

# SUICIDE SWINGS FOCUS TO ALL-ROUND PRESSURE, CLASSROOM TO HOME

Experts advocate emotional resilience training, open parent-student dialogue to stem rising campus suicides

AJIT JOHN

**PANJIM:** On Thursday, a 20-year-old student at BITS Pilani's Goa campus was found dead in his hostel room. It was the third such incident on the campus in just five months, sparking the question: What is driving students to such extremes?

Psychologists and counsellors point to two factors — academic performance and parental expectations — as key contributors to a growing mental health crisis among students. "With rapidly evolving curricula and fierce competition for jobs, students are under constant pressure to perform," said Ciprian Fernandes, a youth counsellor at NS College, Vasco. "When they face setbacks, they tend to buckle under pressure. They're not emotionally mature yet. Older adults might say 'this too shall pass,' but many youths can't handle grief," he explained.

A major concern, Fernandes added, is the emotional disconnect between students and their families. "When students open up about their problems, parents often dismiss them as trivial. That sense of not being understood adds to their distress."

While academic stress is the primary concern, Fernandes noted that personal and relationship issues also contribute to the burden, though these often go unspoken in counselling sessions. "Family expectations around studies and jobs are a major stressor. While graduation rates in Goa are high, job opportunities are limited. This mismatch is a serious concern."

## KEY PRESSURES FACING STUDENTS

- Intense academic demands and competitive job markets
- High parental expectations and lack of emotional understanding
- Emotional immaturity and difficulty coping with failure
- Limited job prospects despite high graduation rates

## SUPPORTIVE MEASURES THAT HELP

- Open, empathetic communication between students and families
- Encouragement from friends and engagement in creative outlets
- Guidance in choosing personal academic and career paths
- Supportive teachers and practical strategies like time management

Students themselves are feeling the weight. Nathania Baptista, a third-year computer engineering student at Don Bosco College of Engineering in Margao, recalled struggling through her second year. "There was so much to study and no time for anything else. I was overwhelmed. I started singing with my dad, who's a musician. That helped me cope. Living with my family made it easier."

Her collegemate, Malcolm Antao, echoed her experience. "The subjects were hard and the syllabus was vast. It was tough



to manage. Some people in college added to my stress, but I got through it thanks to friends who supported and encouraged me."

Afreen Khan, a counsellor at a college in Panjim, said that many students suffer in silence, often because they are following paths chosen by others. "Sometimes students opt for courses chosen by parents or others, not knowing what they truly want. That causes inner conflict. Our job is to help them find their own direction," she said.

Khan emphasised that external expectations can begin

weighing on students well before graduation. "With intense competition for jobs, the pressure starts early. Add a lack of emotional resilience, and it becomes a recipe for distress."

Dr Leann Mesquita, a psychologist based in Margao, believes a shift in mindset is urgently needed — both at home and in college environments. "Parents must be taught to talk not just about success but also about failure. Teachers can make a difference by being supportive and creating a safe space," she said.

“With rapidly evolving curricula and fierce competition for jobs, students are under constant pressure to perform

— Ciprian Fernandes, a youth counsellor at NS College, Vasco

“With intense competition for jobs, the pressure starts early. Add a lack of emotional resilience, and it becomes a recipe for distress

— Afreen Khan, a counsellor at a college in Panjim

“Parents must be taught to talk not just about success but also about failure. Teachers can make a difference by being supportive and creating a safe space

— Dr Leann Mesquita, a psychologist based in Margao

She called for practical, preventive strategies. "Right now, students are under immense pressure to score marks. We need a solution-oriented approach — planning, time management, and open communication can go a long way. But we have to take it seriously."

The rising number of student suicides serves as a sobering warning. Without meaningful changes in how families, institutions, and society address academic stress and emotional wellbeing, experts fear the crisis will only deepen.

## Velim MLA demands measures to ensure safety, well-being of students

Team Herald

**MARGAO:** The tragic death of a second BITS Pilani Goa student within two months has prompted the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) Velim MLA Cruz Silva to issue a strong appeal to the institute authorities, calling for urgent action to address campus safety and student welfare. "The loss of another young life under such distressing circumstances demands immediate and thorough investigation," Silva said in an emotional statement.

Extending his deepest sympathies to the grieving families, Silva emphasised, "We stand in solidarity with the students and families affected, and we call upon the administration to take immediate action to safeguard the well-being of its students." He stressed that the institute must conduct a transparent inquiry into the incidents, stating, "Understanding the root causes is essential to ensuring the safety of all students on campus."

