



ZP Poll Campaign Ends, Goa Braces for Multi-Cornered Showdown

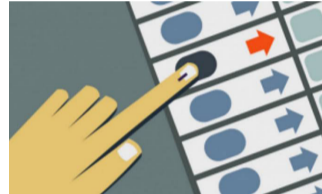
Battle for 50 Zilla Panchayat seats seen as early test of political strength ahead of 2027 Assembly elections

Team Goemkarponn

PANAJI: Campaigning for the December 20 Zilla Panchayat elections in Goa concluded today at 8 am bringing to an end weeks of intense political activity and setting the stage for a closely fought contest among the State's key political parties.

The elections will determine the outcome in all 50 Zilla Panchayat constituencies across North and South Goa, with the ruling Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) and its ally, the Maharashtra Gomantak Party (MGP), seeking to reinforce their dominance at the grassroots level. The

alliance has projected the polls as a crucial barometer of public support ahead of the 2027 Assembly elections, **CONTD TO PAGE 06...**



Dr. Sai Gautam Gopalakrishnan wins Manohar Parrikar Yuva Scientist Award 2025

Team Goemkarponn

PANAJI: Dr. Sai Gautam Gopalakrishnan, Associate Professor of Materials Engineering at the Indian Institute of Science (IISc), Bengaluru, has been

named the recipient of the Manohar Parrikar Yuva Scientist Award 2025. He leads a research group in computational materials science at IISc. This is the third edition of **CONTD TO PAGE 06...**

Birch by Romeo Lane co-owner Ajay Gupta Moves for Bail

Team Goemkarponn

MAPUSA: Ajay Gupta, one of the co-owners of the Birch by Romeo Lane nightclub at Arpora, has approached a local court in Mapusa seeking regular bail in connection with the deadly fire incident at the club. Gupta, who was arrested by the Goa Police in New Delhi, is currently in the custody of the Anjuna Police. His bail plea has been filed before the District Court



in Mapusa, where he is being represented by senior advocate Rohan Desai. According to court sources, the application is expected to be taken up for hearing later on Thursday, following which the court is likely to issue notices to the Goa Police **CONTD TO PAGE 06...**

“No Risk of Persecution”: Belgium’s Top court clears Extradition Path for Mehul Choksi

Final Appeal Dismissed, Paving Way for Return to India in PNB Fraud Case

New Delhi: Belgium’s highest judicial authority has rejected the final legal challenge filed by fugitive businessman Mehul Choksi, effectively clearing the way for his extradition to India in connection with the Rs 13,000 crore Punjab National Bank fraud case. The ruling upholds an earlier decision of the Antwerp Court of Appeal and marks a decisive moment in India’s efforts to bring the accused back to face trial. The court firmly rejected Choksi’s claims



that his return to India would result in an unfair trial or expose him to torture or inhuman treatment. Judges concluded that he failed to present concrete and credible evidence to support allegations of political persecution or denial of justice. The **CONTD TO PAGE 06...**

PUBLIC APPEAL

GOA STATE ELECTION COMMISSION ALTINHO, PANAJI-GOA

Zilla Panchayat Elections 2025

Poll Date: 20th December, 2025
Poll Time: 8:00 am to 5:00 pm



PARTICIPATE WITH PRIDE - CAST YOUR VOTE
YOUR POWER, YOUR RESPONSIBILITY

Issued in Public Interest by
Goa State Election Commission, Altinho, Panaji- Goa
Website: sec.goa.gov.in

Goa's Coast Is Not Delhi's Backyard

The fire at Birch should finally end the myth that what is happening along Goa's coast is harmless indulgence or glamorous excess. It is neither. It is a systematic dismantling of rules, enabled by power, celebrity, and political influence, much of it imported from Delhi. Birch is not an aberration. It is the inevitable outcome of a culture where law enforcement bends before privilege and accountability dissolves in the presence of famous names and powerful connections.

For years, North Goa has witnessed a steady takeover by high-profile restaurants, clubs, and beachside establishments that operate in a grey zone at best and in outright violation at worst. Coastal Regulation Zone norms are treated as suggestions. Fire safety approvals become rubber stamps. Temporary permissions quietly turn permanent. Complaints raised by locals are dismissed as obstruction or jealousy. The law, meanwhile, retreats.

Birch is only one example. Bastian Riviera, promoted by actor Shilpa Shetty, and establishments like Goya have repeatedly raised red flags over permissions, land use, and compliance. These are not marginal players unaware of the law. These are well-funded, professionally advised ventures that know exactly how far they can push the system and who to call when trouble arises.

The real problem lies not only with the businesses but with the ecosystem that protects them. North Goa today is deeply influenced by a powerful Delhi circuit. Politicians on vacation, senior IAS and IPS officers on "breaks," retired bureaucrats turned investors, and their networks of fixers and facilitators have transformed governance into an informal negotiation. When the violator is connected to Delhi, enforcement in Goa suddenly slows down.

Local officials understand this reality all too well. A strict inspection can invite

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The consequences are serious. Goa's coastline is ecologically sensitive and already under stress. Illegal or poorly regulated structures overload sewage systems, block natural water flows, and create severe safety hazards. Fires like the one at Birch are not random accidents. They are symptoms of negligence, overcrowding, and compromised safety standards.

Local communities pay the price. Fisherfolk lose access to traditional

spaces. Villages face water shortages while luxury establishments operate without restraint. Noise, traffic and environmental damage are normalised in the name of "high-end tourism." Meanwhile, small local businesses are penalised or shut down for far lesser violations, reinforcing a two-tier system of justice.

What makes this especially corrosive is the loss of public faith. When citizens see that rules apply strictly to the powerless and flexibly to the influential, governance loses legitimacy. The law becomes a performance rather than a principle. Goa begins to resemble a colony within its own borders, catering to outsiders who enjoy the land without respecting it.

