



ENDGAME FOR LUTHRA BROTHERS

■ Owners Of Birch By Romeo Lane Detained in Phuket-Thailand; To Face Deportation. Goa Police Special Team To Leave For Thailand To Take Custody Of Saurabh & Gaurav Luthra.

Team Goemkarponn

PANAJI: Saurabh and Gaurav Luthra co-owners of the Birch by Romeo Lane nightclub in Goa where 25 people were killed in a devastating fire linked to a suspected indoor fireworks have been detained in Phuket, Thailand. The brothers had fled to the country on an IndiGo flight from Delhi barely hours after the tragedy, prompting authorities in India to issue a Look-Out Circular and an Interpol Blue Notice. Official sources confirmed that a team from Goa Police is preparing to travel to Thailand to take custody of the duo and escort them back to India to face criminal proceedings. Their abrupt departure on December 7, at a time when emergency crews were still



battling the flames and rescuing victims, raised serious questions. Investigators later found that the brothers had booked their tickets at 1:17 am, shortly after the incident unfolded at the Arpora club. The Luthras, who had previously refused to return citing fear of arrest, claimed through legal channels that they were not involved in the daily functioning of the establishment and

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Luthra brothers passports suspended by MEA

Team Goemkarponn

PANAJI: In a significant escalation of the Arpora nightclub fire investigation, the Union government has suspended the passports of Gaurav and Saurabh Luthra, who have been on the run since December 6. The action was initiated by the Ministry of External Affairs following a formal



request from the Goa Police, and officials indicated that a full passport cancellation could follow.

Ajay Gupta Sent to 7-Day Police Custody in Birch Fire Case

Team Goemkarponn

PANAJI: Ajay Gupta, a co-partner of The Birch by Romeo Lane nightclub, has been remanded to seven days of police custody by the Mapusa Court as investigations into the recent fire incident continue. Gupta, who was arrested outside the state and brought to Goa on a 36-hour transit remand,



maintains that he is only a “sleeping partner” in the establishment and has no role in its day-to-day functioning.

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“E-Cigarette Ban Row Erupts in Lok Sabha After Allegation Against Trinamool MP”

■ Subheading: Accusations of vaping inside Parliament prompt calls for investigation and renewed focus on enforcement of India’s strict e-cigarette laws.

Team Goemkarponn

New Delhi: A session of the Lok Sabha turned tense on Thursday after BJP MP Anurag Thakur alleged that a member of the Trinamool Congress had been using an e-cigarette inside the House. Raising the issue during Question Hour, Thakur asked Speaker



Om Birla whether such devices were permitted in Parliament. When the Speaker confirmed that they were not, Thakur claimed that a Trinamool

MP had been vaping inside the chamber for several days. His allegation prompted several BJP MPs to join the protest, briefly disrupting proceedings. Thakur urged the Speaker to order an immediate inquiry, stating that the use of e-cigarettes was prohibited nationwide

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GHRC issues notice to Goa CS, DGP following ALLU complaint over Birch fire tragedy

Team Goemkarponn

PANAJI: The Goa Human Rights Commission (GHRC) has taken cognisance of a complaint filed in the aftermath of the Birch by Romeo Lane nightclub inferno, which claimed 25 lives, and has issued notices to the Chief Secretary and



the Director General of Police demanding their response. The complaint was filed on December 10 by the All India Lawyers

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Amit Shah Defends Electoral Reforms, Rejects ‘Vote Theft’ Claims in Heated Lok Sabha Debate

■ Home Minister Accuses Opposition of Misinformation as BJP, Congress Clash Over SIR, EVMs and Voter Rolls

Team Goemkarponn

New Delhi: Union Home Minister Amit Shah delivered an extensive and forceful response in the Lok Sabha to allegations raised by Opposition leader Rahul Gandhi on the Election



Commission, the Special Intensive Revision of electoral rolls and claims of vote manipulation. Presenting a detailed chronology of the Election Commission’s structure, Shah noted that India had no formal law for

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A House Divided Leaves Goa's Voters Short-changed

Goa is heading into the Zilla Panchayat election with an opposition that looks more like a patchwork of quarrelling groups than a force capable of challenging the BJP's rural grip. The election might be local, but the stakes are high. Zilla Panchayats shape everyday governance. They influence how development money moves, which projects are prioritised and how responsive the system is to ordinary people.

A divided opposition only strengthens the ruling party's advantage and weakens democratic balance. The BJP enters this contest with a clear head start. It has a well-oiled organisation, steady messaging and a confidence built on past performance. The opposition, meanwhile, has walked into the campaign with confusion and mistrust. Congress and Goa Forward Party have tried to present themselves as partners, yet their own alliance has come together under pressure rather than strategy. It carries the weight of past rivalries and contradictions. Instead of projecting unity, they look like two groups forced into the same room because there was no time left. Then there are the parties insisting on going solo. The Revolutionary Goans Party approaches this election with its own identity politics, determined to expand its influence independently. Aam Aadmi Party, too, has chosen to contest alone. Their reasoning is partly ideological and partly a reaction to years of instability within Congress.

But the result is the same. Each of these parties chips away from the same pool of anti-BJP votes. Instead of creating a collective challenge, they carve out small islands of influence that rarely overlap strategically. Fragmentation becomes even more visible at the constituency level. Several seats will see opposition candidates squared off against one another in contests that would have been straightforward if the

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Fragmentation becomes even more visible at the constituency level. Several seats will see opposition candidates squared off against one another in contests that would have been straightforward if the parties shared a common plan.

parties shared a common plan. In places where the opposition vote is naturally strong, the split hands BJP an advantage without the party having to fight for it. Goa has seen this pattern before in Assembly elections where divided votes translated directly into BJP victories.

