

GOA'S YOGA GURU NABBED FOR RUNNING DRUG RACKET

Caught in Chhatisgarh, the drug lord ran a yoga centre in Patnem for 20 yrs

BASURI DESAI

PANJIM: The arrest of well-known international yoga guru Tarun Agrawal alias Sonu, now revealed to be a drug dealer operating out of an ashram near Pragma Giri hills in Dongargarh, Chhatisgarh, has exposed yet another disturbing underbelly of Goa's 'spiritual tourism' scene.

Speaking to **O Herald**, Jitendra Verma, in-charge of Dongargarh Police Station, informed that the arrested accused, known as Tarun Agrawal, was operating Kranti Yoga at Patnem beach in Canacona, South Goa.

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Opp. HEALTH OFFICE CHINCHINIM
19th To 29th June
TIME : 10.30 am To 8.30 pm

Agarwal, a permanent resident of Chhatisgarh, had changed his name on his Aadhaar Card to Yogi Tarun Kranti Agarwal with an address in Patnem, according to the officer.

Verma revealed that Agar-



Yoga guru-turned-alleged drug dealer Tarun Agrawal alias Sonu in custody of Dongargarh Police, Chhatisgarh

NOT QUITE A YOGI

- Tarun Agrawal alias Sonu, was arrested in Dongargarh, Chhatisgarh, and was running Kranti Yoga retreat on Patnem beach for 20 years, till recently
- The centre offered wellness and yoga teaching courses and was frequented by foreigners
- Agarwal also has over 10 NGOs registered under him and allegedly sought foreign funding
- He has reportedly travelled to over 100 countries

wal was known as the founder and managing director of Kranti Yoga, which offers certified yoga classes. Agarwal had been staying in Goa for almost 20 years before moving back to Dongargarh three months ago to set up an ashram. His beach-front yoga retreat in Patnem, which he allegedly used to float NGOs and seek international funding, was a front for a sophisticated narcotics racket. Dongargarh Police arrested Agarwal with nearly 2 kg of

cannabis. According to police, over the two decades he spent in Goa, Agarwal developed a solid network under the cover of wellness and meditation. His yoga centre was frequented by foreign tourists, many of whom attended expensive retreat packages, detox workshops, and 'spiritual healing' programmes. After gaining popularity in Goa's alternative lifestyle circuit, Tarun was looking to replicate the same model in

Dongargarh, but the police acted on time.

"He had a deep network. Foreigners came and went frequently, but no one ever thought to ask what was really going on," said a resident of Colomb-Canacona, on condition of anonymity.

Tarun claimed to be the director of over 10 NGOs, with alleged foreign funding. Investigative agencies are now investigating these organisations for possible links to money laundering and drug traf-

ficking. His Patnem address in Goa is now part of the investigation trail.

Sources confirmed that the equipment, foreign-imported boxes, and video materials seized from his Dongargarh ashram may have been routed through Goa.

However, Canacona Police Station PI Harish Raut Desai, confirmed that Agarwal's name has never been linked to any criminal case in Goa.

Tarun's story is not unique though. In recent years, Goa has become a haven for white-collar and narcotics-linked criminals, many of whom find safe shelter in Goa while operating illicit businesses. The trend has raised serious questions about the state's policing, local intel gaps, and unchecked inflow of foreign funds.

Just weeks ago, young boys involved in crypto currency fraud were nabbed while hiding in Calangute. Last month, a fugitive from Haryana wanted in a land scam was found running a homestay in Ashwem. Earlier this month, a Rajasthan native wanted in NDPS and other criminal cases, was found operating a couple of liquor stores in Goa.

Cont on Pg 11 >>

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A-I PLANE CRASH

Black box data being analysed at AIBB lab: Govt

PTI, NEW DELHI: The government on Thursday said data is being extracted from black boxes, and analysis of cockpit voice recorder and flight data recorder is underway to reconstruct the sequence of events that led to the fatal crash of the Air India plane in Ahmedabad on June 12.

In an update, the civil aviation ministry said the Aircraft Accident Investigation Bureau (AAIB) promptly initiated an investigation and constituted a multi-disciplinary team headed by the AAIB chief on June 13 in line with prescribed norms.

The team includes an aviation medicine specialist, an Air Traffic Control (ATC) officer, and representatives from the US National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB), it said in a statement.

Cont on Pg 11 >>

'Taxi app's fuel sop mere lollipop'

Drivers remain unconvinced

Team Herald

PANJIM: In a bid to attract more drivers to the Goa Taxi App, the State government has rolled out a new incentive scheme — but traditional taxi drivers remain unimpressed.

Announced on X by the Department of Tourism, the offer promises 25 litres of free fuel (petrol, diesel, or CNG) to the first 500 drivers who complete 50 rides while staying active between 8 am and 8 pm for 30 consecutive days.

Reacting to the move, North and South Goa Taxi Union President Sunil Naik dismissed the gesture, saying, "It's the same app, just modified. They're offering a 'lollipop' to attract drivers, but Goa taxi owners are well aware of what's really behind this scheme."