The Birch fire must mark a turning point. Not another committee. Not another temporary closure. There must be accountability that travels upward, not just downward. Who cleared these establishments. Who ignored warnings. Who intervened to stall action. These questions cannot be brushed aside with vague assurances.

Celebrity ownership should invite tougher scrutiny, not softer handling. The presence of Delhi politicians or senior officers should never be a protective shield. If IAS and IPS officers misuse their influence, they must face consequences, not quiet reassignment. Goa's institutions must answer to Goa's people, not to visiting power brokers.

Goa's strength has always been its balance between openness and restraint, tourism and tradition, growth and nature. Allowing its coast to be converted into a lawless playground for the privileged will destroy that balance beyond repair. The Birch fire is a warning written in smoke and ash.

If Goa ignores it, the next disaster will not just expose broken rules. It will expose a state that chose influence over integrity, and silence over safety.

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Justice or Just Optics in the Birch Fire Case?

The recent developments following the Birch fire raise an uncomfortable but necessary question. Will the Luthra brothers actually be punished, or are we witnessing yet another eyewash designed to calm public anger until attention shifts elsewhere?

Goa has seen this script before. After every major violation or disaster involving wealthy and influential individuals, there is an initial flurry of notices, sealing orders, and official statements. Files are opened, committees are formed, and headlines are generated. Then, quietly and predictably, the matter fades. Permissions are "revisited," cases are "reviewed," and business resumes are often with minor cosmetic changes.

The Luthra brothers are not ordinary operators. They are rich, well-connected, and well-versed in navigating India's regulatory maze. In a system where money and influence routinely dilute accountability, it is difficult to believe that the full force of the law will be applied to them. If past experience is any guide, responsibility will be deflected onto managers, contractors, or junior officials, while the real beneficiaries remain untouched.

This is not cynicism. It is based on a pattern. When celebrities, powerful businessmen, or politically connected investors are involved, punishment rarely matches the violation. At best, fines are imposed that mean little to those with deep pockets. At worst, cases collapse altogether.

If the Goa government is serious, it must prove it through action, not announcements. Transparent investigations, time-bound prosecutions, and personal accountability are the only measures that will restore public trust. Anything less will confirm what many already suspect. That justice in such cases is performative, not real.

- Dinesh Satardekar, Bastora

Fire Safety Warnings Must Translate Into Real Enforcement

The recent directive issued by the Directorate of Fire and Emergency Services (DFES) on mandatory fire safety compliance is timely and necessary, especially in the wake of tragic incidents such as the Birch fire. However, the real test lies not in the strength of the circular, but in its enforcement on the ground.

Goa has no shortage of rules, regulations, and well-drafted advisories. What it lacks is consistency and courage in implementation. Fire Safety NOCs are often treated as routine paperwork, obtained once and forgotten, even as establishments undergo major structural changes, increase occupancy, or alter layouts in ways that compromise safety. Inspections, where they occur, are frequently predictable and superficial.

The DFES has clearly stated that licences can be suspended or cancelled for non-compliance. This must apply equally to all establishments, regardless of size, brand value, or ownership. High-end restaurants, bars, clubs and hotels cannot be allowed to bypass norms simply because they generate revenue or attract influential clientele. Selective enforcement will only reduce this warning to another symbolic gesture.

Equally important is accountability among licensing authorities. If trade licences and occupancy certificates continue to be renewed without verifying valid fire clearances, the responsibility for future disasters will lie as much with officials as with operators. Inter-departmental coordination must move beyond circulars and become a routine practice.

The DFES has outlined clear preventive and life safety measures. Now the State must ensure surprise inspections, public disclosure of violations, and swift action where norms are flouted. Only visible, impartial enforcement will restore public confidence and, more importantly, prevent the next avoidable tragedy.

- Agnelo D'Souza, St Inez

ED Conducts Fresh Searches in Goa Land Grab Case, Seizes Dubai Property Documents

Team Goemkarponn

PANAJI: The Directorate of Enforcement (ED), Panaji Zonal Office, has carried out fresh search and seizure operations in connection with a high-profile Goa land grab case involving prime property at Caranzalem.

The searches were conducted on December 16 under the provisions of the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA), 2002, at residential and business premises linked to M/s Models Real Estate Developers and its partners

According to the ED, the investigation stems from an FIR registered by the Panaji Police and pertains to the alleged

illegal acquisition of tenanted agricultural land bearing Chalta No. 44 (New 44A) of P.T. Sheet No. 162 at Caranzalem, belonging to the family of Tanu Gauns

Press Release Searches in Land

The agency has alleged that the accused, including officials of the Archdiocese of Goa and a then official of the City Survey Office, acted in connivance with late Peter Vaz, former partner of Models Real Estate Developers, to fraudulently manipulate revenue records. As per the ED, the lawful



tenant's name was illegally deleted from Form 'B' of the City

Survey records using forged and fabricated documents, following which the property was unlawfully sold to the real estate firm

The land was subsequently developed into a residential project named Models Mystique, which, the ED claims, generated further proceeds of crime. During the searches at the Caranzalem residence of Diogo Nathan Vaz and Natalina Estela Vaz, as well as the firm's registered office at Santa Inez, the agency seized

incriminating documents, including a sale and purchase agreement dated February 2, 2007, and title deeds of a property in Dubai allegedly purchased by late Peter Vaz

Digital devices recovered during the operation reportedly revealed contacts of international investors, mainly from the UAE, and indicated alleged cash-based transactions. Documents establishing the lawful tenancy rights of Tanu Gauns and records related to the estimated construction cost of apartments on the disputed land were also seized. The ED stated that further investigation in the case is underway.

Accidents on The Rise, Nightclubs Must Shut By Midnight: Min Vishwajit Rane

Team Goemkarponn

PANAJI: Expressing serious concern over the rising number of accidents in the state, Health Minister Vishwajit Rane on Tuesday called for strict curbs on alcohol consumption and nightlife activities, particularly in North Goa's popular tourism hubs.