The lesson still appears unlearned. Another problem is the timing. The opposition spent too much of the year in uncertainty, waiting for others to make the first move, leaving decisions until the last minute. Alliances built in haste rarely inspire confidence. Voters notice when parties appear unsure

about whom they are working with or what they stand for together. Panchayat elections require deep local engagement. They demand early identification of candidates, door-to-door work and a consistent narrative. The ruling party, with its system already in place, benefits immensely from this organisational contrast. The opposition's disunity is not only a political failure but also a missed opportunity for Goa's rural electorate. Many voters who want an alternative are left guessing which party can actually mount a challenge. Instead of conversations about rural development, land use, local employment and governance reforms, the news is dominated by who is allying with whom, who has walked out of talks and who is contesting independently. The people's concerns become secondary to political arithmetic. This moment calls for introspection within the opposition. Power cannot be won through scattered ambition.

A serious challenge requires coordination, compromise and a willingness to put larger goals above narrow interests. Parties do not need to merge, but they must at least agree on where they stand, how they divide seats and how they plan to communicate a shared vision to voters. Without that, they risk turning every election into a replay of past mistakes. Goa's rural voters deserve a real contest, not a default coronation. An effective opposition is essential for accountability. When one party dominates without resistance, the system becomes less responsive. That is not healthy for any democracy, and Goa is no exception. Unless the opposition learns to work together, even minimally, the BJP will continue to benefit from the same recurring fractures. The election might be local, but the message is much larger. A house divided cannot offer leadership. It can only offer disappointment.

EDITOR'S SPEAK

Why Must Tragedy Be Our Wake-Up Call?

-By Suraj Nandrekar

The deadly fire in Anjuna has once again exposed a disturbing truth. In India, large scale safety reforms rarely come from foresight. They come from funerals. Every time lives are lost, the machinery of the state suddenly moves with speed. High level meetings are called. Committees rush to inspect. Emergency orders are issued. Police teams pursue the accused. Courts hear urgent pleas. And the public is left wondering why this urgency was missing the day before the tragedy. The Chief Minister's meeting with senior officials and the Tourism Minister focused on what establishments must do to keep people safe. That discussion should have taken place long before the night the blaze broke out.

Goa's tourism industry thrives on crowded bars, clubs, restaurants and event venues. The risks are obvious. Yet enforcement is often sporadic, sometimes absent and too often shaped by convenience rather than duty. The two minutes of silence observed for the victims served as a solemn tribute, but it also highlighted a deeper silence. It was the silence of inaction in the months and years when these establishments operated without rigorous oversight. Now the Joint Inspection Monitoring Committee is out in Pernem, Bardez and Tiswadi, examining bars, clubs and restaurants for fire compliance. Emergency exits, hydrants, alarms and evacuation plans will all be scrutinized.

But these spaces have been functioning openly. They have hosted thousands of people without any significant intervention from authorities. When inspections take place only after lives are lost, they become a spectacle of damage control rather than a genuine commitment to prevention. The sweeping order under Section 163 of the Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita, banning fireworks and pyrotechnic devices inside tourist establishments across North Goa, is another example. Such a prohibition should have been standard practice in a state known for packed indoor events. Pyrotechnics inside enclosed or semi enclosed spaces are inherently dangerous. Yet only after a massive fire do we see decisive action. This is not proactive governance. It is a reaction to failure. The developments in the investigation further reflect a system that springs into action only after disaster strikes.

The Rohini Court heard the bail plea of the absconding Luthra brothers, who allegedly booked tickets to Thailand at the same time firefighters were battling the blaze and pulling people out of danger. The court denied immediate relief, and Goa Police opposed the plea. Another accused, Ajay Gupta, has been produced before a magistrate and will now be brought to Goa. While accountability is essential, it should not take a tragedy to reveal gaps in monitoring, licensing and compliance. Goa's tourism sector is its pride and its lifeline. That makes safety non negotiable. Yet too often, regulations are treated as formalities and enforcement becomes active only when something goes horribly wrong. This cycle must end. A state that depends on tourism cannot afford episodic governance. It needs steady, unwavering oversight, not bursts of action triggered by public outrage. The Anjuna fire is more than a tragic incident. It is a warning that safety cannot wait for another disaster. Prevention must become the rule, not the reaction.

HC Quashes Conviction of 3 Men in 2017 Calangute Murder Case

Team Goemkarponn

PANAJI: The High Court of Bombay at Goa has overturned the conviction of three men sentenced to life imprisonment for allegedly murdering Tyron Nazareth at the Calangute fish market in 2017, ruling that the prosecution failed to establish their guilt beyond reasonable doubt. A division bench of Justice Bharati Dangre and Justice Ashish Chavan on Wednesday set aside the



May 30, 2023 judgment of the Additional Sessions Judge, North Goa, which had found Joseph Brandon Sequeira, Ceon

Bruno Fernandes, and Mahesh Rampal guilty of murder under Section 302 read with Section 34 of the IPC. All three

were lodged at Colvale Jail. According to the prosecution, complainant Dipesh Naik, along with friends George Denzil Noronha and Tyron Nazareth, had been drinking at the Calangute fish market on the night of June 24, 2017. Around 11:30 pm, while the trio went to buy beer from a nearby bar, the accused allegedly approached Naik and Noronha on an Activa scooter, asking for Nazareth.

