

## Cong raises Rs 300 cr scam stink in Goa

Party leader Pawan Khera lists over 20 projects that he claims were awarded to private players without due process

**NEW DELHI, PTI:** The Congress on Saturday accused Goa's BJP government of awarding projects worth hundreds of crores to private players without competitive bidding and asked if the BJP-led Centre would initiate an Enforcement Directorate probe into this.

Congress' head of Media and Publicity Department Pawan Khera claimed that over 20 projects worth over Rs 300 crore were awarded to private players without competitive bidding. In a statement, Khera said "BJP has created a cabal of 'Mini-Adanis' in Goa, who benefit through favouritism in awarding plum contracts".

There was no comment from the Goa government or the BJP on the charges. Khera alleged PM Narendra Modi's 'fight against corruption' is a 'fight for the corrupt' as his 'own government' in Goa is an example of this "hollow talk".

"As Rs 304.24 crore scam in public funds where private players were awarded more than 20 projects with-

### GOA PROJECTS THAT PAWAN KHERA RED-FLAGGED

■ **47.18 cr** Smart Water Supply IoT Project under Jal Jeevan Mission was awarded to vendor, apparently without open bidding

■ **148.66 cr** worth of PWD works carried out without bidding and only on nomination basis

■ A power infrastructure improvement scheme in the Siolim area with **₹32.14 cr** of road reinstatement work was split into four contracts to keep each below certain financial thresholds, thereby avoiding the higher authorisation and open bidding process that a single **₹32 cr** project

would have required.

■ A **₹9.17 cr** contract for highway consultancy was awarded without an open selection process

■ A bundle of PWD Division II projects totaling **₹2.74 cr** was completed without prior sanction, and only after completion did the department seek approval in aggregate

■ Building renovation works—such as alterations in a Goa Medical College hospital ward (costing **₹2.03 cr**) and repairs to a minister's office chamber (**₹0.34 cr**)—were carried out and then presented for ex-post approval

■ Vikasit Bharat event in

Margao, costing **₹13.22 cr**, was carried out without any formal administrative or expenditure sanction before the event.

■ The Goa CSR Conclave 2023 (**₹2.78 cr**) was executed first and approved later

■ During PM Modi's visit to Goa on 27th April 2024, the state incurred about **₹1.37 cr** in expenses. Only after the event was the bill submitted for formal approval

■ The construction of a fire station in Cuncolim was divided into at least five separate contracts under **₹50 lakh** each, as this allowed approvals at lower administrative levels

(As per Pawan Khera's media statement)

out competitive bidding has looted the people of Goa. 'Na Khaunga, Na Khane Doonga' is a mirage. The BJP has created a cabal of

'mini-Adanis' in Goa, who benefit through favouritism in awarding plum contracts, openly demolishing every rule of the procure-

ment manuals and the Central Vigilance Commission (CVC)," Khera alleged.

Cont on Pg 18 >>

### KING KOHLI SHOWS HIS CLASS



RCB veteran Virat Kohli's unbeaten 59 off 36 deliveries helped his team chase KKR's 175 target in just 16.2 overs. Kohli, who scored four boundaries and three sixes, added 95 runs for the opening wicket along with Phil Salt (56, 31b, 9x4, 2x6) in just 8.3 overs to set the tone for the chase. For KKR, skipper Ajinkya Rahane came up with a splendid knock of 56 but Man of the Match Krunal Pandya's three-wicket burst turned the match in RCB's favour

Full report on Pg 20 >>

## Betul blast: Company's licence suspended

Inspection of gutted gunpowder warehouse points to significant safety protocol lapses

Team Herald

**MARGAO:** Within 48 hours of the massive blast and fire at a gunpowder storage facility that rocked Naqueri-Betul on Thursday night, the Petroleum and Explosives Safety Organisation (PESO) has suspended the licences of Hughes Precision Manufacturing Pvt Ltd, which was operating the storage facility.

PESO's decision came after a site inspection on Saturday, which aimed to assess the damage and determine the cause of the incident. Preliminary findings suggest that significant safety protocol lapses occurred at the facility, raising concerns about the handling and storage of

**The Petroleum and Explosives Safety Organisation (PESO) did on-site inspection on Saturday, after which it handed the suspension of licence order to Hughes Precision Manufacturing Pvt Ltd. The safety protocol lapses at the facility raise concerns about the handling and storage of hazardous materials.**

hazardous materials. The blast had shaken buildings around the area, with the fire visible for many kilometres in all directions, though there were no casualties.

The regulatory body, which operates under the

Union Ministry of Commerce & Industry, Government of India, deemed the storage facility unsafe for use. The decision followed a comprehensive report from South Goa District Collector Eгна Cleetus, who visited the site on Thursday night to oversee emergency operations.

In a formal notice issued to Hughes Precision, Joint Chief Controller of Explosives, R Rawat, confirmed that the company's licence to transport explosives by road was suspended. This temporary measure was taken under Section 6E of the Explosives Act, 1884, and Rule 118(5) of the Explosives Rules, 2008.

Cont on Pg 18 >>

### For the first time since going to hospital, Pope to be seen in public

**AFF, VATICAN CITY:** Pope Francis will make his first public appearance on Sunday with a blessing and a wave from Rome's Gemelli hospital where he was admitted on February 14 with breathing problems.

The 88-year-old pontiff has been battling pneumonia in both lungs after being hospitalised.

"Pope Francis intends to wave and offer a blessing from the Agostino Gemelli hospital in Rome after Angelus prayers," The Vatican said Saturday.

The pope has missed the Angelus prayers for five straight weeks for the first time since his election in March 2013. The Angelus prayers are normally recited by the pope at midday every Sunday.