"If accidents have increased, then drinking must stop. Bars and nightclubs should be shut down—we do not want a nightclub culture," Rane said, stressing that public safety must take precedence over entertainment.

He pointed out that many parents live in constant fear when their children step out at night to places like Calangute, Anjuna and Vagator, uncertain if they will return



home safely.

Highlighting the emotional toll of fatal accidents, the Health Minister said, "There are so many mothers who worry when their children go out at night... When someone in a family dies, it shatters the entire family."

Rane suggested that nightclubs should be mandatorily closed by midnight and even proposed restrictions on alcohol consumption within clubs.

Fire safety clearances Mandatory: Licences at Risk for Non-compliant Establishments: DFES

Team Goemkarponn

PANAJI: In a strong message to commercial and public establishments, the Directorate of Fire and Emergency Services (DFES) has cautioned that failure to comply with prescribed fire and life safety norms could result in the suspension or cancellation of operating licences.

The warning follows a series of recent fire incidents, including the fatal blaze at Birch, after which the department issued a comprehensive circular directing all licensing authorities to tighten enforcement of fire safety regulations. The DFES has made it clear that fire safety compliance is a shared and ongoing responsibility, and not merely a procedural requirement at the time of obtaining clearances.

As per the directions, local authorities have been instructed to verify the validity of Fire Safety No Objection Certificates (NOCs) before granting or renewing any trade licence, occupancy



certificate or operational permission. Authorities have also been told to promptly alert the DFES about unsafe conditions, violations or hazardous practices detected within their jurisdictions.

The department has stated that any establishment functioning without a valid Fire Safety NOC, or found violating mandatory fire norms, will be liable for immediate regulatory action, including the withdrawal of licences. It reiterated that all occupancies must secure and maintain a fire clearance in accordance with the Goa Fire Force Act, 1986 and the Rules of 1997, and that licences remain valid only so long as the fire clearance is current.

SIR Process Transparent, Grievances Must Follow Due Process: S. Goa Electoral Roll Observer

Team Goemkarponn

MARGAO: The Electoral Roll Observer for South Goa, Sandeep Jacques, IAS, appointed by the Election Commission of India, has asserted that the ongoing Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of electoral rolls is being carried out in a transparent manner, while underlining that citizens must adhere to established procedures when raising objections or complaints.

Addressing representatives of recognised political parties and election officials



during his visit to South Goa on Tuesday, Jacques said that any individual who feels aggrieved by the actions of election authorities is entitled to pursue appropriate legal remedies, particularly if they believe a complaint lodged against them is false. The meeting was attended by the District Election Officer (DEO),

Electoral Registration Officers (EROs) and Assistant Electoral Registration Officers (AEROs), and focused on issues arising from the SIR exercise.

During the interaction, Congress leader Savio Coutinho raised concerns over an FIR registered against him by the Margao police in connection with

an alleged incident at the district library. Describing the complaint lodged by the Additional Collector-II as baseless, Coutinho claimed he had not visited the library for the past two months and questioned the circumstances under which the FIR was filed.

Responding to the issue, Jacques clarified that the registration of an FIR amounts to a complaint and does not imply that the person named has been held guilty. He said it is for the police to examine the veracity of the complaint and take a decision accordingly.

Vasco Tops Goa with Nearly 13,000 'Unmapped' Voters in Draft Electoral Rolls

Team Goemkarponn

VASCO: Vasco has emerged as the worst-affected constituency in Goa in the Election Commission of India's latest draft electoral rolls, with 12,951 voters marked as "unmapped", the highest for any Assembly segment in the State.

The classification

means that the voters' names — as well as those of their parents — do not figure in the post-Special Intensive Revision (SIR) electoral roll of 2002, placing their eligibility under verification. Until the process is completed, their inclusion in the final voters' list remains uncertain.

Notably, Vasco had



earlier also topped the list of electoral deletions, with a large number of names removed on grounds such as death, permanent migration out of Goa, prolonged

absence, or duplication of entries. Election officials say the high number of unmapped voters reflects the constituency's long-standing demographic churn linked to port-related employment and population movement.

Under the ongoing SIR exercise, all unmapped voters continue to feature in the draft rolls.

Youth Found Dead on Arambol Beach

Team Goemkarponn

ARAMBOL: Mandrem Police have registered an Unnatural Death (UD) case No. 54/2025 under Section 194 of the Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita (BNSS) after a young man was found lying motionless on Arambol Beach in the early hours of Wednesday.

Police received information at around 6.47 am on December 17, 2025, about an unknown



male, aged approximately 30-35 years, found

motionless on the beach. Upon conducting inquiries

with local residents, the deceased was later identified as Abhay, son of Bheem Singh, aged 23 years, working as a waiter. He was a native of Sharog Kando Bhatnaul, Sirmaur district, Himachal Pradesh, and was employed at Café Russian, Arambol, Pernem, Goa.

Further enquiry in the matter is in progress by the Investigating Officer, PSI, Mandrem Police Station.

Man Found Dead in Room Behind SDH Chicalim

Team Goemkarponn

CHICALIM: A 39-year-old man was found dead in his room located behind the Sub-District Hospital (SDH), Chicalim, on Wednesday morning. Police received information at around 8.36 am from 108 Vasco Ambulance staff stating that a male person was lying unconscious in his room.

Police rushed to the spot and found the man lying in an unconscious state. Upon examination, the 108 ambulance medical staff declared him dead. The deceased has been identified as Chhavindra Gurung (39), a resident of behind SDH, Chicalim.

Police conducted a



scene of UD occurrence panchanama and an inquest panchanama over the dead body. The body has been preserved at the South Goa District Hospital (SGDH), Margao, for further medico-legal formalities.

Enquiries with locals, roommates and family members revealed that the deceased had suffered an injury to his right leg for the past one year, which was reportedly bleeding.