2 Colva Spas Sealed Following Arpora Fire Tragedy

Team Goemkarponn

COLVA: In the aftermath of the Arpora fire incident, the South Goa district administration has shut down two spa establishments in Colva. The move follows an order issued on Wednesday by South Goa Collector and District Magistrate Egna Cleetus, based on a report from the Superintendent of Police, South Goa.



The Collector instructed the Salcete Mamlatdar to immediately seal the two outlets Royal Spa and Happiness Will Grow Unisex Salon and Spa both operating in Colva village.

Season's first turtle nesting recorded at Agonda beach

Team Goemkarponn

CANACONA: The season's first turtle nesting was recorded at Agonda beach early Thursday morning, marking the official start of the new nesting cycle along the Canacona coast. According to forest officials, a mother turtle emerged from the sea at around 5.45 am, surveyed the beach, and then began excavating the sand to create a pit. By 5.50 am, she had laid her clutch of eggs on the expansive 2.9-km stretch of Agonda beach before returning to the sea. Forest guards, who had been monitoring the turtle from a distance, later recovered 145 eggs from the natural nest. The eggs were carefully relocated to Pit No. 1 at



the Turtle Rehabilitation Centre (TRC) in Agonda, where they were secured inside a specially prepared man-made pit for safe incubation. The South Goa Marine Range (SGMR), headquartered at Galgibaga, operates two major nesting and protection sites Agonda TRC and Galgibaga TRC both recognised as key conservation zones for turtle nesting in the state.

Goa Police Pull Back 31 Donated Laptops After Donor Arrested for Fraud

Team Goemkarponn

PANAJI: The Goa Police have retrieved 31 laptops that were donated to the force last year after discovering that the benefactor now arrested in Mumbai had allegedly been posing as an influential official to commit fraud. In an embarrassing setback for the department,



police headquarters on Wednesday issued an urgent wireless order instructing 26 police stations to return the laptops by noon. The

devices had been accepted in 2023 following the donor's meeting with Chief Minister Pramod Sawant. The laptops, gifted by Vaibhav Thakar,

had been distributed to stations across Panaji, Old Goa, Agassaim, Mapusa, Pernem, Anjuna, Porvorim, Calangute, Bicholim, Valpoi, Mandrem, Konkan Railway, Margao Town, Maina Curtorim, Colva, Fatorda, Quepem, Curchorem, Sanguem, Canacona, Vasco, Mormugao, Verna, Ponda and Mardol.

Tawadkar Denies Knowledge of Molasses Dumping; SDM Orders Police to Book Those Responsible

Team Goemkarponn

CANACONA: In a dramatic turn of events over allegations of illegal molasses dumping, Canacona MLA and Minister Ramesh Tawadkar, Dy. Collector Pratap Naikgaunkar, and Shristhal Sarpanch Sejal Gaonkar have all denied any knowledge or involvement in the contractor's actions, even as public outrage grew



on Saturday. The controversy erupted after a contractor allegedly claimed that the discharge of liquid molasses into excavated pits was done with

the full knowledge of the minister, the SDM, and the sarpanch. However, all three categorically refuted the claim. Tawadkar, pointing towards the contractor's representative during a tense confrontation, dismissed the allegations saying, "Main toh tumhe mila nahi, na jaanta hoon. Main tum logon ko pehchanta hi nahi" ("I have never met you nor do I know who you are).

Goa Issues Tough Fire Safety Advisory for Factories After Recent Blaze

Team Goemkarponn

PANAJI: In the wake of a fatal fire reported recently in the State, the Inspectorate of Factories and Boilers has issued a fresh set of fire-safety directions for all industrial units, calling for strict adherence to avoid accidents, regulatory breaches and financial liability.



The circular stresses that the measures outlined are only a minimum requirement and that factory operators must adopt any additional precautions mandated by other authorities, depending on their

processes and the level of fire risk. It also reiterates that factories must conduct quarterly fire drills and maintain a valid Fire NOC from the Directorate of Fire & Emergency Services. A key emphasis is on keeping all detection and firefighting systems in working order, with equipment appropriate for the specific types of fire hazards on site.

High Drama at Canacona ADEI Office as Parents, Students Stage Sit-In; DoE Withdraws Teacher's Transfer Order

Team Goemkarponn

CANACONA: A day-long high-voltage protest at the Canacona ADEI office ended in victory for parents and students of Government Primary School (GPS) Ziltawadi on Wednesday, after the Director of Education (DoE) withdrew the controversial transfer order of teacher Sukanti T. Velip. The agitation began early in the morning, with parents and students arriving before the ADEI office



opened, fulfilling their earlier threat of staging a sit-in if the transfer order was not cancelled.

DMT Worth Rs.1 Cr. Seized In Korgao; Belarus National Arrested

Team Goemkarponn

KORGAO: In a major joint operation, the NCB Goa Zonal Unit along with Pernem Police seized suspected DMT worth around ₹1 crore from a residence at Pethwada, Korgao, between December 9 and 10, 2025. Acting on specific intelligence, the teams raided the premises and recovered a total of 1,321



grams of substances believed to be various forms of DMT along with extraction materials. The

seized items included 933 grams of dark brown liquid suspected to be DMT, 41 grams of raw

wood bark used for DMT extraction, 388 grams of a coffee-coloured liquid form of DMT, and 8 grams of dried mushrooms suspected to be used in the preparation of liquid DMT. The contraband was allegedly found in possession of Belarus national Ina Volkova, residing at Pethwada, Korgao. Authorities later placed her under arrest on December 10, 2025.

