



Birch Nightclub Fire Case: Property Owner Questioned by Police

■ Pradeep Ghadi Amonkar claims prior warnings to authorities were ignored, alleges forgery in cancelled sale

Team Goemkarponn

Anjuna: Pradeep Ghadi Amonkar appeared before the Anjuna police for questioning in connection with the Birch nightclub fire case, as investigators

continue to probe the circumstances that led to the tragic incident. Speaking to the police, Amonkar stated that he has owned the property since 1994. He said the premises were operated



by him as a hotel for around 10 years before its

use changed over time. Amonkar further informed investigators that he had later entered into an agreement to sell the property to Khosla, but cancelled the deal

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Birch Case: Ajay Gupta's police custody extended by 5 days

Team Goemkarponn

Mapusa: The Judicial Magistrate First Class (JMFC), Mapusa, today extended the police custody of Ajay Gupta by five days in connection with the Birch fire case.

Gupta was produced before the court by the Mapusa police, who sought further custodial interrogation as part of the ongoing investigation.

The court allowed the request and remanded the accused to police custody for an additional five days.

During the hearing, Gupta informed the court that he would cooperate with the



investigation. Ajay Gupta was arrested by the Mapusa police for allegedly forging documents to obtain an excise licence for Birch, Romeo Lane. Police said the investigation is continuing to ascertain the full extent of the alleged forgery and to identify any other persons involved in the case.



Nitin Nabin's Leadership to Energise BJP Nationwide: Goa CM

Team Goemkarponn

New Delhi: Chief Minister Pramod Sawant today said that the appointment of Nitin Nabin as BJP National Working President will further strengthen the party's organisational structure across the country.

Speaking after a meeting in New Delhi, Sawant said Nitin Nabin's long-standing organisational experience

and dedication to the party will provide fresh energy and direction. "His journey within the organisation is inspiring. Under his leadership, the BJP will continue to grow stronger and remain committed to the service of the nation," the Chief Minister said. Sawant added that the interaction focused on strengthening the party at

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Goa's roads are killing people, and the State is looking away

Goa does not lack road safety advisories, committees or statistics. What it lacks is the will to act. Union Road Transport and Highways Minister Nitin Gadkari's recent letter to Chief Minister Pramod Sawant, urging direct intervention to tackle road fatalities, reads less like guidance and more like a reprimand. When a Union Minister has to spell out basics such as signage, lane markings and crash barriers, the problem is no longer technical. It is an administrative failure.

The timing of the letter, just ahead of National Road Safety Month, adds urgency. Gadkari's emphasis on zero-fatality strategies, scientific crash analysis and immediate engineering corrections is not revolutionary. These principles have been discussed for years. What is disturbing is that Goa, a small and wealthy state by national standards, still struggles to implement them consistently.

The numbers are unforgiving. In October 2025 alone, Goa recorded close to 200 road accidents, resulting in 18 deaths and more than 100 injuries. North Goa accounted for 96 accidents, including eight fatal incidents that claimed nine lives. South Goa reported 104 accidents and nine deaths in the same month. Earlier, in April, the State had seen 198 accidents and 26 fatalities. This is not a spike. It is a pattern.

Monthly data released by the Directorate of Transport has repeatedly flagged high accident and fatality rates. Blackspots are known. Dangerous curves, poorly designed junctions, missing medians and fading lane markings are visible to anyone who drives regularly. Yet corrective action remains slow, fragmented or cosmetic, often triggered only after a fatal crash draws public attention.

Goa's road infrastructure reflects a troubling lack of coherence. Newly resurfaced stretches abruptly give way to broken roads. Signage is

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missing, hidden behind trees or placed so late that it offers no real warning. Lane discipline is virtually absent, while enforcement swings between sporadic crackdowns and long periods of indifference. In such conditions, accidents are not exceptions. They are inevitable.

More alarming is the State's casual approach to court-mandated safety mechanisms. The Supreme Court's Committee on Road Safety, constituted in 2014, directed all states to establish District Road Safety Committees chaired by District Collectors and involving Members of Parliament. These committees were meant to meet regularly, analyse accident data and ensure

time-bound corrective measures.

A decade later, Goa's compliance appears uneven. While South Goa has reportedly held a few meetings, the North Goa committee has allegedly not met at all. This is not a clerical oversight. It is a failure to respect Supreme Court directives. When institutions designed to save lives are ignored, accountability becomes optional.

The human cost of this neglect is severe. Every fatal accident leaves behind grieving families, financial hardship and psychological trauma. Many victims are young riders, daily commuters or workers travelling at odd hours. For them, a missing signboard or a poorly lit junction can be the difference between life and death.

Tourism complicates the picture but does not excuse inaction. Goa's roads are shared by locals and visitors, many of whom are unfamiliar with local driving conditions and rely heavily on signage and road markings. If anything, a tourism-driven economy should demand higher safety standards. Instead, visitors and residents alike are exposed to the same risks.

Gadkari's call for data-driven interventions and engineering solutions highlights what has been missing. Road safety cannot be reduced to helmet drives, fines or occasional awareness campaigns. It requires coordination across departments, clear timelines, and political ownership at the highest level. Zero fatalities is not a slogan for January banners. It is a policy goal that must shape every decision on road design and enforcement.

Goa now faces a stark choice. It can treat this letter as yet another advisory to be acknowledged and forgotten, or as a warning that patience is wearing thin. The deaths on its roads are not accidents in the truest sense. They are the foreseeable consequences of delay, denial and disregard.

OpEd

Open letter to the Hon'ble Chief Justice of India

Respected Sir,

Your directive asking members of the Goa Bar to undertake a month-long campaign to spread awareness about one of the gravest challenges facing the state and the nation is both bold and deeply commendable. When I first came across the programme online, I admit I was sceptical. But after listening carefully to every speaker, that scepticism gave way to hope.