The Velim MLA also highlighted the urgent need for better mental health support, saying, "The pressures of academic life can be overwhelming, and it is imperative that institutions provide accessible and effective psychological support to prevent further tragedies." He warned that without systemic changes, vulnerable students may continue to suffer in silence.

His statement concluded with a firm demand: "We urge the authorities at BITS Pilani to act now—not with empty assurances, but with concrete measures that protect students and restore trust."

## Seven boats destroyed in fierce blaze at Coco beach



Tem Herald

**PANJIM:** A major fire broke out late on Friday night at the popular Coco beach area of Nerul, completely destroying seven fishing boats that had been anchored along the shore. Although the fire services responded swiftly, the blaze spread rapidly, causing significant damage.

The incident has sparked fear among local fishermen and boat owners, many of whom allege that the fire was not accidental but premeditated. "This is not the first time boats have caught fire in this manner," said a local resident. "The authorities must investigate the matter seriously."

While an official estimate of the damages is still awaited, preliminary reports suggest losses running into several lakhs. Some of the destroyed vessels were used for water sports, raising concerns about the potential impact on the local tourism sector.

Officials from the Nerul police station outpost and the Fire Department were present at the scene and have begun investigating the cause of the fire. Authorities are examining whether any flammable substances were present aboard the vessels and how the fire may have started.

In the wake of the incident, locals have urged the administration to improve safety measures. "The absence of CCTV surveillance along the beach, the lack of designated docking areas, and poor night-time security are serious concerns," a boat owner said.

## STATEMENT ISSUED BY BITS PILANI GOA CAMPUS ON THE SUICIDE

**VASCO:** BITS Pilani, K K Birla Goa Campus is deeply shaken at the tragic loss of Krishna Kaseria, a second-year undergraduate student, on May 1, 2025. This heartbreaking loss has left all of us shattered and in deep sorrow.

Our thoughts and prayers are with his family, friends, and all those who knew him. We recognise how difficult and unsettling this time is for every

member of our community, especially for students who were close to him. We are doing everything possible to support them with compassion and care.

The campus authorities are in close coordination with the police, who have taken charge of the situation. We are fully cooperating with them to ensure all necessary steps are be-

ing taken appropriately. BITS Pilani is conducting an internal inquiry in this matter.

In addition, the Institute is trying its best to ensure that students are safe and secure. Recently, a group of faculty members have undergone Young Mental Health First-Aiders certification programme. These faculty members reach out to students

providing them safe space to open up about themselves. The Institute also conducts listening circles by interacting with students in their respective hostel common rooms to understand their concerns related to academic, social and community life in campus. The timings of Student Activity Centre, which houses the sports and recreational facilities for students, had also

extended its timing recently to open throughout the day till late night all on Sundays and all holidays. Mpower, the counselling centre on campus, offers sessions and access to 24x7 helpline. The campus authorities urge all students to utilise the above facilities to keep their mind and body healthy, said a press release issued by the BITS Pilani, K K Birla Goa Campus

## BEACHFRONT DAMAGE



Broken pavement tiles at Miramar promenade pose safety risks to beachgoers, blamed on vehicular movement along the beachfront

UPENDRA NAIK

## Churchill's plea to block 'Costao' film dismissed by High Court

Team Herald

**PANJIM:** The High Court of Bombay at Goa has dismissed former Chief Minister Churchill Alemao's appeal restraining Bhanushali Studios Limited, the Bombay Fables Motion Pictures and the director Sejal Shah from releasing/screening film 'Costao'.

In his application, Churchill had sought temporary injunction to restrain the respondents from carrying on any further production of the suit movie (Costao) and from releasing the same in theatres or OTT platform or any other source in India or abroad, including from release of its trailer.

The appellant had also prayed for a direction for screening of the film in the

presence of the Trial Court, himself and his family members before release of its poster, teaser and movie itself and to appoint a committee of experts to view the film and to submit a report to the Court.

Churchill had further prayed for directions to the defendants to pay him Rs 100 crore by way of damages or compensation for defamatory act and for Commission and Omission.

The applicant had stated that the film being produced was solely based on the narrative given by a retired Customs officer Costao Fernandes, in complete ignorance of various judicial proceedings that were initiated in respect of the incident, and which are contained in various judgments of the Court and of

the Supreme Court.