Driver siphons off Rs. 2.4 lakh through GPay fraud in Dabolim

Team Goemkarponn

DABOLIM: A Dabolim resident has alleged that his driver siphoned off ₹2.4 lakh from his bank account after secretly accessing his GPay application, prompting Vasco police to register a cheating and cyber-fraud case. According to police, complainant Vinayan K.K., resident of Vidhyanagar Colony,



Dabolim, reported that the accused, Shankar Babu Chauhan, who worked as his driver and was staying in his house, allegedly exploited his position of trust between June 30 and the present date.

Panaji Police Register Case After Taxi Driver Assaulted at Taleigao

Team Goemkarponn

PANAJI: Panaji Police have registered Cr. No. 179/2025 after a taxi driver was allegedly assaulted and threatened by three individuals at Colwalkar Plaza, Taleigao. The complaint was filed by Namdev @ Vinod Mayekar, 48, a resident of Colwalkar Plaza and a taxi driver by profession. According to him, the



incident took place on December 9, 2025, at around 8:30 am when he questioned one of the accused, Rafik Attar, for sitting in the pathway leading to his flat. Police said that Rafik, angered by the confrontation,

called his two sons — Yasim Attar and Salman Attar. The trio allegedly abused the complainant in filthy language and then assaulted him using an iron rod, along with fist blows and kicks. The attack reportedly caused injuries to the complainant's left eye, nose, and right leg. The accused also allegedly threatened to kill the complainant.

Man Held For Selling E-Cigarettes At Candolim Store; Products Worth Rs.15,000 Seized

Team Goemkarponn

CALANGUTE: Calangute Police have registered an offence after a raid at a general store in Candolim uncovered the illegal sale of electronic cigarettes. The case was registered on December 9, 2025, at around 10:30 pm based on a state complaint filed by PSI



Vighnesh V. Naik of Calangute Police Station. According to police, the incident occurred between 6:49 pm and 8:35 pm at Palekar General Store, located at House No. 109,

Dando, Candolim, Bardez. During the operation, the accused — Shahrulkh Khan, 25, son of Shami Khan and residing at Marquiss Waddo, Candolim, originally from Banda district in Uttar Pradesh — was allegedly found selling electronic cigarettes and related products, which are banned.



File Photo

Illegal Cattle Slaughter Unit Unearthed At Nirancal; 2 Booked

Team Goemkarponn

PONDA: Ponda Police have initiated action against two individuals for allegedly operating an illegal cattle slaughter facility and disposing of carcasses in a hazardous manner at Nirancal, Bethoda. The case was registered following a complaint filed by Raj Pratik, Officer with the District Society for Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (South), operating under the office of the Collector, South Goa. According to the complaint, accused Vikas Prabhu, a

resident of Nirancal and owner of a cow shed and dairy in the locality, along with Shabir Hangal, also a dairy farmer from the same area, allegedly ran an unauthorised slaughter operation within Prabhu's property. The duo is further accused of disposing of cattle carcasses and bones in an unsafe and hazardous manner in the vicinity of the cow shade. Police said the acts not only violated animal cruelty norms but also posed a public health and environmental threat due to improper waste disposal.

Mapusa Police Arrest Accused With Ecstasy Worth Rs.20 Lakh in Late-Night Raid

Team Goemkarponn

MAPUSA: In a coordinated narcotics operation, Mapusa Police arrested a 25-year-old man after he was allegedly found in possession of a substantial quantity of Ecstasy worth approximately ₹20 lakh. According to the police, the raid was conducted in the early hours of December



10, 2025, following prior intelligence received the previous evening. At around 1:00 am, PSI Dattaprasad Pandit of Mapusa Police Station,

along with his team, carried out the operation at the parking lot of the New KTC Bus Stand in Mapusa. During the raid, the accused — Umar Kacchi, son of Faruk Gaffar Kacchi, resident of Freitaswado, Canca-Verla, Bardez — was allegedly caught red-handed. Officers recovered 20 grams of a narcotic

substance suspected to be Ecstasy, estimated to be worth ₹20,00,000 in the illegal market. Police also seized ₹500 in cash and a Tata Safari SUV (GA 04 E 7742) believed to be linked to the accused. The seizure was carried out in the presence of panch witnesses, and a detailed panchanama was conducted on the spot.

Panaji Police Register Cheating Case In Oris Coin Investment Fraud Worth Rs.5.95 Lakh

Team Goemkarponn

PANAJI: Panaji Police have registered Cr. No. 180/2025 after four individuals filed a complaint alleging they were cheated of ₹5,95,400 through a fraudulent investment scheme involving "Oris Coins." The complaint was

lodged by Datta Kumar Sawant of Porvorim and Sunita Naik, Sachin Naik, and Sakhil Naik of Campal, Panaji. According to the police, the alleged fraud occurred between January 2024 and August 2024 within the

jurisdiction of TNK, Panaji. The complainants alleged that the accused Vaishnavi B.V., 20, of Mala, Panaji, and Rahul Jadhav dishonestly induced them to invest in Oris Coins by promising unusually high returns. They were

assured a 10% monthly dividend for the first year and continued dividends for up to five years, provided they doubled their investment in the first year. If they failed to do so, the second-year dividend would be halved, with the remaining portion credited as additional coins.



