

Paper leak: Goa University to initiate disciplinary proceedings against Prof

Team Herald

PANJIM: The Executive Council of Goa University on Friday decided to initiate disciplinary proceedings against Dr Pranav Naik, Assistant Professor of Physics at the School of Physical and Applied Sciences. The proceedings will be carried out in accordance with the Goa University statutes and the CCS CCA rules applicable to service matters.

The university has also filed a complaint with Agasaim Police against Dr Naik to facilitate a further investigation into what it has termed unauthorised and unlawful activities allegedly carried out by him.

Earlier, University Vice-Chancellor Prof Har-

FACTS OF THE CASE

■ Asst Prof allegedly leaks question paper to a female student in Sept last year

■ Vice-Chancellor says that there was no question of paper leakage, claims Dr Naik had only taken some chemicals from the cabin of another assistant professor. Claims there was no complaint

■ Social activists, NSUI,

others file police complaint on March 16; demand action

■ Facing pressure, GU places Asst Prof under suspension on March 17

■ Fact Finding Committee formed, submits report on March 19; Executive Council on Friday initiates disciplinary proceedings against Asst Prof

ilal Menon had stated that there was no question of paper leakage by Dr Naik. However, he mentioned that the professor had taken some chemicals from the cabin of another assistant professor. The incident re-

portedly took place in September last year.

The matter escalated when activist Kashinath Shetye and others filed a police complaint on March 16, 2025. This was followed by additional complaints

from the National Students' Union of India (NSUI) and the Goa Pradesh Youth Congress at the police station.

Facing public and student pressure, the university placed Dr Naik under suspension on March 17. A two-member fact-finding committee was then constituted, which submitted its report to the Vice-Chancellor and the Governor (who is the Chancellor) on March 19.

The report was presented before the Executive Council on Friday, following which the council decided to initiate disciplinary proceedings against Dr Naik.

Meanwhile, a four-member high-level enquiry committee, constituted to

MORE TROUBLE IN STORE

Govt constitutes four-member high-level inquiry panel headed by Retd HC Judge Justice RMS Khandeparker to probe issue; committee requests for information in an affidavit form either in person or via Speed Post by April 1

investigate the alleged paper leak, met on Thursday.

The committee has decided to invite information and evidence from various stakeholders, including, student organisations at Goa University, students from the class where the alleged paper leak occurred, teaching faculty of the School of Physics and Applied Sciences, the Dean and Vice-Dean/Head of the Department of the School of Physics and Applied Sciences and any

other individuals possessing authentic information regarding the alleged incident.

The committee has requested that all information be submitted in the form of an affidavit in a sealed cover to Dr Gervasio S F L Mendes, the liaison officer, at the Office of the Additional Directorate of Higher Education, Goa Education Complex, Porvorim. Submissions can be made either in person or via speed post by April 1.

Camurlim woman killed, three injured in Amboli accident

Team Herald

MAPUSA: Tragedy struck a family from Camurlim, Bardez when the car in which they were travelling turned turtle killing one of the occupants and injuring three others near Ajara, Amboli, on Friday.

The victim has been identified as Ankita Bhosle (50), while her husband Ajit Bhosle (56) and two sons Ashish (32) and Anshel (29) sustained injuries too.

The accident occurred early morning while they were returning home from a pilgrimage tour of Akalkot Swami Samarth and Shirdi Sai Baba Temple.

Ashish who was driving the car told police that he felt drowsy and lost control over the steering.

The car then rammed into a hoarding near

The accident occurred early morning while they were returning home from a pilgrimage tour of Akalkot Swami Samarth and Shirdi Sai Baba Temple.

Shangaramala-Suleran, Ajara, Amboli and ended deep into the valley.

The injured were immediately rushed to nearby Ajara Rural Hospital for treatment and were discharged. The police also sent the body for post-mortem examination and handed it over to the family for last rites. Head Constable Anil Sarmabale is conducting further investigations under the supervision of PI Naguesh Yemgar.