The film is a production not based on the complete narrative or rather based on an incomplete narrative of the facts of the particular incident and is in the nature of detaining the plaintiff and his family members harming his reputation, his public image and his political status.

Stating that no gold was ever confiscated or recovered by Costao, the applicant stated that the narrative of the basis of the film, that the Customs Department have managed to establish a gold smuggling case against the Alemao clan is false. If the film is produced and released it would portray the plaintiff and his family as a 'Villain'.

The defendants clarified that the film was a fictionalised work inspired by the narration in the decision of the Supreme Court of India of 20.02.1996, of a real-life incident involving the plaintiff, his late brother (Alvernaz) and Costao. It further states that the film does not purport to be a true story and is a fictional account in which the

real-life incident may have inspired the film. The film contains a specific disclaimer that any resemblance to persons, past or present is purely incidental.

The High Court observed that none of the publishers of the news items mentioned by the appellant were not added as defendants in the suit, even though relief against media houses and publishers were sought.

### FISH FOR SALE

### MAITOLLEM CURTORIM

SUNDAY, 4<sup>th</sup> May 2025 6:30AM

Opp Carmel Chapel Curtorim

### FISH AVAILABLE

CATLA, CATFISH, INSUD, ROHU, PITOL, KILAPI, CHONOK

### ST. JOSEPH CHAPEL CONVOL

### Donation

### Coupon Draw

Date: 01/05/2025

1st Prize : 2380

2nd Prize: 2131

3rd Prize : 3142

**LOOKING FOR A SEA FACING PROPERTY IN GOA ON JOINT DEVELOPMENT AGREEMENT (JDA) BASIS**  
We are reputed builders who are constructing and developing residential projects in Goa since last five years with good know how and working of Goa Market. We are on the look out for sea facing, clear titled, settlement zone, good properties including in South Goa for development on joint development agreement (JDA) Basis. Depending on the size and the location, the properties will be developed and designed into residential villa projects or small boutique hotels, or good vacation stay property as suitable. The properties will be developed and constructed as per Goa town and country planning norms and applicable CRZ Rules, without any deviations to the same. Mutually commercial agreeable terms based on the output, will be discussed and decided mutually as per the applicable market norms. Interested property holders / stake holders may mail all information and property and proposal details to luminarizen@gmail.com

## YET ANOTHER TWIST: Man who killed six-yr-old girl was not her father, say police

Accused sent to 7-day police remand; cremation held in presence of biological father

Team Herald

**MARGAO:** In a startling development, it has emerged that Saleem Dambal, the man arrested for the brutal murder of a six-year-old girl in Macasana-Curtorim, is not her biological father, as previously believed. Police sources have confirmed that the actual father of the deceased child is Humanta Rao, who rushed to Maina-Curtorim upon learning of his daughter's death and was present during her cremation, which was conducted in Margao.

Dambal, a 28-year-old native of Gadag, Karnataka, had been absconding since the crime and was apprehended by Maina-Curtorim Police in his hometown. A police team was sent to Gadag, where he was arrested and brought back to Margao.

According to police, Dambal is unmarried and is alleged to have an extramarital relationship with the girl's mother. He had brought the victim, her mother, and younger brother to Macasana, where the four were living in a roadside hut. The heinous crime occurred late at

night when Dambal, allegedly under the influence of alcohol, struck the girl with a wooden rod over a petty argument, resulting in her death. After the assault, Dambal and the victim's mother took the unconscious child to the Primary Health Centre in Curtorim, where she was declared dead.

Immediately after the incident, Dambal fled the scene. Police investigations revealed that he had taken a lift from a passing vehicle, boarded a train from a nearby station to Thivim, and then travelled by bus to Karnataka in an effort to

evade arrest.

CCTV footage from nearby locations was also collected and analysed as part of the investigation. Based on the evidence and technical surveillance, Maina-Curtorim Police successfully tracked down the accused and took him into custody.

Maina-Curtorim Police have registered a case under Sections 103(1) and 115(2) of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS) 2023 and Section 8(2) of the Goa Children's Act. The accused has been remanded to seven days of

police custody as investigations continue.

The motive behind the gruesome act remains unclear. However, police sources said further inquiry is underway to establish the full chain of events and any underlying causes that led to the fatal assault.

This incident marks the second murder reported in the jurisdiction of the Maina-Curtorim Police Station within just 15 days. Earlier, a man from Odisha was found murdered in a rented room in Raia.