AAP Fields 42 Candidates, Accuses Congress Of Hidden Alliance With BJP

Team Goemkarponn

PANAJI: The Aam Aadmi Party on Wednesday announced a robust slate of 42 candidates for the upcoming Zilla Panchayat elections in Goa, positioning the list as one of the most grassroots-driven and youth-centric the state has seen. Addressing a press conference in Panjim, AAP State President Adv. Amit Palekar said



the party had chosen “honest and accountable candidates rooted in their communities” and urged Goans to “ignore the political noise” and

support “leaders who are among you and for you.” He added that AAP’s candidates carry strong public trust and represent the clean politics that

Goans are demanding. Working President and National Spokesperson Valmiki Naik emphasised the youth-driven character of the candidate list, revealing that 70 per cent of AAP’s nominees are under the age of 35. He said these candidates were educated youth and community workers who had been active on the ground long before the elections were announced.



IndiGo cancellations ease as 7 flights dropped at Dabolim airport

Team Goemkarponn

DABOLIM: Flight disruptions continued at Goa International Airport, Dabolim, as seven IndiGo flights were cancelled, affecting passengers flying to major metropolitan sectors. The cancellations were reported on routes connecting Mumbai, Delhi, Hyderabad, Bengaluru and Ahmedabad,

leaving several travellers scrambling for alternate options amid the ongoing operational turbulence. Airport sources said that while disruptions persisted, there was visible improvement compared to the last few days, when a higher number of cancellations and delays had caused widespread inconvenience.

71-Year-Old British National Found Dead in Patnem Resort Room

Team Goemkarponn

CANACONA: A 71-year-old British national was found dead in his room at a resort in Patnem, Canacona, early Wednesday morning. According to Canacona Police, the deceased, identified as Nigel John Denton, had been staying

at the resort with his partner since December 3. At around 7:30 am, his partner noticed that Denton was unresponsive while he was asleep. He was immediately shifted to the Canacona Community Health Centre (CHC) in a 108 ambulance, where the attending doctor declared him brought dead.

AAI steps up measures at Dabolim airport as IndiGo crisis triggers disruptions

Team Goemkarponn

DABOLIM: The Airports Authority of India (AAI) on Wednesday outlined a series of measures taken to ensure smooth passenger movement at Goa International Airport, Dabolim, amid continued disruptions caused by IndiGo’s operational crisis. The briefing was given at a Wednesday evening press



conference addressed by Officiating Airport Director Laxmi G.S., along with CISF Deputy Commandant Rohan Pawar and Chief Security Officer Vipin

Srivastava. Speaking to reporters, Airport Director Laxmi G.S. said that the airport, in coordination with all stakeholders, had activated multiple layers

of facilitation to prevent congestion and ensure seamless operations. “We have deployed additional manpower at all touch points, opened extra check-in counters, strengthened queue management and coordinated closely with CISF, Goa Police and Traffic Police for smooth city-side movement,” she said.

Scrutiny: 1 Nomination Rejected; 3 in Khola, 6 in Poinguinim in Fray for Canacona ZP Polls

Team Goemkarponn

CANACONA: Scrutiny of nomination papers for the upcoming Zilla Panchayat elections in Canacona concluded on Wednesday, with one independent candidate’s nomination



rejected, while three candidates in Khola and six candidates in Poinguinim

cleared the process and remain in the fray. The nomination of independent candidate Prakash Anant Warik from Poinguinim (Ward 23), who filed his papers on the last day, was rejected after it was found that he had not fulfilled a

mandatory requirement for independent candidates. According to sources in the Returning Office, Warik was informed on Tuesday itself that his application was short of one essential condition and was given time to rectify it.



Lokosthav-25 Postponed; Festival Rescheduled to January 9–11 Next Year

Team Goemkarponn

CANACONA: The popular Lokosthav-25 festival, organised annually by the Adarsh Yuva Sangh, has been postponed due to the Model Code of Conduct enforced for the upcoming Zilla Panchayat elections. The event, earlier scheduled for 19th–21st December, will now be held from January 9th to 11th, 2026. Announcing the decision

at a press conference, Organising Committee Chairman and Minister for Arts & Culture, Sports & Youth Affairs and Tribal Welfare Ramesh Tawadkar said the MCC in place for the December 20 ZP polls necessitated the rescheduling. “Given the election schedule and the code of conduct, Lokosthav-25 has been postponed to January 9, 10 and 11,” Tawadkar confirmed.

Kidnapping and Sexual Assault Case Registered Against Jharkhand Native in Goa

Team Goemkarponn

PANAJI: The Goa Police have registered a serious case of kidnapping and sexual assault against a man identified as Chaman Ram, a native of Jharkhand, following a complaint filed by a local



woman (name withheld for legal reasons). The complaint alleges that

the accused kidnapped the complainant’s minor daughter from her lawful custody in Kirbhat, Nuvem, on November 18, 2025, at approximately 3:30 PM. Allegations Detail Kidnap and Assault Across States According to the official complaint, the accused,

Chaman Ram, not only allegedly kidnapped the minor but also allegedly had sexual intercourse with her for an extended period, from the time of the kidnapping until the morning of December 7, 2025, at 8:00 AM, in Mumbai.