Further enquiry in the matter is being carried out by PSI Mayur K. Sawant of Vasco Police Station.

Daily Wage Labourer Found Dead Near Cine Lata, Margao

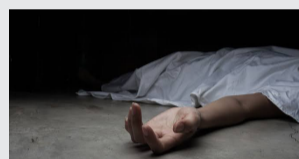
Team Goemkarponn

MARGAO: An unidentified person was found lying near Cine Lata, close to the Margao Municipal Council, on Wednesday

morning. Police received information from the PCR Panaji at around 7.31 am regarding the incident.

Upon reaching the spot, the person was shifted to the District Hospital, Margao, where

the doctor on duty declared him brought dead. Subsequent enquiries revealed that the deceased was identified as Ravi (other details not known), who had been working as a



daily wage labourer in the Margao area for the past 20 years.

Further enquiry in the matter is being conducted by PSI Subhash Gaonkar of Margao Town Police Station.

DM Issues Prohibitory Orders for Polling and Counting Days

Team Goemkarponn

PANAJI: The District Magistrate of South Goa has issued prohibitory orders in connection with the Zilla Panchayat elections, directing the closure of all restaurants, bars, tea shops, paan shops, eateries and other food joints located within a 100-metre radius of polling stations across South Goa on polling day, December 20, 2025, from 6.00 am to 9.00 pm.

Similar restrictions will be in force at counting centres on December 22, 2025, from 6.00 am till the completion of vote counting. The order also prohibits any gathering of more than five persons within 100 metres of

polling stations in the Zilla Panchayat constituencies of South Goa district.

The restrictions will not apply to public servants on duty, authorised election officials, including polling staff, magistrates, police personnel and government employees, nor to bona fide marriage or funeral processions and religious processions or functions.

Violation of the order will attract penal action under Section 223 of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita, 2023, and other relevant provisions of law.

The order has been issued in the interest of maintaining public order and ensuring the smooth conduct of polling and counting processes.

PROHIBITORY ORDER

Unidentified Disabled Beggar Found Dead at Baina

Team Goemkarponn

MORMUGAO: An unidentified male, aged around 35 years, was found dead at Baina on Tuesday afternoon. Police received information from the PCR Panaji at about 3.00 pm stating that an unknown person was lying dead and had been shifted to the Sub-District Hospital (SDH), Chicalim.



Upon reaching SDH Chicalim, the duty doctor confirmed that the individual had been brought dead. Preliminary enquiries with local

residents revealed that the deceased was a disabled person who used to beg and had been sleeping on the roadside in the area for the past

one year.

An inquest panchanama was conducted over the dead body, which has been preserved at the South Goa District Hospital (SGDH), Margao, for further medico-legal formalities.

Further enquiry is being carried out by PSI Saidatta Naik of Mormugao Police Station.

North Goa Rent a Cab Association Flags Fake car Rental websites

Team Goemkarponn

PANAJI: The North Goa Rent a Cab Association has reported an incident of a tourist being cheated by an unauthorized car rental website operating in North Goa. According to the association, the tourist was provided with a private number plate vehicle instead of a legally registered rent-a-cab, resulting in financial loss and inconvenience.

The association has formally urged the Calangute Police to investigate the matter and identify multiple



suspected fake car rental websites allegedly operating without valid transport licences. It has also demanded strict action against those

involved to curb illegal operations and prevent further cheating of tourists. The association warned that such fraudulent practices

not only harm tourists but also damage the reputation of Goa's tourism sector and affect legitimate rent-a-cab operators.

Campaigning Guns Fall Silent; BJP Candidates Hold The Sway In Canacona ZP Seats

Team Goemkarponn

CANACONA: With the campaigning guns falling silent at 8 am on Thursday, intense electioneering for the Khola (22) and Poinguinim (23) Zilla Panchayat seats came to an end, as candidates across party lines expressed confidence of emerging victorious. However, BJP candidates in both constituencies are widely perceived to be holding the edge as the contests head into polling.

In Khola, the contest has shaped into a three-cornered fight involving BJP, Congress-Goa Forward Party (GFP) alliance and the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP). BJP candidate Tejal Pagi, backed by former Chief Minister and BJP Vice President Chandrakant (Babu) Kavlekar and supported by Canacona MLA and Minister Ramesh



Tawadkar, is pitted against Congress candidate Sumitra Pagi, supported by Quepem MLA Altone D'Costa, and AAP candidate Adv. Samiksha Kholkar.

BJP's Tejal Pagi is the only candidate to have completed door-to-door campaigning across all four village panchayats—Agonda, Shristhal, Khola and Betul-Naqueri. Congress candidate Sumitra Pagi's outreach remained limited, while AAP's presence was also confined to select areas. Campaigning saw sharp exchanges between Altone D'Costa and

Chandrakant Kavlekar, with both sides holding multiple corner meetings attended by senior party leaders, including BJP state president Damu Naik.

In Poinguinim, BJP candidate Ajay (Ajit) Loliencar is believed to enjoy an advantage owing to an aggressive and well-coordinated campaign by party karyakartas. Minister Ramesh Tawadkar conducted several corner meetings in areas considered weak for the BJP, further strengthening Loliencar's position.

The Congress-GFP alliance candidate

Prashant Naik, backed by former minister and ex-Canacona MLA Isidore Fernandes, made visible inroads in several pockets, holding interactions with farmers and local residents. Independent candidates Shailesh Pagui, former Loliem-Polem sarpanch, and Daya (Umesh) Gaonkar, a Congress rebel and former Khotigao sarpanch, also ran extensive campaigns across all four village panchayats, drawing noticeable support.

AAP candidate and former Khotigao sarpanch Rajesh Gaonkar trailed behind in terms of campaign visibility, while BJP rebel Vipin Prabhugaonkar largely campaigned solo. Another independent candidate, Diksha Pagi, limited her outreach mainly to Poinguinim, focusing on areas with community support.

