

Porvorim police probe Rs 4.62 crore Samagra Shiksha Abhiyan fund fraud

Accused allegedly took 10% commission per transaction; Police suspect insider involvement as probe widens to Delhi and Bengaluru

Team Herald

PANJIM: Porvorim Police investigating the alleged misappropriation of Rs 4.62 crore in central funds allocated to the Samagra Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA) suspect that the arrested accused, Rabin Paul, received a commission of approximately 10 per cent on each fraudulent bank transaction.

PSI Sitaram Malik, a member of the investigation team, stated that the fraud first came to light on 16 May when Dr Shambhu Ghadi, Director of Goa Samagra Shiksha, was alerted by a bank employee about a mismatch in the signature on a

TIMELINE OF FRAUD
■ 10 suspicious transactions
■ Occurred between 8 March and 25 March 2025
DETECTION
■ Fraud detected on 16 May 2025
■ Discovered when SSA Director Dr Shambhu Ghadi noticed a signature mismatch on a cheque

cheque presented for clearance. Dr Ghadi, who confirmed he had not issued the cheque, immediately rushed to the bank and, upon confirming irregularities, lodged a complaint with the Porvorim Police.

Preliminary inquiries re-

vealed ten suspicious transactions occurred between 8 and 25 March 2025. While Rabin Paul has claimed that his bank account was used without his knowledge, police have expressed scepticism, citing the digital tracking available in

ACCUSED DETAILS	
■ Rabin Paul arrested in Barasat, West Bengal	tion
■ Allegedly received 10% commission per transaction	■ Claims his account was misused without consent; cops sceptical
VIOLATION OF PROTOCOL	
SSA protocol breached: Payments should be via direct bank transfer, not cheques	

modern banking systems. Paul, who was arrested in Barasat, West Bengal, is not believed to be a passive participant in the scam, according to investigators.

A specialised police team is currently following multiple leads, including the

possible involvement of individuals based in Delhi and Bengaluru, where inquiries are ongoing. Though internal collusion has not been ruled out, PSI Malik said it was premature to speculate on the involvement of bank officials. "It is too early to draw

conclusions, especially given developments still unfolding in Delhi," he noted.

Under SSA protocols, staff payments are strictly processed via direct bank transfers and not through cheques. Authorities suspect the perpetrators may have gained unauthorised access to SSA's account details, forged cheques, and replicated signatures — potentially with insider assistance from within the SSA system or the nationalised bank concerned.

Given the scale of the fraud, the Chief Minister is being kept regularly informed on the status of the investigation.

Pilerne site turns deadly as pump falls on labourer

Team Herald

MAPUSA: In a tragic incident, a 37-year-old labourer from West Bengal, Maklesh Mandal, lost his life while working at a well construction site in Maina-Pilerne, Bardez.

According to police reports, Mandal sustained severe head injuries after a motor pump accidentally fell on him. He was immediately rushed to Goa Medical College and Hospital (GMC), Bambolim, but succumbed to his injuries during treatment.

CCP barricades access to unsafe market building

Team Herald

PANJIM: The Corporation of the City of Panaji (CCP) on Saturday barricaded the passage leading to the unsafe municipal building near the Falcon Apartments, adjacent to the Panjim market, even as shopkeepers claimed they had voluntarily suspended business pending a decision on their appeal to the Minister for Urban Development.

Out of 13 traders who were served eviction notices, ten ceased commercial operations from Friday night, following the withdrawal of their writ petition filed before the High Court of Bombay at Goa. These petitioners informed the Court that they would not occupy their respective shops from Friday, pending further orders on their stay application/appeal filed before the competent authority, with a hearing scheduled for Tuesday, May 27.

The aggrieved shopkeepers had initially approached the High Court seeking a stay on the CCP's eviction order. Representing them, Advocate C Padgaonkar argued that the absence of a Presiding Officer to hear the appeal left the petitioners without an effective remedy, prompting them to move the High Court.

However, after the petitioners withdrew the writ petition to pursue their appeal before the Minister for Urban Development, the Court observed that

the Corporation was free to enforce its May 21, eviction order against the remaining three occupants, should they fail to comply.

Despite the voluntary closure by the shopkeepers, the CCP on Saturday sealed the passageways on either side of the building, causing disruption to 17 additional vendors operating from makeshift stalls opposite the condemned structure.

CCP market inspector Virendra Mahale confirmed, "The passage will be closed on either side of the building."

Speaking to **O Herald**, R N 'Kamal' Renjen, proprietor of Kamal Chemist and Druggist, questioned the Corporation's move. "When we have voluntarily decided to stop our business, why is CCP doing this drama of closing the passage? Our appeal is pending. We have been doing business here for the last 55 years, and they cannot give a 24-hour notice to vacate the premises. It does not make sense. We are cooperating with the CCP in every way and they should give us some time. If the building is unsafe, we are ready to vacate it, but the CCP should relocate us somewhere so that we can earn our livelihood. Let us see what will be the outcome of our appeal fixed for hearing on May 27."