It is evident that the Hon'ble Justices and the Chief Minister have Goa's long-term interests at heart. I sincerely hope that those entrusted with implementing this vision will place the lives and futures of young Goans above an illicit, FDI-driven juggernaut which, while adding to national revenues, extracts a devastating social cost.

I write not as an observer, but as someone shaped by the very ecosystem this initiative seeks to reform.

I was in Class X when I noticed a classmate, a talented footballer, sitting vacant-eyed while the rest of us anxiously revised for our SSC prelims. When I asked him why he was not studying, he said he did not care. He told me he and his friends had spent the previous night at an "acid party" and boasted of smoking an entire tola of hashish. Growing up in the northern coastal belt, he had been exposed to Goa's so-called "nation-building" tourism model far earlier than many of us. By Class XII, I too was caught in the same spiral, sitting for my HSSC board exams intoxicated and numb, with little fear of failure. I was the last among nearly forty friends to try marijuana, and only did so after my first heartbreak, which then felt like the most difficult test of my life.

At seventeen, I was taken to a casino in a starred hotel in Panaji. An older acquaintance pointed out a gambler and whispered, "He's a minister." The man, either a minister or an MLA, was friendly and conversational, casually wagering ₹18,000 per spin on roulette, betting only on colours. I lost a substantial amount that night. My father, wisely, refused to bail me out. I worked for months to repay the debt and never gambled again.

Grace intervened where reason failed. I gave up drugs, alcohol and smoking for life. I know how brutal addiction and de-addiction can be, and how far one can fall in just a few years. More importantly, I have come to understand how sacred Goa's natural and social capital truly is, and why remaining a silent witness to its state-sponsored destruction is no longer an option. Sir, while your efforts are laudable, they may appear quixotic against the reality on the ground. Goa has become a notorious narco-tourism destination. Alcoholism is normalised, even celebrated. Sex trafficking has been woven into the tourism economy. In many ways, Goa has become India's Baina, a reference to the red-light district demolished years ago under the leadership of the late Manohar Parrikar. International bodies have not helped matters. Despite the Financial Action Task Force praising India after its mutual evaluations, Goa's hybrid and poorly regulated gambling model continues to borrow the worst features of Cambodia, Laos, Northern Cyprus and Laukkaing. Information about politically exposed persons owning casinos in Goa has not resulted in meaningful course correction. Recent events are telling. A Karnataka legislator was caught openly flouting Goa's gambling laws, yet there has been little public accountability. A local news channel recently aired undercover footage of a land-based casino accepting bets manually, an activity legally restricted to offshore casinos. Similar patterns were seen in Australia, where casinos broke laws repeatedly because penalties were inconsequential.

Australia ultimately learnt, at great cost, that organised crime syndicates were laundering billions through casinos. One repeat offender was fined the equivalent of over ₹600 crore. As Australian academic Elizabeth Sheedy observed, "Poor governance is a big part of this story. Once you run a casino cleanly, it's not nearly as profitable." Those words resonate powerfully in Goa today.

Goa, like Sikkim, is one of only two Indian states with legalised gambling. That alone demands the highest standards of regulation and oversight. Singapore offers a proven model, built on rigorous controls and institutional integrity.

Respectfully, **Chris Fernandes**



BJP's North and South Goa ZP Leadership Nominees File Nominations

Team Goemkarponn

Panaji: The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) on Friday formally filed nominations for its candidates for the top posts in the North and South Goa Zilla Panchayats, ahead of leadership elections scheduled for December 30.

In North Goa, Reshma Bandonkar of Reis Magos filed her nomination for Adhyaksha (Chairperson), while Namdev Chari of Honda

filed for Upadhyaksha (Vice-Chairperson). For South Goa, the BJP has announced Sidharth Dessai of Xeldem as its Adhyaksha nominee and Anjali Velip of Barcem as Upadhyaksha nominee. Dessai had previously served as Upadhyaksha before the recent ZP elections. BJP state president Damodar Naik confirmed that the party's nominations followed consultations with elected Zilla Panchayat members and highlighted the party's aim to ensure stability and

focus on development at the grassroots level.

The filing of nominations on December 29 officially kickstarts the leadership election process, with the polls for Adhyaksha and Upadhyaksha scheduled for December 30 and the swearing-in ceremony on December 31.

Meanwhile, the BJP has secured support from the Maharashtrawadi Gomantak Party (MGP) and independent member Sunil Jalmi, strengthening its prospects to secure

leadership control in both Zilla Panchayats.

Naik stated that accepting Jalmi's support followed party deliberations, particularly after local MLA Govind Gaude pointed out MGP's opposition to the BJP candidate in Betki-Khandola during the elections.

"With the nominations now filed, BJP's priority remains to ensure stable administration and expedite development across Goa's Zilla Panchayats," Naik said.

Gadkari Urges CM Sawant to Take Lead as Road Safety Concerns Mount in Goa

Team Goemkarponn

PANAJI: Union Minister for Road Transport and Highways Nitin Gadkari has written to Chief Minister Pramod Sawant, urging him to personally intervene to address what he termed a serious road safety challenge in Goa as well as across the country.

The communication comes ahead of National Road Safety Month in January and stresses the need for swift adoption of zero-fatality strategies, particularly along accident-prone stretches.

Gadkari has called for



scientific crash analysis, better use of data, and immediate upgrades in road design, signage, lane markings, and the installation of protective barriers at vulnerable locations.

The letter gains significance in light of Goa's alarming accident figures. During October

Rebello calls for state-wide people's movement to protect Goa's ecology

■ Former judge urges citizens to unite against hill cutting, forest diversion and unchecked real estate projects, warns of ecological collapse amid water scarcity

Team Goemkarponn

Panaji: Former Bombay High Court judge Justice Ferdino Rebello has appealed for a state-wide people's movement to oppose what he described as unchecked development in Goa's ecologically sensitive areas, warning that hills, forests, water bodies and villages are being sacrificed for real estate projects even as residents face acute shortages of basic resources.