“Kind of Did Not Want to Come Back”: Shubhanshu Shukla Shares Space Experience

■ India's 1st Astronaut on ISS Highlights Nation's Growing Ambitions in Human Spaceflight.

Kolkata: Air Force Group Captain Shubhanshu Shukla, the first Indian to visit the International Space Station (ISS) as part of the Axiom-4 mission, described space as a place of profound peace and breathtaking views, saying he “actually kind of did not want to come back.” Shukla returned to India from the United States on August 17, 2025, after completing his 18-day mission. Addressing schoolchildren at an event organized by the Indian Centre for Space Physics, Shukla reflected on the difference between hands-on space experience and theoretical training. He called his journey a critical “stepping stone” for India's human spaceflight ambitions under the Gaganyaan program. “The experience gained is a national asset and is already guiding ongoing missions,” he noted. Shukla emphasized that India is pursuing “big and bold dreams” in space exploration, including the Gaganyaan program, the development of an indigenous space station, and ultimately, a human landing on the Moon targeted for 2040. He stressed that these goals, while challenging, are achievable and urged students to take ownership of India's space aspirations. Highlighting the growing opportunities in the



sector, Shukla said expanding human spaceflight capabilities would create significant employment prospects. He echoed the words of India's first astronaut, Rakesh Sharma, noting that “from orbit, India is still the best in the world,” while asserting that the achievement was a collective one, reflecting the talent and dedication of the nation. Shukla pointed out that India is now developing a complete astronaut ecosystem, allowing future generations to not only dream of space but also achieve it domestically. “Space missions inspire a million hopes. That is why such programs must continue. The sky is not the limit,” he said. Looking ahead, Shukla expressed eagerness to participate in more missions, including a spacewalk, which would require an additional two years of training.

Elon Musk Says He Is ‘Looking Forward To Serve India’ As Starlink Leaders Meet Telecom Minister

■ Talks focus on expanding satellite-based last-mile connectivity across remote regions.

New Delhi: Elon Musk reaffirmed his interest in bringing Starlink's satellite-based internet services to India after a senior delegation from the company met Union Communications Minister Jyotiraditya Scindia on Wednesday. Responding to Scindia's post about the meeting, Musk said he was “looking forward to serving India with Starlink,” signalling continued momentum toward the service's entry into the country. Scindia held discussions with Starlink Business Operations Vice President Lauren Dreyer and other senior officials, focusing on accelerating satellite-driven last-mile connectivity. The minister said satellite technology will play a crucial role in advancing the government's vision of a digitally empowered India by improving access in rural, remote



and underserved areas. He highlighted that expanding reliable internet access is central to strengthening digital inclusion and ensuring development reaches every part of the country. The meeting follows increased engagement between Starlink and Indian authorities after the company secured key approvals earlier this year. Starlink, operated by SpaceX, uses a network of low-Earth-orbit satellites to deliver high-speed connectivity in areas where conventional broadband is limited. The company has received authorisation from IN-

SPACe and licences to launch GMPCS services, VSAT operations and ISP Category-A services under the unified licence framework. Maharashtra recently became the first state to formally partner with Starlink, signing a Letter of Intent to introduce satellite-based connectivity in remote regions. The state government views the technology as vital to bridging digital gaps in difficult terrain. Starlink is currently completing several regulatory and infrastructure requirements before launching its services in India.

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ENDGAME FOR LUTHRA BROTHERS

were being targeted unfairly.

They also maintained that their trip to Thailand was for business and not an attempt to flee. However, a detailed police investigation paints a starkly different picture. The FIR notes that Birch by Romeo Lane lacked essential fire-safety essentials such as extinguishers, alarms, suppression equipment, and a valid fire audit all mandatory requirements. Officers allege that the owners,

managers, partners, and senior staff conducted a fire act at the venue despite knowing the risks, and without implementing basic precautions. The report also cites the absence of emergency exits on both the deck and the ground floor, which left several patrons trapped when the blaze rapidly engulfed the structure. Goa Chief Minister Pramod Sawant had vowed swift action, ordering a crackdown on unsafe and illegal establishments across the state.

GHRC issues notice to Goa CS, DGP following AILU complaint over Birch fire tragedy

Union (AILU), Goa Unit, raising serious concerns over alleged administrative and policing lapses linked to the December 6 fire. The GHRC, comprising Acting

Chairperson Desmond D'Costa and Member Pramod V. Kamat, examined the complaint during its sitting on December 11. After perusing the submission, the Commission directed

both officials to file their replies and remain present for a hearing scheduled on January 6, 2026 at 10.30 a.m. The notice was issued under Proceeding No. 88/2025.

“E-Cigarette Ban Row Erupts in Lok Sabha After Allegation Against Trinamool MP”

and could not be allowed within the country's highest legislative body. Birla reminded members to maintain decorum and assured them that any violation brought to his notice would be addressed. The BJP MPs are expected to file a formal written

complaint. Textiles Minister Giriraj Singh also reacted, calling the alleged incident deeply unfortunate, particularly if committed by a public representative. The controversy revived attention on India's stringent regulations on e-cigarettes, which

were outlawed under the Prohibition of Electronic Cigarettes Act of 2019. The law bars the manufacture, import, sale, distribution, storage and advertisement of such devices, and even possession is considered an offence.