While all 13 shops in the building remained shut, several makeshift stalls opposite the site reopened. Many of these are believed to have been sublet.



The passage leading to the premises has been barricaded

RAINY DAY SNACK



Young boys forage for snails in a flooded field in Guirim on Saturday evening. Field snails are a high protein delicacy enjoyed during the rainy season in Goa

Woman injured, pet dog killed in road accident at Chicalim

Team Herald

VASCO: A 35-year-old woman was seriously injured and her pet dog killed on the spot after they were knocked down by a speeding car near the Chicalim junction on Friday night.

The victim, identified as Rani Bind, had taken her dog for a walk and was waiting near the road divider to cross when a car came speeding from an internal road and rammed into her. The impact killed the dog instantly and left Bind seriously injured.

The car, reportedly driven by Ulhas Naik, then collided with two other vehicles before crossing over the road divider and landing on the opposite side of the road.

The injured woman was rushed to Goa Medical College and Hospital (GMC), Bambolim, where her condition is said to be critical.

Family members of Rani Bind have demanded immediate action against Naik for rash and reckless driving.

6 health officers, 4 sanitary inspectors face suspension over graft charges

Team Herald

PANJIM: Health Minister Vishwajit Rane on Saturday announced that two health officers and four sanitary inspectors are set to be suspended next week over allegations of corruption and blackmail.

The decision follows a meeting with the Directorate of Health Services (DHS), during which evidence reportedly emerged linking the six officials to corrupt practices and extortion.

Rane confirmed that the suspension process is underway and that the identities of the individuals involved will be disclosed in the coming week.

This move forms part of the Health Department's broader initiative to curb corruption and reinforce accountability within the public health sector. Rane reiterated the government's zero-tolerance policy on misconduct, warning

CALANGUTE-BAGA ON FDA WATCH LIST FOR FOOD SAFETY VIOLATIONS

CALANGUTE: The Food and Drugs Administration (FDA) will conduct a two-week drive in the Calangute-Baga area following continued non-compliance with food safety regulations by restaurants, food outlets, and retailers, despite repeated raids since the beginning of the year. "In the coming two weeks, we will be visiting all shops along the coast here and check them for food safety violations and take strict action," said FDA official Richard Noronha.

The FDA has been conducting regular surveillance drives in Calangute after receiving multiple complaints regarding the quality of food items, including cashew nuts. During these inspections, officials have seized large quantities of sub-standard cashew nuts, fined numerous outlets, and shut down several restaurants and shops. However, the violations continue, Noronha confirmed.

that any official found misusing their position would face strict disciplinary action. The development underscores the administration's commitment to maintaining transparency and integrity in the delivery of health services.

Rane also revealed that action had already been

initiated against a Food and Drug Administration (FDA) food inspector following corruption complaints. "Officers involved in corruption should be terminated from government service," Rane asserted.

Earlier, the Health Minister chaired a meeting at Goa Medical College (GMC),

Bambolim, to review departmental functioning and assess the State's preparedness for vector-borne diseases.

"We discussed a comprehensive action plan with health officials and GMC experts to understand the challenges faced by each department and the current state of facilities. Our objective is to ensure that people receive the best possible treatment," said Rane.

"We also brainstormed on building a more agile and responsive system to swiftly tackle any health emergencies arising from a potential surge in vector-borne diseases," he added.

Rane further held one-on-one meetings with each Head of Department at GMC to identify shortfalls and explore measures to strengthen every unit. "Our goal is to ensure that the people of Goa receive the highest standard of healthcare services," he concluded.

Congress demands safety audit after roads cave in

Team Herald

PANJIM: The opposition Congress Party has demanded a full safety audit of roads affected by underground cabling works and has called for accountability to be fixed on the contractors and officials responsible.

Reacting to the recent incidents of a truck and a bus caving in due to roads weakened by haphazard and unscientific digging for underground cabling, the Congress stated that the alarming situation exposes the utter disregard for public safety and accountability by the State government.

“The Goa Pradesh Congress Committee strongly condemns the BJP government that is endangering the lives of Goans every single day. This is not development; this is destruction packaged as ‘Viksit Bharat’. Roads are dug up and left unrepaired, endangering motorists, commuters, and citizens alike,”
— Amarnath Panjikar, GPCC media cell chairman

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Amarnath Panjikar said.

"Why has the State government failed to repair these roads in time? Is the delay due to disputes over 'Mission Total Commission', or is it sheer administrative incompetence? Either way, the people of Goa are paying the price," Panjikar stated.

The Congress has demanded a time-bound plan.