RPF Madgaon Restores Lost Passenger Belongings, Reinforcing Trust And Safety

Team Goemkarponn

MARGAO: The Railway Protection Force (RPF), Madgaon, has once again demonstrated its commitment to passenger safety and service by successfully tracing and restoring lost belongings to passengers under Operation "Amanat".

On 16 December 2025, a passenger lodged a complaint through Rail Madad reporting that a handbag had been left behind in Train No. 22119, Tejas Express. Acting swiftly, on-duty RPF personnel secured the bag and kept it in safe custody. Upon verification, the handbag was found to contain a mobile phone valued at ₹50,000 and cash amounting to ₹3,420, taking the total value of the recovered property to ₹53,420. After completing all due documentation and verification formalities, the bag was safely handed over to the passenger on 17 December 2025.

On the same day, another complaint was



received through Rail Madad regarding a bag left unattended on Platform No. 1 at Madgaon Railway Station. The on-duty RPF staff promptly took custody of the bag and, after completing the necessary procedures, returned it to the rightful owner on 17 December 2025.

In both instances, the passengers expressed their sincere appreciation to the Railway Protection Force for its prompt response, professionalism and dedicated efforts under Operation "Amanat". The initiative continues to reinforce passenger confidence in the RPF and its role in ensuring safety and security across the railway network.

INVITATION

PARRA CITIZENS FORUM ASSOCIATION
Take Pleasure In Inviting you to the

11th All Goa Stars Presentation and Carol Singing Competition

Festival of Stars

To be Held on **23rd December 2025, 06:00pm**
onwards at **Jackni Vaddo (Parra Tinto)**
Opposite Graça Costa Polyclinic, Parra, Goa.

In The Gracious Presence of

Shri. Damodar (Damu) G. Naik
Hon'ble Goa State BJP President,
as the **Chief Guest**

Shri. Michael Lobo
Hon'ble MLA, Calangute Constituency | Chairman, GSIDC

Smt. Delilah Lobo
Hon'ble MLA, Siolim Constituency | Vice Chairman, ESG

Shri. Daniel Lobo
Sarpanch, Village Panchayat Parra

Shri. Chandanand Harmalkar
Ex - Sarpanch & Panch Member, Village Panchayat Parra

Smt. Elsy Lobo
Deputy Sarpanch, Village Panchayat Parra

Shri. Edwin Lobo
President, Parra Citizens Forum Association

Shri. Pradeep Morajkar
Convener - Organising Committee
and Members of Village Panchayat Parra

Wishing you a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year 2026

Entries for the Stars will be accepted from 10.00am to 06:00 pm

Michael Lobo,
MLA, Calangute Constituency |
Chairman, GSIDC

Delilah Lobo,
MLA, Siolim Constituency |
Vice Chairman, ESG

Daniel Lobo,
Sarpanch,
Village Panchayat Parra

PROGRAM

07:00 PM :
Carol Singing Presentation

08:00 PM:
Live Band - AJ
Father Son Duo

09:00 PM:
Live Performance of Comedian -
John D'silva, Remie de Raia & Rose Vaz

10:00 PM:
Prize Distribution






Chandanand Harmalkar
Ex - Sarpanch & Panch Member, VP Parra

Elsy Lobo
Deputy Sarpanch, VP Parra

Sanjay Korgaonkar
Panch Member, VP Parra

Candida D'Souza
Panch Member, VP Parra

Bazilio Pacheco
Panch Member, VP Parra

Shital Redkar
Panch Member, VP Parra

Edwin Lobo
President, Parra Citizens Forum Association

Pradeep Morajkar
Convener - Organising Committee

John D'silva

Remie De Raia

Rose Vaz

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Bazilio Pacheco
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MLA, Calangute Constituency |
Chairman, GSIDC

Delilah Lobo,
MLA, Siolim Constituency |
Vice Chairman, ESG

Daniel Lobo,
Sarpanch,
Village Panchayat Parra

Indian Navy Commissions INAS 335 'Ospreys' At INS Hansa In Goa

Team Goemkarponn

DABOLIM: The Indian Navy on Thursday commissioned INAS 335, christened the 'Ospreys', at INS Hansa in Goa, marking the induction of MH-60R multi-role helicopters as the Navy's first fully operational squadron on the Western Seaboard.

Addressing the commissioning ceremony, Chief of the Naval Staff Admiral R. Hari Kumar



said the induction comes at a historic moment, coinciding with 75 years

of India's Fleet Air Arm and 64 years since Operation Vijay, which led

to the liberation of Goa. He said the occasion reflects the Navy's rich

aviation legacy and its continued transformation to meet emerging maritime challenges.

The Chief of the Naval Staff highlighted that the MH-60R helicopters are equipped with advanced sensors and modern weapon systems, which will substantially enhance the Navy's capabilities in maritime surveillance, anti-submarine warfare, strike operations and search-and-rescue missions across the

Western Seaboard.

Emphasising the Navy's thrust on Aatmanirbharta, Admiral Kumar said indigenous weapons and systems have been integrated into the platform. He added that INAS 335 is fully operational and ready to deploy with the Fleet from Day One, significantly strengthening the Indian Navy's operational readiness and maritime security posture.

Python rescued near electricity department quarters at Sada

Team Goemkarponn

SADA: A python was rescued near the Electricity Department quarters at Sada following timely action by alert local residents on Wednesday night, preventing panic in the residential area.

The reptile was first spotted moving close to the staff quarters, prompting residents to exercise caution and inform experienced locals. Vikrant Kangralkar and Basu, residents of the area, responded swiftly and managed to safely restrain the python without causing harm to the animal or endangering the public.

Residents said the presence of the snake had created concern, especially as the area is frequented by children and morning walkers.