The initiative coincides with ongoing public consultations on the draft Goa Transport Aggregator Guidelines 2025, open for feedback until June 30. The

It's the same app, just modified. They're offering a 'lollipop' to attract drivers, but Goa taxi owners are well aware of what's really behind this scheme

It is a two-year-old app. Around 1,000 drivers are already registered. To bring in more drivers, we've introduced a scheme offering 25 litres of fuel to new registrants who meet the conditions

— Kedar Naik, Tourism Director

draft policy has sparked stiff resistance from traditional taxi unions, who fear it will clear the path for national ride-hailing platforms like Ola and Uber.

Cont on Pg 11 >>

Expectations surpassed: Shukla aboard ISS

PTI, NEW DELHI: IAF test pilot Group Captain Shubhanshu Shukla on Thursday became the first Indian to set foot on the International Space Station as he and three other astronauts entered the orbital laboratory to warm hugs and handshakes after the docking of their spacecraft at the end of a 28-hour journey around the earth.

Scripting history with this feat, Shukla, 39, became the 634th astronaut to travel to space with the Indian Air Force's fighter pilot ending his brief remarks after entering the ISS with a "Jai Hind Jai Bharat" message. He is also the second Indian to go to space in 41 years and the first since Rakesh Sharma's eight-day sojourn in 1984.

"With your love and blessings, I have reached the International Space Station. It looks easy to stand here, but my head is a little heavy, facing some difficulty; but these are minor issues," he said in brief remarks in Hindi at the formal welcome ceremony at the ISS.

"We will get used to it. This is the first step of this journey."

Cont on Pg 11 >>

JAI HIND: ASTRONAUT 634



Shubhanshu Shukla enters International Space Station along with 3 other astronauts, 1st Indian to achieve this feat

Rising sea eats into beach, homes at Polem

Erosion doom hangs over Polem beach despite promise of guard wall since Parrikar's time

GAURESH SATTARKAR

POLEM: Just 600 metres long, it's possibly the sunshine State's smallest beach located at the southernmost tip of Goa. But Polem beach could soon vanish, as relentless sea erosion eats into the shoreline, threatening both villagers and the few tourists who come here in the monsoon.

For the past three days, residents living along the shore have been gripped by fear, unable to sleep at night as powerful waves continue to batter the coastline.

The strong tidal activity has already caused significant damage. Portions of the shoreline have been washed away, as several trees were uprooted and electricity poles collapsed. Many newly planted coconut saplings have drowned, and seawater has begun entering homes and beach-side shacks.

Villagers say they have been repeatedly requesting the Lolem Village Panchayat to construct a protection wall along



Around 12 coconut trees, both new and old, have been washed away... We informed the panchayat secretary and Sarpanch Nisha Chari, but she ignored our concerns and hasn't even visited the site

— Anjeer Chandrekar, local businesswoman

When Manohar Parrikar was CM, he visited us and assured us that the protection wall would be built immediately. But after that, no one took any action. Our businesses and homes are in danger

— Atul Raikar, local fisherman

the coast to prevent such disasters. According to them, funds of approximately Rs 12 lakh were sanctioned in 2023 for both a retaining wall and a foot-bridge. However, no action has

been taken, and the tendering process has yet to begin.

"We are living in fear because of these dangerous waves. Around 12 coconut trees, both new and old, have been washed

away, and some more are on the verge of falling. We informed the panchayat secretary and Sarpanch Nisha Chari, but she ignored our concerns and hasn't even visited the site. If the pro-

tection wall had been built, this situation wouldn't have arisen," said Anjeer Chandrekar, a local businesswoman.

Back in 2004, during his tenure as Chief Minister, the late Manohar Parrikar had visited Polem and assured villagers that a protection wall would be constructed. Two decades later, that promise remains unfulfilled.

Atul Raikar, a local fisherman and businessman, said: "When Manohar Parrikar was CM, he visited us and assured us that the protection wall would be built immediately. But after that, no one took any action. Our businesses and homes are in danger. The shoreline keeps getting eroded, and trees are falling. They could collapse on shacks or houses at any moment."

Despite the growing crisis, neither the panchayat nor the local MLA has visited the affected area. While the local panch, Pratija Bandekar, has reportedly been pushing for urgent action, the sarpanch continues to remain unresponsive.

Social media disclosure now mandatory for US visas

PTI, NEW DELHI: Outlining each visa adjudication as a "national security decision", the US has asked applicants to share their social media usernames or handles of each platform they have used in the last five years.

The US Embassy in India shared the information in a brief statement issued on Thursday, which also cautioned against "omitting" social media information as it could lead to "visa denial and ineligibility for future visas".

The statement posted on X read, "Visa applicants are required to list all social media usernames or handles of every platform they have used from the last 5 years on the DS-160 visa application form. Applicants certify that the information in their visa application is true and correct before they sign and submit."

Cont on Pg 11 >>

MAX. TEMP 30.5°C
MIN. TEMP 25°C

idharudhar



Let's tolerate him for now — he has the vote bank.