Reacting to reports of a protest procession in Arambol against development in forest areas, Rebello said similar movements were needed across Goa to protect hills, lakes, rivers, seashores and village ecosystems from large-scale plotting and construction.

Goa's Illegal Nightclubs and Dubious Constructions 'Mushrooming by Design,' Says Savio Rodrigues

Team Goemkarponn

Panaji: Nearly 200 illegal nightclubs and questionable constructions have emerged across Goa, allegedly not by accident but "by design," said social activist Savio

Rodrigues on Friday.

Speaking on the issue, Rodrigues blamed key government departments, particularly the Goa Coastal Zone Management Authority (GCZMA), for failing to safeguard Goa's coastline.

"Licences are bought, violations are ignored, and our land is sold off piece by piece to the highest bidder," he said.

Rodrigues alleged that illegal nightlife and dubious constructions in Goa operate under



a simple unwritten rule: "Paise Pheko, Tamasha Dekho... Bhivpache Garaz Na."

Amit Palekar questions BJP over land conversions

■ Seeks Birch Club Fire Inquiry Report

Team Goemkarponn

PANAJI: Advocate Amit Palekar has strongly criticised the BJP-led Goa government over large-scale land conversions and the delay in making public the magisterial inquiry report into the Birch Club fire tragedy that claimed 25 lives.

Palekar alleged that "slowly and steadily, lakhs and lakhs of square metres of land in Goa are being converted, either overlooked or overseen by Chief Minister Dr Pramod Sawant, while the Town and Country Planning department under Vishwajit P Rane continues land



conversions undeterred, even after judicial intervention." Palekar said such conversions must be stopped immediately to protect Goa's land and ecology. Questioning the delay in releasing the magisterial inquiry report into the Birch Club fire, Palekar asked why the BJP government has failed to make the report public even 20 days after the incident, despite the Chief Minister assuring that it would be submitted within seven days.

Post-Mortem Confirms Murder of Woman Found Dead in Bicholim

Team Goemkarponn

BICHOLIM: An autopsy has confirmed that 55-year-old Laxmi Shirodkar, whose body was found in Bicholim last week, was a victim of homicide. Police have arrested a man who was residing with her in connection with the case.

Shirodkar, originally



from Matne in Dodamarg taluka of Maharashtra, was discovered dead inside a tempo parked near the old Bicholim

police station on December 26.

From the outset, police suspected the circumstances surrounding her death to be suspicious.

Ramesh Teli, who was living with Shirodkar, was taken into custody for questioning soon after the body was found. The post-mortem examination

later established that the woman died due to asphyxiation, following which Teli was formally arrested on charges of murder.

According to investigators, the accused and the victim had a troubled relationship marked by frequent arguments and incidents of physical violence.

Three Karwar natives booked for outraging modesty of woman at Gulem

Team Goemkarponn

Canacona: Canacona police have booked three men, all natives of Karwar in Karnataka, for allegedly outraging the modesty of a woman at a bar and restaurant in Gulem, Canacona.

According to police, the incident occurred on Friday afternoon at Sudharshan Bar & Restaurant, Gudi-Gulem. The accused have been identified as Rajesh Thakarkar, Sudhir Thali and Prashant Talikar, all residents of



Nandangadha, Karwar, Karnataka. Police stated that the accused allegedly

abused the woman using filthy, derogatory and insulting language and threatened her by saying, "We will lift you, we will molest you and we can even murder you," thereby insulting her modesty and causing fear for her life and safety.

Man mistaken for burglar by Bhutebhat locals in Vasco dies during treatment

Team Goemkarponn

BHUTEBHAT: A 34-year-old man, who was earlier caught by locals at Bhutebhat after being mistaken for a burglar, died while undergoing treatment at GMC Bambolim, police said.

The deceased has been identified as Debanand Sana, a native of Kolkata. Vasco police received information at around 12.28 hrs on

December 27, 2025, from the Casualty Police at GMC Bambolim that Sana had expired during treatment.

Police sources said Sana had been referred from the Institute of Psychiatry and Human Behaviour (IPHB), Bambolim, to GMC, where he later died.

The incident traces back to December 23, when residents of Bhutebhat apprehended



Sana as he was coming out of a vacant house in the area with a ladder. Suspecting him to be a burglar targeting an unoccupied house, locals detained him and handed him over to Vasco police. At the time,

some residents had even claimed that Sana was accompanied by four others who allegedly fled with stolen booty.

However, Vasco police later dismissed the burglary theory put forward by the locals. After verification, police clarified that Sana was employed with a contractor and was mentally unsound. He was subsequently admitted to IPHB Bambolim for medical treatment.

Porvorim Police Book Two for ₹5 Lakh Job Fraud

Team Goemkarponn

PORVORIM: Porvorim Police have registered a case against two persons for allegedly cheating a South Goa resident of ₹5 lakh on the pretext of providing a job abroad.

As per Porvorim Police Station Crime No. 102/2025, an offence under Section 318(4) read with 3(5) of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS), 2023 was registered on December 27, 2025, at 4.32 pm following a written complaint by Mr. Baban Gawade, a resident of Calvaddo, Varca, South Goa.

The complainant alleged that between September 2024 and December 2025, at

Porvorim, the accused — Dennis Carvalho, who operates from an office near Mall de Goa on the left side of Orion Hotel, Porvorim, and Rahul Bhagadkar, a resident of Mumbai — acted

with common intention and induced him to pay ₹5,00,000 by promising employment abroad.

Mr. Gawade stated that the amount was paid on different occasions through cash and GPay. However, the accused allegedly failed to arrange the promised job and also did not refund the money, thereby cheating him.

Porvorim Police have taken up further investigation in the case. The probe is being carried out by PSI Mandar Parab of Porvorim Police Station.

FRAUD

Bangladeshi National Arrested for Illegal Stay in Goa

Team Goemkarponn

MANDREM: Mandrem Police have arrested a Bangladeshi national for illegally entering and staying in India without valid travel documents.