However, the calm and coordinated approach adopted by the rescuers ensured that the situation was brought under control within a short time.

After the rescue, the python was later released into a safe forested area, away from human habitation.

Local residents appreciated the efforts of Vikrant Kangralkar and Basu for their presence of mind and quick response, stating that their intervention helped avoid a potentially risky situation and restored a sense of safety in the locality.

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"No Risk of Persecution": Belgium's Top Court Clears Extradition Path for Mehul Choksi

ruling stated that there were no substantial grounds to believe that Choksi's fundamental rights would be violated if extradited. Choksi has spent the past several months challenging his extradition through multiple legal avenues in Belgium. His defence relied heavily on claims linked to his alleged abduction from Antigua to Dominica in 2021 and the subsequent withdrawal of an Interpol Red Notice. The court dismissed these arguments, noting that the charges against

him including criminal conspiracy, cheating, and money laundering qualify as extraditable offences under the laws of both countries. A significant element influencing the court's decision was the set of diplomatic assurances provided by Indian authorities. These assurances detailed the conditions of Choksi's detention, confirming that he would be lodged in a designated barrack at Mumbai's Arthur Road Jail equipped with proper sanitation, ventilation, and lighting.

MMC staff spring birthday surprise for chairperson Girish Borker

Team Goemkarponn

MORMUGAO: In a heartwarming and unexpected gesture, staff of the Mormugao Municipal Council (MMC) surprised Chairperson Girish Borker by organising his 50th birthday celebration at the municipal garage early Thursday morning, leaving him visibly emotional.

Unaware of what awaited him, Borker was invited at the MMC garage at around 7 am to find the entire premises decorated with balloons, banners and lights. Staff members revealed that preparations for the celebration had begun as early as 4 am, with employees from



various departments working together quietly to ensure the surprise remained intact.

As Borker entered the office and realised the effort put in by the staff, he was overwhelmed with emotion and broke down in tears. Several staff members gathered around him, applauding and

wishing him, before joining him to cut the birthday cake amid cheers and smiles.

Speaking briefly after the celebration, an emotional Borker thanked the staff for the affection and respect shown to him. He said the gesture meant more than any formal celebration and

reaffirmed his commitment to the welfare of MMC employees.

Marking the occasion, Borker also handed over letters granting special status to municipal workers. Under his tenure, the MMC has become the first municipality in Goa to elevate daily wage workers to temporary workers, entitling them to leave benefits on par with regular staff. The MMC has also emerged as the first civic body in the State to provide insurance coverage for its workers. Staff members said the celebration was their way of expressing gratitude for a chairperson who, they said, stood firmly by workers' rights and dignity.

...CONTD FROM PAGE 01

ZP Poll Campaign Ends, Goa Braces for Multi-Cornered Showdown

leaning heavily on Chief Minister Pramod Sawant's extensive campaigning and development-focused narrative. The Congress, contesting in alliance with the Goa Forward Party (GFP), has attempted to reassert itself by positioning the combine as the main alternative to the BJP-MGP bloc. Their campaign highlighted issues such as unemployment, weaknesses in local self-governance, and alleged corruption

under the current government. The Aam Aadmi Party (AAP), fighting the elections independently with candidates in 42 constituencies, sought to energise the race by banking on its governance pitch and high-profile leadership. AAP national convener Arvind Kejriwal's three-day visit to Goa, which included public rallies and door-to-door outreach alongside party candidates, emerged as the centrepiece of its campaign. The

party has said it hopes to expand its presence in rural Goa through these polls. Also in the fray is the Revolutionary Goans Party (RGP), which has been campaigning aggressively to translate its identity-driven politics into electoral relevance. Emphasising local issues and grassroots mobilisation, the party aims to demonstrate that it can move beyond protest politics and secure a stable foothold in the State.

Birch by Romeo Lane Co-owner Ajay Gupta Moves for Bail

to submit their response. The arrest follows the fire that broke out at the Arpora-based nightclub on December 6, resulting in the

death of 25 persons. The incident triggered a major investigation into alleged safety lapses and operational violations at the

establishment. So far, the Goa Police have arrested eight individuals in connection with the case.

Dr. Sai Gautam Gopalakrishnan wins Manohar Parrikar Yuva Scientist Award 2025

the prestigious national award instituted by the Government of Goa to inspire young scientific minds in Goa and across India to pursue excellence in science for the benefit of humanity. A total of 50 applications were received

from leading research institutes across the country. After rigorous evaluation, 10 candidates were shortlisted for personal interviews. Following an intense scrutiny process by an expert committee chaired by eminent scientist

Dr. Anil Kakodkar, Dr. Gopalakrishnan was selected as the final awardee. The award carries a cash prize of ₹5 lakh and a citation, making it the highest cash prize in the field of science and technology in the country.

Parliament Approves Bill Allowing 100 Percent Foreign Investment in Insurance Sector

■ “Higher FDI Will Boost Competition and Lower Premiums”

New Delhi: Parliament on Wednesday approved legislation permitting up to 100 percent foreign direct investment in the insurance sector, marking a major reform aimed at expanding coverage, attracting global capital, and strengthening competition. The Sabka Bima Sabki Raksha Amendment of Insurance Laws Bill 2025 was cleared by the Rajya Sabha through a voice vote, a day after receiving approval from the Lok Sabha.

The House rejected amendments moved by Opposition members, including proposals seeking referral of the



bill to a parliamentary committee for further examination. Responding to the debate, the Finance Minister said the reform would enable foreign insurers to bring in higher levels of capital and technology, helping the sector grow faster and reach more people.

The minister highlighted that opening up the insurance sector over the years has already led to a steady rise in insurance penetration,

while significant untapped potential still remains. She said the move to allow 100 percent foreign investment would encourage more global insurers to enter the Indian market, particularly those who have been reluctant to operate through joint ventures due to partnership constraints.

