets, Dornier Do-228 surveillance planes, Antonov An-32 transport aircraft, Chinook heavy-lift helicopters, and Mi-17 helicopters, flying over the scenic landscapes of Dibrugarh. The programme, scheduled from 9 am to

2:30 pm, will be attended by military and civilian dignitaries, air veterans, and schoolchildren. Air Chief Marshal Amar Preet Singh is expected to be present, while Defence Minister Rajnath Singh's visit has been cancelled.

'It Matters What India Wants' Sets the Tone as Hardik Pandya Powers a Resounding Series Start

■ All-round brilliance marks the star cricketer's impactful return in Cuttack.

New Delhi: Hardik Pandya announced his return to international cricket with a commanding display that shaped India's 101-run victory over South Africa in the opening T20I in Cuttack. After nearly six months away due to a quadriceps injury, the all-rounder stepped back into the national side with clarity of purpose and delivered a match-winning performance that highlighted both his resilience and value in high-pressure situations. Coming in at a difficult moment with India needing stability and momentum, he produced a fluent 59 from 28 deliveries. His innings combined clean timing, calculated



risk and sharp awareness of the pitch, transforming India's total into a formidable one. His approach was marked not by raw aggression alone but by control and smart decision-making that shifted the complexion of the contest. He later contributed with the ball as well, adding a

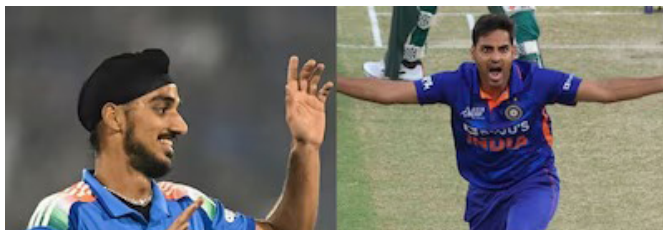
crucial wicket to complete a strong all-round effort. The significance of the innings extended beyond the scoreboard. Months of structured rehabilitation, extended time at the National Cricket Academy and the challenge of regaining peak fitness had shaped his journey back.

Arshdeep Singh Draws Level With Bhuvneshwar Kumar To Become India's Joint-Highest Powerplay Wicket-Taker

■ Left-arm pacer leads a dominant bowling display as India crush South Africa.

New Delhi: Arshdeep Singh delivered another incisive new-ball spell to equal Bhuvneshwar Kumar's record for the most wickets taken by an Indian bowler in T20I powerplay overs. The milestone came during the first T20I against South Africa at Barabati

Stadium in Cuttack, where the left-arm pacer struck twice inside the opening overs to set the tone for a commanding win. He opened India's defence by removing Quinton de Kock for a duck with his second delivery of the innings, beating the batter with movement and pace.



His next breakthrough came in the third over when Tristan Stubbs edged behind, giving Arshdeep his second wicket and

taking his powerplay tally to 47. This placed him level with Bhuvneshwar, who had held the record since 2022.



Praggnanandhaa Clinches FIDE Circuit 2025 To Seal Spot in 2026 Candidates Tournament

■ Indian grandmaster crowns a dominant season with qualification for chess's elite event.

New Delhi: Indian grandmaster Praggnanandhaa R has completed a breakthrough year by winning the FIDE Circuit 2025 and securing a coveted berth in the 2026 Candidates Tournament. His consistently strong performances across major international events ensured he finished the season at the top of the standings, marking another milestone in his fast-rising career. The 20-year-old delivered a series of standout results through the year, including title wins at the Tata Steel Masters, Superbet Chess Classic Romania, UzChess Cup Masters and the London Chess Classic Open.

He also claimed a runner-up finish at the Stepan Avagyan Memorial and placed 12th at the Sinquefield Cup, adding crucial points to his circuit tally. His steady momentum allowed him to overtake Ding Liren in May and maintain his lead

through the rest of the season. Praggnanandhaa shared his excitement on social media, thanking his coaches, family and supporters for their role in his journey.

He noted that earning his place in the Candidates is a major step forward and reaffirmed his commitment to continued hard work. By late November, several of his closest rivals had already qualified for the 2026 Candidates through alternative routes, which limited their presence in remaining circuit events. Vincent Keymer, another contender, had no more classical tournaments scheduled, leaving only Nodirbek Abdusattorov with a theoretical chance of overtaking the Indian grandmaster. Abdusattorov delivered a phenomenal performance at the London Chess Classic Elite, producing one of the most impressive tournament rating performances in history and collecting 19.62 circuit points.

Kolkata Set for Unprecedented Scenes as Messi Mania Peaks Ahead of GOAT India Tour

■ City braces for record crowds, star-studded attendance and historic celebrations on 13 Dec.

New Delhi: Kolkata is witnessing an extraordinary surge of excitement as the GOAT India Tour prepares to open in the city on 13 December, marking Lionel Messi's much-anticipated arrival. The football icon will launch the tour from Kolkata before travelling to Hyderabad, Mumbai and Delhi, and the build-up



has already transformed the city into a hub of celebration and devotion. The Salt Lake Stadium counters saw long queues

forming from early morning as thousands rushed to secure entry. Tickets, priced from around Rs 4,000 to nearly Rs 25,000 for premium categories, have been selling at an exceptional pace. Fans across generations gathered outside the venue, many posing with their tickets and sharing their excitement online.

Amaira Dhumatker Continues Her Dominant Run With a Confident Quarterfinal Entry

PANAJI: Goa's emerging badminton prodigy Amaira Dhumatker has delivered another impressive campaign, securing her place in the quarterfinals of the Yonex Sunrise 4th Mini National Badminton Championships 2025 in Vadodara. Competing in the under 11 category, the nine year old displayed remarkable control, consistency and maturity well beyond her age as she navigated through a demanding draw at the

Sama Sports Complex. Her journey began with a commanding performance in the Round of 64 against Pranjal Kumari Dharkar of Rajasthan. Amaira set the tone early, maintaining a fast pace and keeping her opponent on the defensive throughout both games. Her ability to dictate rallies helped her close out the match 21-10, 21-3 without allowing any momentum shift. In the Round of 32, she faced Ahana Srimani of West Bengal,



a matchup that tested her adaptability. Amaira started strongly by taking the opening game 21-6, using sharp placement and quick net play.