As per Mandrem Police Station Crime No.

117/2025, an offence under Sections 21 and 23(a) of the Immigration and Foreigner Act, 2025 was registered on December 27, 2025, at 6.01 pm on the complaint of PSI Pratik Garudi (31), attached to Mandrem Police Station.

Police stated that at around 5.35 pm on December 27, 2025, at the parking area of Arambol, Pernem, the accused, identified as Ms. Sarmin Bibi (32), wife of Janatoor Shiddar and a native of Bangladesh, was found to have illegally entered India

and was residing in Goa without possessing valid travel documents such as a passport or visa.

The accused was arrested at 6.11 pm after following all Supreme Court guidelines. Further investigation is in progress.

Rash riding at Cortalim flyover claims life of pillion rider

Team Goemkarponn

CORTALIM: A pre-dawn scooter accident at the Cortalim flyover on December 28, 2025, claimed the life of a pillion rider after the two-wheeler rammed into a road divider.

Police said the incident occurred at around 4.00 hrs when a Fascino scooter, travelling from Panaji towards Margao, lost control while negotiating the flyover bridge at Cortalim. The scooter hit the road divider

with force, throwing both the rider and the pillion rider onto the road.

The rider has been identified as Vinod Bajaj, a native of Madhya Pradesh, while the pillion rider was Sahil Kumar Pinjani, also a resident of Madhya Pradesh. Both sustained serious injuries in the crash and were rushed to GMC Bambolim for treatment, where Sahil Kumar Pinjani was declared brought dead.

Based on a state complaint filed by Head

Constable Siddesh Dessai of Verna Police Station, police said the scooter was being ridden in a rash and negligent manner at the time of the accident. Verna police have registered a case under sections 281 and 106(i) of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita.

Further investigation is being carried out by PSI Mahesh Bhomkar of Verna Police Station under the supervision of PI Anand Shirodkar and the guidance of Mormugao DySP Gurudas Kadam.



Chicken Shop Broken Into at Thivim, Cash, CCTV DVR and Hens Stolen

Team Goemkarponn

COLVALE: Covale Police have registered a case against an unknown accused for breaking into a chicken shop and committing theft at Thivim in Bardez. As per Covale Police Station Crime No. 73/2025, an offence under Sections 331(3), 331(4) and 305 of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS) was registered on December 28, 2025, following a complaint lodged by Mr. Gousapak Udakeri (33), a businessman and resident



of Ponxem, Thivim.

The complainant stated that between 10.00 pm on December 27 and 7.30 am on December 28, 2025, an unknown person broke open the front metal shutter of his Halal Chicken Centre located near Chaitanya Hospital, Madel, Thivim, and gained illegal entry into the shop.

The accused allegedly

stole cash amounting to ₹1,200 in different denominations from the cash counter, two live hens worth ₹500, and a CCTV DVR valued at ₹4,000. The total loss has been estimated at ₹5,700.

Covale Police have registered the offence and further investigation is being carried out by PSI Vishnu Jadhav.

Petrol Pump Theft Solved: Three Held, Including Minor; Organised Crime Angle Invoked

Team Goemkarponn

BICHOLIM: Bicholim Police have solved a theft case reported at Krishna Petrol Pump, Sankhali, and arrested two accused persons while detaining a juvenile in conflict with law, with investigators invoking provisions related to organised crime.

According to Bicholim Police Station Crime No. 171/2025, an offence under Sections 305 and

331(4) of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS), 2023 was registered on December 28, 2025, following a complaint by Mr. Sunil Parvatkar (51), a resident of Karapur, Tisk Sankhali.

The complainant stated that in the early hours prior to 5.50 am on December 28, an unknown person gained entry into the office of his petrol pump, Krishna Petrol Pump, and committed theft of cash

amounting to ₹9,000 along with a CCTV DVR.

During the course of investigation, three suspects — Mahesh Shetty (19) of Karai Shirodkar, Bhuvan Pillai (18) of Peddem, Mapusa, and a juvenile — were detained at odd hours by PSI Rashmir Parab Matonkar while on mobile patrol duty within the Bicholim police station jurisdiction. Upon interrogation, the suspects confessed to

their involvement in the crime.

Police also seized a Honda Dio two-wheeler from the possession of the accused, which is suspected to be stolen.

Further interrogation revealed that the accused were allegedly operating as part of a syndicate involved in organised criminal activities and had prior involvement in multiple offences in Banda, Kudal and other parts of Maharashtra.



Based on these disclosures, Section 112 of the BNS, 2023, relating to organised crime, has also been added to the case.

The accused Mahesh

Shetty and Bhuvan Pillai have been formally arrested, while the juvenile has been sent to Apna Ghar, Mercas, after following due legal procedures.

Goa Animal Liberation Movement Holds Liberation March in Panaji

■ Activists symbolic role-play to highlight animal rights and oppose speciesism

Team Goemkarponn

Panaji: The Goa Animal Liberation Movement organised the 4th annual Goa Animal Liberation March on December 27 at Dr Babasaheb Ambedkar Park, Patto, Panaji. The peaceful public demonstration, held from 4 pm to 7 pm, saw participation from animal rights activists from Goa and other regions, advocating animal liberation and ethical justice for non-human animals.

The march began at Dr Babasaheb



Ambedkar Park and featured a striking visual demonstration along its route. Activists enacted a reverse role-play, portraying humans as caged and chained while participants dressed as animals stood free.

The symbolic act was intended to prompt the public to reflect on the realities of animal confinement and exploitation.

Held shortly after Goa Liberation Day on December 19, the event

underscored the idea that liberation is an ongoing process. Organisers said the values that shaped Goa's freedom—dignity, resistance to exploitation and justice—are equally applicable to animals, who continue to be used as commodities in food systems, research, entertainment, fashion and cultural practices.