With the expected entry of additional players, competition in the sector is likely to intensify, which could lead to improved products and lower premiums for consumers. Addressing concerns related to employment, the minister said the reform would generate more jobs rather than reduce

them. She pointed to data showing that employment in the insurance sector has nearly tripled since the foreign investment cap was raised from 26 percent to 74 percent.

The government also dismissed claims that the bill was rushed, stating that consultations on the proposed changes had been ongoing for nearly two years. The legislation introduces amendments to key laws governing the sector, including the Insurance Act of 1938, the Life Insurance Corporation Act of 1956, and the Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority Act of 1999.

GPS-Based Toll system to Be Operational by End of 2026: Nitin Gadkari

■ Satellite and AI Technology to Ensure Zero Waiting Time and Higher Revenue

New Delhi: A nationwide GPS based toll collection system will become fully operational by the end of 2026, bringing an end to waiting time at toll plazas and significantly improving travel efficiency on national highways. The new system will rely on satellite technology and artificial intelligence, allowing vehicles to pass through toll points without stopping.

The road transport and highways minister informed Parliament that the upcoming system will be an advanced form of multi lane free flow tolling. Vehicles will be able to cross toll points at speeds of up to 80 kilometres per hour without barriers or manual intervention.



The technology will combine satellite tracking, automatic number plate recognition supported by AI, and existing FASTag infrastructure to ensure seamless toll collection. According to the minister, the move will generate substantial economic benefits. Fuel savings alone are expected to reach nearly Rs 1,500 crore, while government revenue is projected to increase by about Rs 6,000 crore.

Rs 20,000 Fine or Turned Back: Delhi Cracks Down on Old Vehicles at Borders

■ Strict GRAP Stage IV Checks Enforced as Air Quality Slips into Hazardous Zone

New Delhi: Delhi intensified enforcement at its border entry points on Thursday as air quality levels plunged into the hazardous category, prompting strict implementation of Stage IV of the Graded Response Action Plan. Dense smog reduced visibility across several stretches, including the

Delhi Noida Direct Flyway, where the air quality index near the Chilla border touched nearly 490.

Teams from the Delhi Police and the transport department were deployed at multiple checkpoints to monitor incoming traffic. Non compliant vehicles registered outside Delhi were either fined or denied entry.

“Relations Remain Stressed”: Bangladesh Acknowledges Strain After India Summons Envoy

■ Dhaka Says Diplomatic Move Was Expected, Calls for Efforts From Both Sides to Restore Ties

New Delhi: Bangladesh on Tuesday acknowledged that its relations with India remain under strain, following New Delhi's decision to summon the Bangladeshi High Commissioner over controversial remarks made by a political leader in Dhaka. While stopping short of saying that bilateral ties have entered a new phase, Bangladesh indicated that tensions

have persisted for some time and will require mutual effort to ease. Bangladesh's foreign affairs adviser said India's diplomatic step was not unexpected and should be viewed as a routine response to statements that had wider implications. He noted that it was difficult at this stage to determine whether the relationship had fundamentally shifted, adding that the current



situation reflects existing challenges in bilateral engagement. The remarks came days after a senior leader of the National Citizen Party made statements perceived

as threatening India's territorial integrity. The politician had suggested that Bangladesh could provide space to forces hostile to India and referred to severing India's northeastern region, commonly known as the seven sisters. Several of these states share a direct border with Bangladesh, raising concerns in New Delhi over the implications of such rhetoric.

Manipur's Displaced Families Forced to Flee Again Amid Fresh Gunfire

■ Return to Villages Cut Short as Firing Erupts Near Bishnupur Foothills

New Delhi: Efforts by displaced families in Manipur to rebuild their lives suffered a major setback this week after fresh gunfire forced villagers to abandon their homes barely a day after returning. Hundreds of people who had been living in relief camps in the valley areas for more than two years had begun returning to their village near the foothills in Bishnupur district, escorted by district



officials. Many of the houses they approached were damaged or reduced to ruins, untouched since the violence of May 2023.

The fragile return was disrupted on Tuesday

night when sounds of automatic gunfire echoed from nearby hill areas. Within minutes, security forces deployed in the area fired warning rounds in response.

BJP Alleges Rs 5,000 Crore Lapse in Gruha Lakshmi Scheme, Assembly Disrupted

■ Opposition Walks Out as Government Admits Two Missed Instalments

New Delhi: The Karnataka Assembly witnessed sharp confrontations on Wednesday after the opposition BJP accused the Congress government of failing to release two months of payments under the Gruha Lakshmi welfare scheme, alleging a possible financial lapse amounting to nearly Rs 5,000 crore. The standoff led to repeated disruptions and a walkout by BJP legislators, forcing the House to be adjourned for



over an hour.

The Gruha Lakshmi scheme is one of the five major guarantees announced by the Congress after assuming power in 2023. It provides a monthly assistance of Rs 2,000 to women heads of Below Poverty Line households through

a Direct Benefit Transfer mechanism. The scheme currently covers about 1.26 crore beneficiaries across Karnataka.

The controversy began when a BJP legislator raised concerns that payments for February and March had not been credited to beneficiaries' bank accounts. Responding in the House, the Women and Child Welfare Minister initially stated that payments had been made up to August.

