

## LAKHS LOST IN BHATLEM GAS PIPELINE DAMAGE

Smart City blunder disrupts life across homes and commercial establishments

UPENDRA NAIK & ANIL KUMAR MISHRA

PANJIM: The gas pipeline that was allegedly damaged due to Smart City work in Bhatlem on Sunday led to an estimated loss of over Rs 20 lakh for the gas service provider, apart from disrupting services at homes and in commercial establishments for several hours.

Rahul Dubey, manager of operations at Goa Natural Gas Pvt Ltd, spoke to O Herald about the impact of the incident. "The financial loss exceeds Rs 20 lakh. However, the bigger issue was the damage to our credibility in the market. The gas supply was disrupted for around three hours, and it took over



A video gab of the CCTV footage at the site where the gas pipeline was damaged at Bhatlem, on Sunday

ten hours to restore full service. The repair work began at around 4.30 pm and continued until 8 pm, with restoration taking an additional seven hours," Dubey explained. "Both

domestic and commercial customers were severely impacted, and we received numerous complaints."

Milan Pradhan, manager at Copperleaf, a restaurant in Panjim, which was

one of the establishments impacted, recounted the trouble faced by the establishment. "We took a gas connection from Goa Natural Gas Pvt Ltd about a year ago. This is the first time we've encountered such an issue. Around 5 pm, we received a message informing us of a ruptured pipeline in Bhatlem. We were told the issue would be resolved within 30 minutes, but the supply was only restored around 7:45 pm," Pradhan said. "By then, we had already turned away about 15 customers and home delivery services through Swiggy and Zomato were also disrupted. This led to a loss of around Rs 50,000."

Cont on Pg 11 >>

"The financial loss exceeds Rs 20 lakh. However, the bigger issue was the damage to our credibility in the market. The gas supply was disrupted for around three hours, and it took over ten hours to restore full service

- Rahul Dubey, manager of operations, Goa Natural Gas Pvt Ltd

"We were told the issue would be resolved within 30 minutes, but the supply was only restored around 7:45 pm. By then, we had already turned away about 15 customers, and Swiggy and Zomato services were also disrupted. This led to a loss of around Rs 50,000

- Milan Pradhan, manager at Copperleaf, a restaurant in Panjim

## SMART CITY CRUDE PLANNING



Smart City construction material stacked along the road near Café Bhonsle forces commuters to squeeze through a narrow space, causing congestion

## NGT issues notices to Vedanta, govt over Bicholim mining block

Activist wants Environmental Clearance quashed, claiming there are 13 lakes in the mining area

Team Herald

PANJIM: The National Green Tribunal (NGT), Western Zone Bench, Pune, has issued notices to the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEF&CC), Vedanta Limited, and two other parties in response to an appeal filed by environmentalist Ramesh Gauns. Gauns is seeking to quash the Environmental Clearance (EC) granted to Vedanta Ltd for the mining of iron ore at the Bicholim Mineral Block-I (auction block) in North Goa.

The MoEF&CC, Vedanta Ltd, the Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB), and the Goa State Pollution Control Board (GSPCB) have all been asked to file their responses within the next four weeks. The EC,

## SC dismisses Vedanta's appeal against mining lease auction

PANJIM: The Supreme Court on Monday dismissed an appeal by Vedanta Ltd seeking to halt the Goa government's e-auction for the iron ore mining lease at the Curpem and Sulcorna Mineral Block-XI in Sanguem and Quepem Talukas, South Goa. Vedanta Ltd had sought to be declared the preferred bidder, claiming it was the highest bidder in the November 14 auction and had received the subsequent letter of intent for the mining block. However, a bench of the Supreme Court, led by Justice Abhay S Oka, upheld the February 4 decision of the Bombay High Court at Goa, which had allowed further bidding for the lease.

Cont on Pg 11 >>

dated January 23, 2024, was granted by the MoEF&CC to Vedanta Ltd for the mining of iron ore with a proposed capacity of 3.0 MTPA.

Cont on Pg 11 >>

## Case against Allahbadia, others over crass remarks

PTI, MUMBAI: Social media influencer Ranveer Allahbadia and others associated with a YouTube reality show appeared head-

ed for legal trouble after a series of complaints were filed on Monday in Mumbai over his crass comments that triggered an outrage and forced him to apologise.

The complaints, one with the police and another with a city court, were filed separately by Congress and BJP members. Allahbadia's distasteful comments on parents and sex led to massive outrage across the spectrum, prompting the YouTuber with almost 16 million followers on social media platforms to apologise. The remarks were made on YouTube reality show 'India's Got Latent' hosted by comedian Samay Raina, popular amongst some sections for its often offensive content.