The organisers emphasised that veganism is not merely a dietary preference but a social justice movement that challenges the treatment of animals as property.



Dr Sharada Mulgaonkar Patil installed as IMA Goa State president

Team Goemkarponn

VASCO: The Indian Medical Association (IMA), Goa State Branch, on Sunday held its State Installation Ceremony at BITS Goa, formally installing Dr Sharada Mulgaonkar Patil as the new president for the ensuing term. The ceremony was attended by senior doctors, past IMA office-bearers and distinguished guests, marking a significant moment for the medical

fraternity in the state.

Addressing the gathering after assuming office, Dr Patil announced the theme for her tenure — “Embracing Neurodiversity – Together We Care, Connect and Champion.” She underlined the importance of recognising neurodiversity as a natural variation of the human brain and called for a more empathetic and inclusive approach in healthcare delivery.

“Individuals with conditions such as

Goan Fisherman Expresses Anguish Over Church Attacks, Appeals for Unity

Team Goemkarponn

Benaulim: Francisco Fernandes, popularly known as Pele, a traditional fisherman and prominent voice of Goa's coastal communities, on Sunday expressed deep anguish over recent incidents of violence and attacks on churches in Goa and parts of North India, appealing

for unity, compassion and communal harmony.

Speaking from Benaulim, Fernandes said he was heartbroken by reports of vandalism of Christmas decorations, attacks on places of worship and threats issued to priests in recent days. He also referred to incidents of communal tension and

violence reported from several towns in North India, stating that such developments had shaken the spirit of unity for which India is known.

“These attacks are not just on buildings or decorations; they strike at the very soul of the country,” Fernandes said, adding that India's strength lay in its diversity and



shared values.

Referring to the national flag, Fernandes said its colours symbolise courage, peace and faith, and urged citizens to uphold those ideals.



Congress CLP Meeting Focuses on ZP Results, Strategy to Take on BJP Govt

Team Goemkarponn

PORVORIM: The Congress Legislative Party (CLP) meeting held on Monday discussed key issues affecting the state,

with leaders reviewing the recent Zilla Panchayat election results and deliberating on ways to strengthen the party at the grassroots level.

Congress OBC Cell Chairman Accuses RGP Leader of Acting as BJP Proxy

Team Goemkarponn

Panaji: Chairman of the OBC Cell of the Goa Pradesh Congress Committee (GPCC), Shri Nitin Chopdekar, on Sunday launched a sharp attack on Revolutionary Goans Party (RGP) leader Manoj Parab, accusing him of misleading the people of Goa and acting as a proxy of the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP).

In a press note issued on the occasion of the 140th Foundation Day of the Indian National Congress, Chopdekar said Manoj Parab had no moral authority to comment on the Congress Party and alleged that his repeated statements were aimed at creating false narratives



and manufactured controversies.

Describing the Congress as the “grand old party of India,” Chopdekar highlighted its role in the freedom struggle, nation-building and safeguarding democracy, stating that the party has consistently stood with marginalised communities, including OBCs, SCs, STs and minorities, for over 140 years.

Archdiocese of Goa and Daman Concludes Jubilee Year at Se Cathedral

■ Faithful called to remain ‘pilgrims of hope’ as Ordinary Jubilee ends on Feast of the Holy Family

Team Goemkarponn

OLD GOA: The Archdiocese of Goa and Daman solemnly concluded the Year of the Ordinary Jubilee on Sunday, December 28, coinciding with the Feast of the Holy Family, with a Eucharistic celebration at the Se

Cathedral, Old Goa. The Holy Mass was presided over by Bishop Simião Fernandes, Auxiliary Bishop of the Archdiocese of Goa and Daman, with several priests concelebrating. Delivering the homily, Fr Nelson Sequeira, Professor at the Patriarchal Seminary



of Rachol, reflected on the spiritual significance of the Jubilee Year, highlighting hope as the cornerstone of Christian life, as exemplified by the Holy Family of Nazareth. He urged the faithful to become visible and tangible signs of hope within their families, parishes

and society. Explaining the deeper meaning of the Jubilee, Fr Sequeira said, “The doors of the churches and basilicas opened at the inauguration of the Jubilee Year will be closed at its conclusion, but the doors of our hearts must remain open.

Partagali Math to Remain Closed from January 2 Due to Pending Construction Works

Team Goemkarponn

CANACONA: The premises of Samsthan Gokarn Partagali Jeevottam Math will remain temporarily closed to devotees, tourists, and visitors from January 2, 2026, following the resumption of balance civil

and finishing works after the conclusion of its 550th Year Celebrations. According to the Construction Committee of the Math, the ongoing works include pending civil and finishing activities within the Math premises as well as in the areas surrounding the newly installed Rama Pratima.



2,000-Year-Old Buddhist Site Discovered in Kashmir, PM Modi Calls It a 'Proud Moment'

■ Discovery at Zehanpora highlights the region's rich Buddhist heritage and links to the Kushan period

A significant archaeological find in Jammu and Kashmir's Baramulla district has brought attention to the valley's Buddhist past, with Prime Minister Narendra Modi calling it a "proud moment" for the nation. Excavations at Zehanpora village have revealed stupas, monastic structures, and other buildings dating back roughly 2,000 years, shedding new light on Kashmir's cultural and historical legacy.

The discovery was prompted in part by old photographs of three stupas housed in a French museum, which drew archaeologists' attention and led to the identification of the site. Evidence suggests that Zehanpora may have functioned as a key Buddhist centre,



possibly linked to the elusive Kushan capital, Huvishkapura. Drone surveys confirmed that the village's mounds are man-made rather than natural formations, highlighting its strategic location along an ancient trade and pilgrimage route connecting Gandhara with Kashmir.

Excavations were conducted jointly by the Department of Archives, Archaeology and Museums, Jammu and

Kashmir, and Kashmir University. Archaeologists noted that the foundations of stupas and monastic cells resemble Gandharan layouts, indicating the region's connection to wider Buddhist cultural networks.