Fog Forces Abandonment of India vs South Africa T20I in Lucknow

■ Fans Disappointed as Match Called Off; Series Heads to Final T20I in Ahmedabad

New Delhi: The fourth T20I between India and South Africa at Ekana Stadium in Lucknow was abandoned without a toss on Wednesday due to heavy fog, leaving players and fans frustrated. Scheduled to begin at 7 PM IST, the match was delayed multiple times as visibility remained poor, with six inspections ultimately confirming that play was impossible. Fans who had gathered at the stadium expressed disappointment, with some demanding refunds. One spectator joked he had "sold three sacks of wheat" to watch the game,



highlighting the frustration among attendees. Others suggested that the match should have been scheduled earlier in the day to avoid winter pollution and fog, common in North Indian venues during this season. The Indian team had

begun warm-ups before the toss, with all-rounder Hardik Pandya seen wearing a mask to mitigate the effects of heavy air pollution. The Air Quality Index (AQI) in Lucknow remained in the hazardous range, above 400, raising

concerns over players' safety. BCCI policy allows refunds, minus service charges, when a match is abandoned before a ball is bowled. India currently leads the five-match series 2-1, following wins in Cuttack and Dharamsala. With the series effectively secured, the fifth and final T20I will take place on Friday in Ahmedabad. Fitness concerns remain, as vice-captain Shubman Gill may miss the remainder of the series due to a toe injury, while all-rounder Axar Patel was already ruled out after the third T20I and replaced by Shahbaz Ahmed.



Shubman Gill Sidelined With Toe Injury, May Miss Remaining T20Is Against South Africa

New Delhi: Star India batter and T20 vice-captain Shubman Gill has been ruled out of the final two T20Is against South Africa due to a toe injury sustained during a training session. The injury occurred during an extended batting session in the nets on the eve of the fourth T20I, leaving Gill in pain and unable to participate in the match. He did not travel with the team, and it remains uncertain whether he will feature in the series finale in Ahmedabad.

Rishabh Pant is expected to step in as opener in Gill's absence. The BCCI and team management are reportedly taking all precautions to ensure his swift recovery ahead of the T20 World Cup, as

the upcoming series and the global tournament are likely to feature largely the same squad.

Gill had returned to the Indian team for the T20I series after missing the preceding ODI matches against South Africa. He was expected to strengthen India's top-order, particularly after a modest performance in the Asia Cup. So far in the ongoing series, Gill has scored just 32 runs across three games, with scores of four, a golden duck, and 28, leaving his series average at 10.66 and a strike rate of 103.22. The team management is now focusing on managing the fitness of their specialist top-order batter while preparing for the final encounter of the five-match T20I series.

Doping Woes: India Tops WADA 2024 Positivity Chart Among Major Nations

■ High Positivity Rate Reflects Enhanced Anti-Doping Efforts, Says NADA

New Delhi: India recorded the highest doping positivity rate among major nations in the World Anti-Doping Agency's (WADA) 2024 testing report, raising concerns at both

national and international levels. According to the report, India conducted 7,113 tests last year—including 6,576 urine samples and 537 blood samples—which resulted in 260 adverse analytical

findings. This translated to a positivity rate of 3.6 per cent, the highest among countries carrying out 5,000 or more tests.

By comparison, China conducted 24,214 tests with a positivity rate of

just 0.2 per cent, while the US recorded 6,592 tests with a rate of 1.1 per cent. Russia, despite its global scrutiny over doping issues, had a positivity rate of 0.7 per cent from 10,514 tests.



Punching Above Its Weight: Goa Gears Up for Susegado Strike's Professional Boxing Fight Night

■ Fight Night 4 to Feature National Title Bouts as Platform Strengthens Pro Boxing Ecosystem

Team Goemkarponn

PANAJI: Professional boxing in Goa continues to gain momentum, with Susegado Strike reinforcing its position as a platform dedicated to competitive excellence and fighter development. With a clear focus on meaningful matchups and long term growth, the promotion is steadily shaping a professional boxing culture that places athletes and quality bouts at the centre of its vision.

This commitment was highlighted at a press conference held at the YMCA Conference Hall in Panaji, where Susegado

Strike Fight Night 4 Anniversary Edition was officially announced. The event brought together co founders Prathamesh Naik, Luigson Fernandes, and Clyde Lobo, along with Goan boxers Kailas Gauns and Prahlad Panda, who are set to headline championship contests.

The fight night is scheduled for December 20, 2025, beginning at 6.30 pm at the International Centre Goa in Dona Paula. The card features multiple high profile contests, including two IBC National Title bouts that underline Goa's rising presence on the professional boxing circuit.

Dhanvantari Pratisthan Goa and WAKO Goa Kickboxing Association Successfully Organize Khelo India Asmita Women's League

■ Over 250 Young Athletes Participate as Event Serves as Selection Trial for West Zone Championship

Team Goemkarponn

PANAJI: Dhanvantari Pratisthan Goa, in association with the WAKO Goa Kickboxing Association, successfully conducted the Khelo India Asmita Women's League at the Ponda Sports Complex and Peddem Sports Complex. The tournament witnessed enthusiastic participation from more than 250 girls representing schools from across Goa, reflecting the growing interest in women's kickboxing and competitive sports in the state.

The league was organised with the objective of promoting women's participation

in sports and creating a strong platform for young girls to showcase their skills in a competitive environment. Athletes competed across various categories, demonstrating discipline, confidence, and high levels of sportsmanship throughout the event.

The tournament was attended by several distinguished guests, including the President of Dhanvantari Pratisthan Goa, members of the WAKO Goa Board, representatives from the Ponda Physical Education Teachers' Association, and other dignitaries. Their presence provided encouragement to the participants and

reinforced the importance of grassroots-level sports development.

Adding to its importance, the Khelo India Asmita Women's League also functioned as a selection trial for the West Zone Khelo India Kickboxing Championship. Performances at the league will determine the selection of athletes who will represent Goa at the zonal championship scheduled to be held in Madhya Pradesh from December 25 to December 27, 2025.

The initiative received strong support from the state sports administration, with senior officials highlighting the role of such tournaments

in identifying talent and strengthening women's sports at an early age. The event aligned with national efforts under the Khelo India programme to encourage wider participation of women in organised sports.

The competition concluded on a successful note, with participants gaining valuable exposure and competitive experience. The organisers expressed gratitude to the athletes, officials, volunteers, and supporters whose collective efforts ensured the smooth conduct of the league and reaffirmed their commitment to advancing women's sports in Goa.