Amit Shah Defends Electoral Reforms, Rejects ‘Vote Theft’ Claims in Heated Lok Sabha Debate

appointing Election Commissioners for over seven decades and appointments were made directly by the Prime Minister. He said the selection process was revamped in

2023 to include a panel comprising the Prime Minister, a cabinet member and the Leader of Opposition, which he described as a transparent shift in procedure. Shah dismissed concerns

about CCTV footage from polling stations, clarifying that recordings are used only for internal oversight and are legally required to be deleted after 45 days.

Ajay Gupta Sent to 7-Day Police Custody in Birch Fire Case

Speaking on Gupta's behalf, Advocate Rohan Dessai said that his client is fully cooperating with investigators. While the police had sought 10 days of

custody, the court granted a seven-day remand. Dessai added that, given the ongoing nature of the probe, it would be premature to comment on Gupta's alleged involvement.

India-US Trade Talks Advancing Steadily, Says Piyush Goyal

■ Commerce Minister stresses that negotiations are progressing without deadline pressure as both sides deepen engagement.

New Delhi: Union Commerce Minister Piyush Goyal on Wednesday said that discussions between India and the United States on a potential bilateral trade agreement are moving forward constructively, while emphasising that India does not conduct negotiations bound by strict timelines. Speaking at the Rajasthani Pravasi Divas, Goyal noted that a US trade delegation has been in New Delhi since Tuesday and that the ongoing talks have been unfolding positively. He explained that major trade agreements involve numerous dimensions that require careful alignment, and clarified that India does not approach such discussions with rigid deadlines.



Responding to questions on whether he would meet the visiting US negotiating team, Goyal said he would return to the capital later in the day for parliamentary responsibilities and would attempt to schedule a meeting. He also mentioned that he is travelling to Mumbai on Thursday to meet the Italian Deputy Prime

Minister. Addressing the Pravasi Divas gathering earlier, Goyal highlighted Rajasthan's economic growth and the global footprint of its diaspora, noting that more than one crore people of Rajasthani origin live across the world. He praised their entrepreneurial spirit, remarking that they have continually expanded their presence and influence abroad. The visit of the new US Deputy Ambassador for Trade, Rick Switzer, has added momentum to the ongoing India-US engagement. Switzer is holding discussions with senior officials as both countries work to address key issues and move closer to a trade arrangement. Several rounds of talks have already taken place in recent months.

“Thiruparankundram Issue Can Be Resolved on Hindus’ Strength”

■ RSS Chief Says Dispute Should Be Settled Within Tamil Nadu Amid Ongoing Legal Battle.

New Delhi: The ongoing dispute surrounding the lighting of the Karthigai Deepam lamp at Thiruparankundram in Tamil Nadu has drawn national attention, with RSS chief Mohan Bhagwat expressing confidence that the matter can be settled within the state. He stated that the issue is currently before the judiciary and should progress naturally through legal channels, adding that Tamil Nadu's Hindu community has the capacity to bring about



a favourable resolution. During an interaction at an event in Tiruchirappalli, Bhagwat responded to a question on whether the matter should be taken up at a national level.

Netanyahu And Modi Set To Meet Soon As Both Nations Deepen Strategic Partnership

■ Leaders prepare for high-level talks amid expanding bilateral cooperation.

New Delhi: Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu spoke with Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Wednesday, with both leaders agreeing to meet soon as part of ongoing efforts to strengthen ties between the two nations. According to officials in Jerusalem, the conversation was warm and forward-looking, reflecting the steady rise in high-level engagement between India and Israel. The upcoming meeting is expected to follow a series of ministerial visits that have expanded cooperation across trade, investment and strategic sectors. India hosted several senior Israeli ministers earlier this year, including the Minister of Tourism, the Minister of Economy and Industry, the Minister of Agriculture and



Food Security, and the Finance Minister. These visits helped accelerate progress on multiple bilateral initiatives. During the Finance Minister's visit, the two countries signed a Bilateral Investment Treaty aimed at boosting investor confidence and opening new avenues for economic collaboration.

Mahayuti Alliance To Contest All Civic and Zilla Parishad Polls Together in Maharashtra

■ Top leadership finalises joint strategy; seat-sharing for BMC to be decided through coordination panel.

New Delhi: Maharashtra Revenue Minister Chandrashekhar Bawankule announced that the ruling Mahayuti alliance will contest the upcoming Zilla Parishad and Municipal Corporation elections as a unified bloc. The decision was taken during a key meeting attended by Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis, Deputy Chief Minister Eknath Shinde, state BJP president Ravindra Chavan and senior leaders of the coalition. Bawankule



said district-level leaders have been instructed to complete the alliance's organisational framework at the grassroots level without delay. He acknowledged that disagreements may surface in a small number of seats but assured that

any such issues would be addressed directly by Fadnavis and Shinde to ensure cohesion. As the BJP's in-charge for local body polls, he emphasised that the alliance remains committed to a coordinated approach.

IndiGo Chairman Denies Allegations of Engineering Flight Disruption

■ Vikram Singh Mehta Says Airline Will Probe Causes of Recent Flight Cancellations.

Mumbai: IndiGo Chairman Vikram Singh Mehta has rejected claims that the airline deliberately engineered its recent operational crisis, describing such allegations as “untrue” and reaffirming the company's commitment to safety. Mehta addressed the disruptions in a video message, apologizing to passengers and outlining steps being taken to

understand and prevent future issues.