Officials described the site as revealing a layered history that could reshape understanding of Kashmir's ancient past. "Zehanpora's rediscovery reinforces Kashmir's historic role as a

confluence of civilisations and establishes a Buddhist heritage long overshadowed by familiar historical narratives," said a government official.

In his monthly radio programme, Man Ki Baat, PM Modi highlighted that the rare photographs in the French museum helped researchers connect the dots and confirm the historical significance of Zehanpora. He added that the discovery offers a window into Kashmir's glorious past and serves as a strong reminder of the valley's rich identity and enduring cultural legacy.

The find underscores the importance of continued archaeological research in the region and opens new avenues for exploring Kashmir's role in the spread of Buddhism across South Asia.

Ancient Hindu, Buddhist Sites Across Pakistan Face Growing Threats

■ Hindu and Buddhist monuments face vandalism, neglect and illegal occupation across multiple regions

New Delhi: Ancient Hindu and Buddhist heritage sites spread across Pakistan are facing mounting threats from vandalism, neglect and unlawful occupation, raising serious concerns about the survival of some of South Asia's oldest cultural landmarks. Several of these sites date back nearly 5,000 years and are considered vital to the shared civilisational history of the region. Areas identified as particularly vulnerable include Pakistan occupied Kashmir,



Gilgit Baltistan, Chilas, Hunza, Shatial, parts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Balochistan. These regions host ancient temples, inscriptions and rock carvings that

reflect centuries of Hindu and Buddhist presence. Scholars estimate that the Chilas Hunza Shatial belt alone contains more than 25,000 petroglyphs and inscriptions, with origins

ranging from 5000 BCE to the 16th century CE.

Assessments indicate that several of these sites have been deliberately defaced. Hindu and Buddhist figures carved into rock surfaces are reported to have been scratched out or covered with permanent paint. In some locations, official markings and notices have allegedly been painted directly over ancient carvings, an act experts describe as irreversible damage to irreplaceable heritage.



INSV Kaundinya to Retrace Ancient Indian Sea Routes on Engine-Less Voyage to Oman

■ Traditional stitched sail ship highlights India's 1,500-year-old maritime heritage

New Delhi: The Indian Navy's INSV Kaundinya is set to embark on a historic journey from Porbandar, Gujarat, to Muscat, Oman, reviving India's ancient seafaring traditions. Unlike modern naval vessels, Kaundinya has no engine, relies entirely on wind and sails, and is built using shipbuilding methods dating back over 1,500 years.

INSV Kaundinya is a stitched sail ship inspired by designs seen in the Ajanta cave paintings, as well as descriptions from ancient texts and accounts of foreign travelers. The vessel is approximately 19.6 metres long, 6.5 metres wide, with a draft of around 3.33 metres, and carries a crew of about 15 sailors. Its construction follows the Tankai method, which avoids the use of metal, stitching the hull first before adding ribs. This technique provides flexibility, allowing the ship to withstand strong waves without structural damage.

Materials used include wooden planks, coir rope made from coconut fibre, and natural resins and oils for waterproofing. The ship was crafted by traditional craftsmen from Kerala, led by master shipwright Babu Sankaran. The Indian Navy collaborated on the project to recreate

the design using visual sources, supplemented by scientific testing, including hydrodynamic studies at IIT Madras, to ensure stability and safety. The ship was launched in February 2025 and formally inducted into the Navy in May at Karwar, Karnataka.

INSV Kaundinya carries symbolic designs celebrating India's maritime legacy, including the Gandabherunda (two-headed eagle of the Kadamba dynasty), sun motifs on the sails, the mythical Simha Yali lion on the bow, and a Harappan-style stone anchor on the deck. The vessel is named after Kaundinya, a 1st-century Indian mariner who sailed to the Mekong Delta, married Queen Soma, and helped establish the Funan Kingdom in present-day Cambodia, one of Southeast Asia's earliest Indian-influenced states.

This voyage retraces historic trade routes once used by Indian merchants to connect with West Asia, Africa, and Southeast Asia, transporting spices, textiles, and cultural ideas. By navigating this ancient corridor, INSV Kaundinya celebrates India's centuries-old maritime expertise and showcases the ingenuity of traditional shipbuilding methods.

...CONTD FROM PAGE 01

Birch Nightclub Fire Case: Property Owner Questioned by Police

after allegedly discovering forged documents linked to the transaction.

Amonkar maintained that he had no involvement in the functioning of the Birch

nightclub at the time of the fire. Claiming that the tragedy could have been prevented, he said he had earlier warned the authorities about issues related to the property and its operations.

According to him, timely action on those warnings might have averted the incident.

Police officials said Amonkar's statement has been recorded and will be examined along with

documentary evidence as part of the ongoing investigation. Further inquiries are underway to ascertain responsibility and identify any lapses that may have contributed to the fire.

Nitin Nabin's Leadership to Energise BJP Nationwide: Goa CM

the grassroots level and reinforcing its commitment to development-oriented

governance. BJP Goa President Damu Naik, Vice President Narendra

Sawaikar, and State General Secretaries Siddharth Kuncalienkar

and Sarvanand Bhagat were also present during the meeting.