Cont on Pg 11 >>

## Battleground Benaulim to test Congress-AAP alliance

Cong unit rejects need for alliance in Assembly, AAP MLA 'confident' of prospects despite Delhi results

Team Herald

MARGAO: The discontent simmering over the past few months between alliance partners AAP and Congress have come out in the open after the Delhi elections, with the two parties singing in different voices over the fate of their partnership in the crucial Benaulim Assembly constituency.

After the disappointing Delhi results, AAP Goa President Amit Palekar emphasised his party's continued commitment to the alliance in Goa. On Monday, however, the Benaulim Congress unit publicly rejected Palekar's proposal. At a press conference, Benaulim Block Congress President Keith Gracias announced that Congress would con-

## AAP'S DEFEAT IN DELHI WON'T AFFECT GOA, SAYS VELIM MLA

MARGAO: Aam Aadmi Party's (AAP) Velim MLA Cruz Silva downplayed concerns that the party's loss in the Delhi elections would impact its standing in Goa, reiterating that AAP has built a strong foothold in the state. Silva was responding to media queries on Monday after interacting with locals in Sarzora. However, he blamed Congress for contributing to AAP's defeat in Delhi and claimed it had played a similar role in

the Haryana elections. "Congress contested the Delhi elections only to defeat Aam Aadmi Party. They did not win a single seat. AAP will work hard in Goa to strengthen our organisation," said Silva. He maintained that the defeat of AAP supremo and Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal would not affect AAP's standing in Goa, asserting that the party has already built a strong base in the state over the years.

test the Benaulim seat independently, dismissing the idea of maintain-

ing the alliance in the constituency. "We have witnessed

significant support from the people, which reaffirms our commitment to winning back their trust," Gracias said. "Our focus remains on strengthening the Congress and delivering on the promises made to our voters."

Congress leaders argued that any alliance with AAP would dilute their party's local political identity. With the success achieved in the recent Lok Sabha elections, they believe Congress is in a strong position to contest independently. "This decision sends a clear message that the Benaulim Congress is poised to make a comeback on its own merits," Gracias added.

Cont on Pg 11 >>

## Trump to impose 25% aluminum, steel tariffs today

AP, WASHINGTON: President Donald Trump said he will announce on Monday that the United States will impose 25% tariffs on all steel and aluminum imports, including from Canada and Mexico, as well as other import duties later in the week.

"Any steel coming into the United States is going to have a 25% tariff," he told reporters Sunday on Air Force One as he flew from Florida to New Orleans to attend the Super Bowl.

Cont on Pg 11 >>

## Arambol shack licensee gets HC reprieve

Govt asked to hear licensee before razing shack

Team Herald

PANJIM: The High Court of Bombay at Goa on Monday directed the Department of Tourism to give a hearing to the licence holder of the controversial Arambol shack before demolition.

The licence holder Manuel Espirito Santo Fernandes by a writ petition had challenged the demolition order of the Department of Tourism, in the High Court.

By an order dated January 29, 2025, the Department of Tourism had ordered demolition of the shack following a murder of a local allegedly by the staff of the concerned shack on January 26.

During investigation, it was found that the shack was alleg-

edly sub-let by the original shack licence holder to an outsider. The Department had also imposed a penalty of Rs 25 lakh for subletting it to another person, in violation of Clause 20 of the Tourism Shack Policy. The department had also forfeited his security deposit.

The department had further asked Fernandes to demolish the shack within a period of seven days failing which, it will carry out the demolition at the cost and risk of the allottee, with expenses recovered as arrears of land revenue.

Fernandes was permanently blacklisted and debarred from participating in any future shack allotment processes under the Tourism Shack Policy.

## Perfect companion for cityscapes and city escapes

Special benefits up to ₹2.30 Lakh\*



Range starts at ₹10.69 Lakh\*



Powerful 1.5 TSI Engine Efficient & Reliable



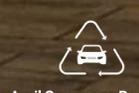
25.4 cm Skoda Infotainment with Subwoofer



Spacious Interior & Luggage Space of 521 Litres



Electrically Adjustable & Ventilated Front Seats



Avail Scrappage Benefit against Certificate of Deposit\*



260 Touchpoints Across India  
Toll-free 1800 2700 260  
www.skoda-auto.co.in



GLOBAL NCAP  
Family Cars with Ultimate Safety

Sales: Goa: (Taleigao) Emporium Automobile: 75740 44499; (Margao) Emporium Automobile: 75740 44499  
Service: Goa: Emporium Automobile: 0832-2979733 / 34

Skoda T&C Apply. \*Special price under this offer is applicable on selected variants and models for limited period and in limited quantity. Specification given differ from model to model. Delivery of the car is subject to stock availability. \*\*Special benefits are applicable on selected variants and models for limited period and in limited quantity. \*\*\*Scrappage Benefit can be availed on select variants only. Check with your nearest dealership for more information. Above Car pictures are created with help of computer graphics solely for purpose of advertising. All disputes are subject to Mumbai court's jurisdiction only.