Mehta explained that the board will conduct a comprehensive review of the flight cancellations, involving external technical experts to work alongside management in determining the root causes. “On December 3, an unexpected chain of events led to large-scale



flight cancellations, leaving thousands of passengers stranded. We are truly sorry for the distress caused,” he said. The airline experienced widespread cancellations after challenges in implementing tighter safety and crew rostering rules, with disruptions peaking on December 5. Although operations have stabilized since then, nearly

220 flights were canceled on Wednesday at major airports, including Delhi and Mumbai. Addressing criticism, Mehta acknowledged that while some feedback was fair, the airline's safety standards were never compromised. He stressed that IndiGo adhered strictly to pilot fatigue and crew rostering rules and did not bypass regulations at any point.

Suryakumar Yadav and Shubman Gill's Form Remains Under Spotlight Ahead of T20 World Cup

Consistency from Yadav and Gill Key for India, Notes Former Wicket-Keeper.

New Delhi: Former India wicket-keeper Deep Dasgupta has flagged the need for better contributions from skipper Suryakumar Yadav and vice-captain Shubman Gill, even as he praised the overall strength and depth of the Indian men's cricket team. While not describing their form as a major concern, Dasgupta emphasized that consistent runs from both players would enhance the team's balance and flexibility ahead of the



T20 World Cup. Speaking after India's recent win in Cuttack, Dasgupta noted that the victory highlighted the squad's resilience,



particularly on challenging surfaces. He observed that Suryakumar, who took over captaincy last year, has yet to display

his best form consistently, and Gill would benefit from converting starts into match-defining contributions. "One you start thinking about runs, the chances are you won't bat freely," Dasgupta said, underscoring the importance of confidence in the middle order. The issue is further complicated by team selection dynamics, particularly when balancing key bowlers like Arshdeep Singh and Kuldeep Yadav with batting depth.

ISL Clubs Push for Collective Ownership, AIFF to Discuss at AGM

AIFF aims to resolve commercial deadlock as ISL clubs propose collective ownership model to ensure continuity of the top-tier league.

The All India Football Federation (AIFF) announced that it will review a proposal from Indian Super League (ISL) clubs to form a consortium for owning or operating the top-tier league during its Annual General Meeting on December 20, 2025. In a communication sent to FC Goa CEO Ravi Puskur and the chief executives of all ISL clubs, the AIFF confirmed that the proposal, suggested as a way to resolve the ongoing commercial deadlock, would require discussion



and approval by both the Executive Committee and the AGM. The federation noted that Point No. 12 from the clubs' December 4 communication, which suggested a collective ownership framework, will be part of these deliberations.

India Stages Dramatic Comeback to Claim Bronze at FIH Men's Junior World Cup

Germany Wins Title as India Overturns Two-Goal Deficit to Defeat Argentina 4-2.

Chennai: India showcased remarkable resilience to overturn a two-goal deficit and defeat Argentina 4-2, securing the bronze medal at the FIH Men's Junior World Cup on Wednesday. This marked India's return to the podium after missing out in the last two editions, finishing fourth in 2021 in Bhubaneswar and again in Kuala Lumpur in 2023. The match saw Argentina take an early advantage, with Nicolas Rodriguez converting a penalty stroke in the third minute,



followed by Santiago Fernandez's strike in the 44th minute. Argentina dominated the first two

quarters, maintaining possession and putting the Indian defense under pressure.

Gambhir Stands Firm on Flexible Batting Orders, Prioritizes Adaptability Over Fixed Positions

Indian Head Coach Emphasizes Adaptability Over Fixed Positions.

New Delhi: India head coach Gautam Gambhir has reaffirmed his belief in a flexible batting order for One Day Internationals, advocating a system where players, particularly in the middle order, are not tied to specific positions. Gambhir stressed that such flexibility allows the team to adjust according to match situations, even if it occasionally leads to unexpected outcomes in certain games. Speaking after India's 2-1 ODI series win over South Africa, Gambhir clarified



that while the opening pair is set, the rest of the lineup does not need to occupy fixed positions. He explained that knowing the general template for batting is important, but strict adherence to

positions beyond the top order is unnecessary. "In the one-day format, batting orders are often overrated, except for the opening combination," he noted. Gambhir highlighted that this approach is designed to leverage the depth of the squad, allowing players to step into roles best suited to the match situation. By rotating positions as needed, the team can exploit favorable matchups, respond to bowling attacks strategically, and maintain balance throughout the innings.

Robin Uthappa, Chris Gayle and Jacques Kallis to Play in Legends Pro T20 League

Star-Studded Lineup Sets the Stage for a Nostalgic and Competitive Opening Season.

Team Goemkarponn

PANAJI: The inaugural Legends Pro T20 League is preparing for a grand debut with a powerhouse roster of former international stars. Chris Gayle, Jacques Kallis, Robin Uthappa, Ambati Rayudu and Stuart

Binny have all confirmed their participation, adding to the growing anticipation surrounding the tournament.

The league continues to evolve into a reunion of players whose careers intersected through memorable partnerships, rivalries and shared



victories across the cricketing world. Chris Gayle shared that many of his fondest cricketing moments involve players who will be part of the league.

He recalled the challenge of facing Kallis during his prime, technical conversations with

Uthappa about batting rhythm and the light-hearted exchanges he enjoyed with Rayudu. He said the return of familiar names, including Shikhar Dhawan and Shane Watson, brings back the humour, competitiveness and respect that defined their playing days.