Karnataka Dy CM DK Shivakumar met MLA Vijai Sardesai in today during his courtesy visit to Goa

PM Modi Urges States to Draft 10-Year Action Plans, Focus on Human Capital to Achieve Viksit Bharat

■ Prime Minister highlights India's demographic advantage and stresses outcome-based governance, skill development, and grassroots self-reliance

New Delhi: During the three-day Pragati meeting in New Delhi, Prime Minister Narendra Modi called on states to prepare comprehensive 10-year action plans with measurable outcomes to accelerate India's journey toward becoming a developed nation. The discussions focused on "Human Capital for Viksit Bharat," underscoring the



country's demographic strength, with nearly 70 percent of the population in the working-age group. PM Modi noted

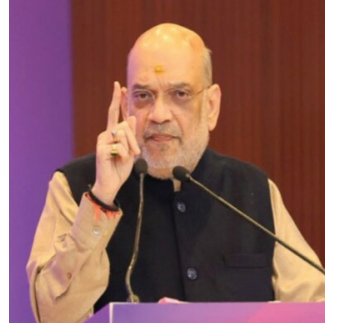
that this demographic advantage, combined with sustained economic growth, presents a historic opportunity to advance India's development goals. He emphasised that empowering the youth remains a top priority, particularly as next-generation reforms aim to position India as a major global economic power. The prime minister

urged states to adopt and institutionalise the Centre's Pragati model to ensure efficient monitoring, timely execution, and results-oriented governance. He also recommended that chief secretaries establish dedicated deregulation cells to streamline processes and remove administrative bottlenecks.

"Why Do They Lose Every Time?": Amit Shah Takes Swipe at Rahul Gandhi

■ Home minister says opposition lacks development driven work culture and public connect

New Delhi: Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Sunday launched a sharp attack on the opposition, saying its repeated electoral defeats stem from an inability to understand public service, governance discipline and the development focused approach followed by the current government. Addressing a public gathering in Nava Vanjar village near Ahmedabad, Shah referred to a recent remark by Leader of the Opposition Rahul Gandhi, who had questioned why his party keeps losing elections. Calling it a strange and revealing question, Shah said the answer lies in the contrast between the work culture of the ruling alliance and that of the opposition. He said once the opposition leadership understands the importance of consistent development, accountability and grassroots engagement, the reason behind their defeats would become clear. Highlighting governance under Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Shah said the



government has prioritised resolving people's problems even when demands are not formally raised. He cited efforts to identify families that were earlier given temporary settlements and later abandoned, stating that they have now been traced and provided with proper land ownership documents. According to him, this sense of responsibility towards citizens reflects a strong public service ethic that was first established in Gujarat and later expanded across the country. Shah said instead of appreciating this approach, the opposition leadership was focused on issues that fall outside its role, referring to debates around electoral roll revisions.

"Respondent Shall Not Be Released," Says Top Court in Unnao Rape Case

■ Supreme Court stays Delhi High Court order suspending Kuldeep Singh Sengar's life sentence

New Delhi: The Supreme Court on Monday stayed a Delhi High Court order that had suspended the life sentence of expelled BJP MLA Kuldeep Singh Sengar in the Unnao rape case, ruling that the issue raises important questions of law that require detailed examination. The apex court directed that Sengar

shall not be released pursuant to the High Court's December 23 order. A three judge bench led by Chief Justice of India Surya Kant, along with Justices JK Maheshwari and Augustine George Masih, was hearing a petition challenging the suspension of sentence. The bench observed that the interpretation of who

qualifies as a public servant under the POCSO Act needs careful consideration, especially in cases involving persons in positions of power. During the hearing, the court was told that Sengar had been convicted for rape and aggravated penetrative sexual assault, offences that involved abuse of authority over

a minor. It was argued that holding a dominant position at the time of the offence is a critical factor in determining the gravity of the crime. The bench expressed concern over a possible interpretation that could classify lower ranking officials as public servants while excluding elected representatives.



"Clarifications Are Required Before Implementation," Says Top Court on Aravalli Definition

■ Supreme Court pauses revised Aravalli classification and seeks independent expert review

New Delhi: The Supreme Court on Monday stayed its own earlier order that had accepted a revised definition of the Aravalli mountain range near Delhi, amid growing concerns that the change could expose environmentally sensitive areas to unregulated mining. The court said the recommendations and directions flowing from its previous order would remain in abeyance until further examination.

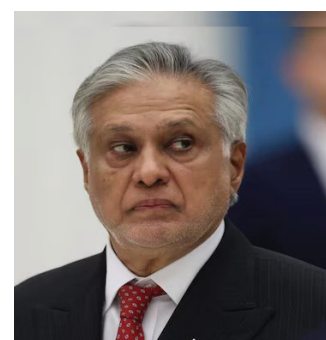
A bench led by the

Chief Justice observed that an independent and impartial assessment was necessary before any implementation, noting that certain aspects of the committee report and court observations appeared to have been misconstrued. The court ordered the formation of a fresh, high powered expert committee to reassess issues related to the updated definition of the Aravalli range and to determine whether it had altered the scope of protected areas.

"80 Drones in 36 Hours": Pakistan Acknowledges Damage From India's Operation Sindoor

■ Islamabad admits Nur Khan airbase was hit, signalling shift from earlier denial of impact

New Delhi: Pakistan has publicly acknowledged the scale and impact of India's precision strikes carried out under Operation Sindoor in May, marking the first detailed admission from Islamabad eight months after the brief but intense military confrontation between the two neighbours. The disclosure confirms that Indian drones struck the strategically vital



Nur Khan airbase in Rawalpindi's Chaklala area, causing damage to infrastructure and injuries



to personnel. Speaking at a year end briefing, Pakistan's deputy prime minister

stated that India launched a large scale drone operation over a short span. He said that at least 80 drones were deployed within 36 hours, claiming that Pakistani defences intercepted most of them. Despite this assertion, he admitted that the Nur Khan airbase was hit in the early hours of May 10, triggering Pakistan's retaliatory military response.

BSF Denies Reports That Bangladesh Activist Hadi's Killers Entered India

■ Force calls claims of cross-border escape 'false, fabricated and misleading'

New Delhi: The Border Security Force (BSF) has rejected claims that two suspects in the murder of Bangladeshi student leader Sharif Osman Hadi fled into India via the Meghalaya border. Reports from Dhaka

Metropolitan Police (DMP) suggested that the suspects crossed the Haluaghat border area and later reached Tura in Meghalaya, a claim widely circulated in Bangladeshi media. Inspector General OP Upadhyay, who heads



the BSF in Meghalaya, stated that no such

movement or arrests occurred. He confirmed that Meghalaya Police also denied any capture of the suspects and questioned the credibility of the reports. The BSF described the claims as false, fabricated, and misleading.