GBA welcomes Panchayati Raj Act amendment, calls for further reforms

Team Herald

PANJIM: The Goa Bachao Abhiyan (GBA) has welcomed the recent amendment to the Goa Panchayati Raj Act, passed by the Goa Assembly, which corrects the term "Special planning" to "Spatial planning" in alignment with the 73rd Constitutional Amendment. This correction restores the powers of village panchayats to prepare spatial plans, as mandated by the Constitution.

GBA convener Sabina Martins described the amendment as a long-overdue correction that will now enable land-use planning at the panchayat level through Ward Development Committees (WDCs), as per Article 243ZD of the Constitution. This, she said, ensures participatory planning by local bodies.

"This amendment is the result of a year-long effort

This amendment is the result of a year-long effort by the Goa Bachao Abhiyan to bring this typographical error to the attention of the Governor, Ministers, and Members of Parliament through representations and meetings

— Sabina Martins, GBA convener

by the Goa Bachao Abhiyan to bring this typographical error to the attention of the Governor, Ministers, and Members of Parliament through representations and meetings," Martins stated.

The GBA delegation had previously met Law Minister Aleixo Sequeira, who initiated a joint meeting of Panchayat and Law Secretaries to facilitate the correction. The organisation has expressed gratitude to the Law Minister Sequeira for ensuring the passage of the Panchayat Raj (Amendment) Bill 2025 during the recently concluded Goa Assembly Budget Session.

Due to the error in the Act, local bodies were excluded from spatial planning for over three decades, leading to a denial of statutory planning rights. This exclusion also prevented the structural organisation of WDCs, along with the allocation of funding and training required for effective local planning.

The GBA strongly criticised the Town and Country Planning (TCP) Department, alleging that it has exceeded its mandate as a technical regulatory body and has taken over the planning process entirely. The organisation claimed that the TCP's unilateral

decisions and flawed regulations have led to chaotic development, bypassing community participation and damaging entire neighbourhoods.

"There are several instances where local bodies were excluded from decisions on projects that had a detrimental impact on villages," the GBA stated.

The GBA has urged the government to amend all relevant laws to align with this corrected amendment, particularly the outdated TCP Act, Goa Land Development and Building Construction Regulations, and other related legislation, as mandated by the Constitution.

Reaffirming its commitment to participatory planning, the GBA stated that it will continue to conduct outreach and awareness programmes on laws, budgets, and planning systems, which are critical to implementing a true people's plan.

SKYBOUND PROGRESS?



The under-construction elevated expressway snakes through Bardez, dwarfing the old highway that runs parallel to it

Power Dept halts unauthorised cable installation in Panjim

Executive Engineer stops workers hired by service provider from climbing poles to install cables

Team Herald

PANJIM: A day after the High Court of Bombay at Goa disposed off a writ petition filed by the All Goa Internet Service Providers Association, an electricity department nodal officer rushed to Panjim on Friday to stop a worker who had climbed an electricity pole to install cables.

The issue arose after Dr Odette Lobo, a city resident, filed a police complaint regarding the unauthorised use of electricity poles. In response, Kashinath Shetye, Executive Engineer of the Electricity Department, visited the site and removed cables tied to the poles. He informed the police that the worker had no permission to climb the pole.

"The electricity department has not given permission to any internet service provider to install cables. I am not concerned about other permissions, but we have not authorised anyone to use electricity poles. We have



Linemen cutting the Internet cables installed on an electricity pole in the 18th June Road, in City

also imposed a penalty on service providers for failing to pay fees amounting to Rs3.5 crore, which have been pending since 2020-21," Shetye stated.

He further explained that the service provider presented a licence issued in 2024, which was invalid as it had been cancelled

in 2022. "Nobody can use the electricity poles without consent and without submitting an application to the department," he emphasised.

Meanwhile, Dr Lobo alleged that service providers were not only using electricity poles but also trees, often installing cables



during night hours.

"Without any valid permission, how can they put up cables? Who is allowing them?" she asked.

She also criticised the electricity department's handling of the issue, questioning why service providers were allowed to

continue operating despite their outstanding dues.