The pope has made public appearances from the Gemelli hospital earlier.

Cont on Pg 18 >>

## 8 paragliders seized from Maha tourists at Keri Beach

Visitors asked to appear before Pernem magistrate

Team Herald

**PERNEM:** The Tiracol Coastal Security Police on Saturday launched a crackdown on illegal paragliding activities and confiscated eight paragliders from Maharashtra tourists at Keri Beach.

The action comes after deaths of a Pune tourist and

a pilot from Nepal during paragliding at Keri in January this year.

The police asked the eight tourists to appear before the Judicial Magistrate First Class (JMFC), Pernem on Monday. The tourists hailing from Mumbai and Pune had gone to Keri Beach for paragliding, but they had

no licence for carrying out the activity.

When contacted, Tiracol Coastal Police Station PI Vikram Naik said that they noticed tourists landing on the Keri beach with paragliders and immediately stopped them.

The police confiscated their paragliders and after getting their details, asked

them to appear before the JMFC, Pernem.

Following deaths of a Pune tourist and a pilot from Nepal during paragliding at Keri in January this year, the Tourism Department had suspended paragliding activities, both motorised and non-motorised throughout the State until further orders.

Cont on Pg 18 >>

### TRUMP'S PLAN TO DISMANTLE THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION: WHAT'S AT STAKE?

#### WHY TRUMP WANTS TO SHUT DOWN THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION:

■ **Campaign Promise Fulfilled:** Trump is acting on a key promise from his campaign

■ **State Control Over Education:** Conservatives argue education should be managed at the state level

■ **Inefficiency & Bias:** Critics claim the Department is inefficient and too influenced by liberal ideologies

■ **Ending the "Woke Agenda":** Trump aims to eliminate what he sees as a "woke agenda" taking over education



#### WHAT DOES THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION DO?

■ **National Policy Oversight:** A cabinet-level agency that shapes U.S. education policy

■ **Established in 1979:** Created by President Jimmy Carter

■ **Financial Aid:** Distributes vital funding, like Pell Grants for low-income students

■ **Data & Enforcement:** Gathers education data and enforces civil rights laws in education

#### ARE KEY PROGRAMS AT RISK?

■ **Vital Funding:** The DoE manages

programs like Title I (\$18.4 billion for low-income schools), IDEA (\$15.5 billion for special education), and federal student loans (\$1.6 trillion)

■ **Trump's Assurance:** The Trump camp claims these programs won't be impacted

that these cuts could lead to overcrowded classrooms, higher tuition, and loss of essential services like special education and student civil rights protections

■ **What's Next?** Stay tuned as the fight over the future of U.S. education continues

### GU 'paper leak': asst professor appears before Agassaim Police

Team Herald

**PANJIM:** Following a complaint of alleged trespass and cheating was registered against him, Goa University Assistant Professor Pranav Naik on Saturday appeared before the Agassaim Police for interrogation.

The complaint was filed against the assistant professor on Friday by University Registrar Prof Sundar Dhuri for alleged trespassing and cheating in the Physics faculty block.

The Agassaim Police have registered the case against Naik under Sections 336 (3), 329 (4), 331 (3), 318 (4) of BNS.

During the course of investigation, the cops served Naik with notice under Section 35(3) of BNSS on Saturday with direction to remain present at the Agassaim Police station for investigation.

The assistant professor was interrogated at length at the Agassaim Police Station, the police said.

The allegations of a paper leak have rocked the university since last Sunday.

## Taking aim with young Goans to keep archery alive

Jose Luis Godinho hasn't let his disabilities stop him from training youth in the sport at Pilar

AJIT JOHN  
ajit@herald-goa.com

**PANJIM:** He may be physically challenged, but that has not deterred Jose Luis Godinho, popularly known as Zito, from dedicating his life to train young Goans in archery at Pilar.

A former goalkeeper, Jose entered the world of archery by chance in Dubai in the 80s.

Before training students in archery, at 18, he was the youngest to be recruited for the State police and continued for the next three years. In 1986, he went to Dubai to boost his finances and took up archery. A recreation manager at a popular hotel in Dubai, he trained locals, Indians and Europeans in the sport.



Young archers, who train with Jose Luis Godinho, set their sights on the target

Jose had the privilege to train late Pakistani Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto and

#### FOCUS ON BULLSEYE

in the subtleties of clay pigeon shooting

■ At 18, Jose was the youngest to be recruited for the State police and continued for the next three years

■ In 1986, he went to Dubai to boost his finances and took up archery

■ At a popular Dubai hotel, he trained locals, Indians and Europeans

■ Had the privilege to train late Pak PM Benazir Bhutto and French football star Eric Cantona

■ Was trained by David Samson, a European, and was able to pick it up in a day

■ Joined Al Forsan, a famous shooting club in Asia

■ Returned to Goa in 2016, launched Zito Archery Club at Don Bosco oratory

■ Trained the U-16 team for the nationals.

■ Zito Archery Club is now based at Pilar

French football star Eric Cantona in the subtleties of clay pigeon shooting.

Jose says he was trained by David Samson, a European, and was able to pick it up in a day. After working for 32 years and training guests at the hotel, he joined Al Forsan, a famous shooting club in Asia.

He returned to Goa in 2016, Jose launched the Zito Archery Club at the Don Bosco oratory. After being given a chance by Fr Ralin, he started training the local children and also trained the U-16 team for the nationals.

"One can figure out how talented a person is the way he/she holds the bow. I provide them with the basics on how to stand, how to aim and when to shoot. The standard of the sport is improving, there is a lot of talent, but with no ground I had to pay for the facility," Jose said.

Cont on Pg 18 >>



Forget heatwave, it's time to brace for the 'hit-wave'!