Bumrah, Hardik Likely to Miss New Zealand ODIs as India Prioritises Long-Term Plans

■ Workload management and World Cup preparation influence selection decisions

Team Goemkarponn

Panaji: Jasprit Bumrah and Hardik Pandya are expected to be rested for India's upcoming ODI series against New Zealand as part of a workload management plan focused on future priorities, including the 2026 T20 World Cup. Both players are likely to feature in the five-match T20I series, which will be India's final T20 assignment



before the global event. Hardik has not played an ODI since the Champions Trophy final

earlier this year, while Bumrah has been absent from the format since the 2023 World Cup final. The

selectors are keen to avoid unnecessary strain on the senior players ahead of a busy international calendar.

Meanwhile, Shreyas Iyer remains under assessment as he continues his recovery from a spleen injury suffered during the Australia tour. If cleared, he could return to action in the Vijay Hazare Trophy and may be considered for the ODI squad.

Humpy Misses Historic Hat-Trick, Finishes With Bronze at World Rapid Championship

■ Tie-break rules deny Indian grandmaster a third title as Carlsen dominates open section

New Delhi: Indian chess ace Koneru Humpy narrowly missed creating history at the FIDE World Rapid Championships, settling for a bronze medal in the women's section after falling short on tie-breaks. Humpy, a former world rapid champion in 2019 and 2024, ended the tournament tied for first place on 8.5 points alongside China's Zhu Jiner and Russia's Aleksandra Goryachkina after the final round. Despite matching the top score after 11



rounds, Humpy was pushed down to third position due to tie-break criteria that consider opponent strength and ratings. As a result, Zhu and Goryachkina advanced to contest the title, with Goryachkina eventually emerging champion to claim her maiden world rapid crown.



Delta Premiere League showcases unity on the field, underscores strong women participation at Zuarinagar

Team Goemkarponn

Panaji: The Delta Premiere League (DPL), an in house corporate cricket tournament of the Delta Group, concluded on a high note at the PPL Ground in Zuarinagar, with Delta Ports emerging as champions after an action packed day of competitive cricket. The one day tournament brought together employees from across the organisation, blending

sporting excellence with teamwork and inclusivity.

The league featured four teams representing different verticals of the Delta Group namely Delta Infra, Delta Ports, Tech Delta and Worldwide Shipping. A full schedule of league matches was played through the day, creating an engaging contest for the winners' trophy. The fixtures included encounters between Delta Infra and Worldwide Shipping, Delta

Ports and Tech Delta, Delta Ports and Delta Infra, Tech Delta and Worldwide Shipping, and Delta Ports and Worldwide Shipping.

Delta Infra competed under the leadership of captain Imam Olekar, with Pooja Naik overseeing team management. Delta Ports, who eventually lifted the title, were led by captain Sachin Kambli and managed by Saniya Taj and Tanzila Shaikh.

United Brothers Extend Winning Run as Legal Titans Keep Semifinal Hopes Alive

■ Dominant performances shape crucial outcomes in Advocates Cricket League 2025–26

Team Goemkarponn

Panaji: United Brothers continued their impressive run in the Advocates Cricket League 2025–26 T20 tournament with a fourth consecutive victory, while Legal Titans stayed firmly in contention for a semifinal spot following a commanding win on Sunday. The matches, played at the Chicalim ground in Vasco, delivered competitive cricket marked by aggressive batting and disciplined bowling.

United Brothers' latest success lifted them to the top of the points table with eight points from



four matches, pushing 18 Juners down to second place. Legal Titans, meanwhile, strengthened their campaign with a confidence boosting performance that keeps their knockout aspirations intact. In the opening match of the day, Lotlikar Lions posted a challenging total of 167 for 8 in their allotted 20 overs after opting to bat

first. Venkatesh Rathod anchored the innings with a powerful 79 off 40 balls, striking seven boundaries and four sixes. Prashant Borkar provided solid support with a composed 45. For Legal Titans, Satchit Mauskar delivered an excellent spell, claiming four wickets, while Jeevan Divkar chipped in with two.

KOFS Cup 2.0 Kicks Off with Energetic Opening Day at Old Goa

■ Young footballers shine across age groups as grassroots tournament gathers momentum

Team Goemkarponn

Panaji: The KOFS Cup 2.0 began on a vibrant note at the Sunshine School Ground in Old Goa, drawing an encouraging turnout on the opening day of the tournament organised by Kick Off Football Schools. The first day featured matches in the Under-8, Under-10 and Under-12 categories, with young footballers showcasing enthusiasm, discipline and emerging skills in a competitive yet positive environment.



Parents, coaches and supporters were present in large numbers, creating a lively atmosphere that reflected the growing popularity of grassroots football in the region. The matches were closely contested, with teams displaying teamwork,



agility and a strong understanding of the game at a young age.

The tournament will continue on Sunday at the same venue, with all Under-15 category matches scheduled for the day. In addition, the semi-final matches of



the Under-8, Under-10 and Under-12 divisions will also be played, setting the stage for an exciting culmination of the competition.

In the Under-8 category, FC Goa FS A will face Super 30 A in the first semi-final, while ACE



will take on JPG Football Stars in the second. The Under-10 semi-finals will see Talent Academy competing against FC Goa FS A, and St. Brittos locking horns with Salgaocar. In the Under-12 division, Valpoi GFDC will meet Rising Stars in one

semi-final, while Vintage 73 will battle Salgaocar in the other. Adding significance to the event, former head coach of the Indian Senior Women's National Team, Maymol Rocky, attended the matches on day one. Her presence inspired young players and highlighted the importance of structured grassroots programmes in shaping future talent. She interacted with players and coaches, offering encouragement and support for their efforts on the field.