"If a consumer fails to pay their electricity bill on time, the department disconnects their power connection. But how can you allow others to profit while cheating the government?" she questioned.

No-confidence motion filed against Marcaim sarpanch and deputy

Team Herald

PONDA: A motion of no confidence has been filed against the Sarpanch and Deputy Sarpanch of Marcaim Gram Panchayat, with five panch members alleging that Sarpanch Shailendra Panajikar has failed to take them into confidence regarding developmental works.

The Marcaim Panchayat, known for being dominated by Power Minister Sudin Dhavalikar's influence, has been stirred by the move. The no-confidence motion against Sarpanch Shailendra Panajikar has generated considerable political excitement. Currently, four members of the nine-member panel support Panajikar.

Five panch members—Vishant Mukund Naik, Eramjo Agiar, Durgadas Naik,

Shilpa Gawde, and Sushma Gawde—have signed the no-confidence notice. Additionally, they have also filed a separate motion of no confidence against Deputy Sarpanch Sandhya Naik.

The development is expected to create political ripples within the panchayat, as members prepare for the next course of action.

Tourist influx in Calangute rising, govt focusing on infrastructure: CM

Team Herald

CALANGUTE: Chief Minister Pramod Sawant on Friday stated that the number of tourists visiting Calangute is steadily increasing, prompting the state government to prioritise infrastructure development to meet growing demands.

"If earlier one lakh people visited Calangute, now the number has risen to 10 lakh. Tourists from across the country, as well as Goa, are flocking to the area," Sawant said.

To support the surge, the government recently launched infrastructure projects worth Rs 100

crore in the Calangute constituency. These include a 33KV underground electricity cable network from the 220/33KV GIS station at Saligao to substations in Calangute, Nagoa-Arpora, Badem-Assagao, and the proposed Baga substation; a 300mm water pipeline from St Anthony Chapel to the 1.2 MLD sump at Umtawade, Calangute; and road repairs following underground cable work.

"This is a plan for the next 25 years. Whatever is needed will be done. I assure you 100% that all required infrastructure projects for Calangute will be completed," Sawant affirmed.

Bison keeps Pondaitees on tenterhooks

Large herds frequently enter residential areas creating panic

Team Herald

PONDA: The frequent spotting of bison in Ponda has triggered fear and panic among locals in the city and nearby villages as well.

Since a couple of bison attacks also were reported earlier from the area, the frequent sightings has generated anxiety among the school going children too. Human-animal conflict over space has intensified over the years, and currently the situation is going out of control say villagers.

Residents, fearing for their safety and that of their children, have urged the forest department to

take immediate action to drive the bison back into their natural habitat.

They have also called for arrangements to be made for drinking water and the plantation of fruit-bearing trees within forested areas, hoping this will discourage the animals from entering residential zones in search of water.

Naresh Naik, a resident of Priol, reported that herds of 15 to 20 wild bison, have been frequently spotted entering localities in Kerim. "This poses a risk to locals. The authorities should arrange for water and plant fruit-bearing trees in forest areas so that



these animals remain within their natural habitat," he said adding that such frequent intrusions were unheard of in the past.

Viraj Sapre, a social worker, highlighted the dangers posed by these animals. "Already, one woman has lost her life after she was gored by a bison in Bondbag Bethora. Over the past few days, these ani-

mals have been frequently entering city areas. They usually come into villages and urban areas in search of drinking water from traditional water reservoirs. Many youths, unaware of the aggressive nature of wild bison, often try to chase them away, which can be extremely dangerous," he cautioned.

Residents of Dhavli also reported similar incidents, stating that the bison regularly venture into their village to drink from local water sources.

Experts believe that ongoing infrastructure projects, including highway development, bypass

roads and large-scale hill cutting, have disrupted wildlife corridors. The construction of huge retaining walls has made it difficult for animals to cross highways, leaving them disoriented and leading to their increased straying into urban areas.

A recent incident saw a female bison, along with her calf, wandering through city streets for an extended period before being safely rescued by forest officials.

Residents continue to appeal to authorities for a long-term solution to prevent such encounters and ensure both human and animal safety.

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