

Job ads for locals a must for private firms in Goa

State amends Employment Exchange Act; erring companies could face a penalty of up to Rs 30,000

Team Herald

PANJIM: The government on Thursday issued a clear warning to private firms, making it mandatory for them to issue job advertisements within the State on priority, failing which, they would face a penalty of up to Rs 30,000.

"The State Cabinet has approved an amendment to the Employment Exchange Act, making it mandatory for private companies to advertise job vacancies within the state, failing which they will have to pay a penalty of up to Rs

Non-compliance will attract penalties of Rs 5,000 for the first offence, Rs 10,000 for the second, and Rs 15,000 for the third. Larger firms with over 400 employees will face steeper fines, ranging from Rs 20,000 for the first violation to Rs 30,000 for repeat offences. A labour inspector will be appointed to monitor compliance

– Pramod Sawant, Chief Minister

30,000," Chief Minister Pramod Sawant told media persons after chairing a cabinet meeting at Mantralaya at Porvorim, adding "We have amended the Act making it mandatory for the private firms to issue job advertisements within the State on priority."

He said, "Non-compliance will attract penalties of Rs 5,000 for the first offence, Rs 10,000 for the second, and Rs 15,000 for the third. Larger firms with over 400 employees will face steeper fines, ranging from Rs 20,000 for the first violation to Rs 30,000 for repeat of-

fences. A labour inspector will be appointed to monitor compliance."

The CM said that the Cabinet has given approval for purchasing Nandadeep building owned by Mapusa Urban Bank for Rs 25 crore. This will help the bank under liquidation to return the money back to its depositors, he said.

Sawant also announced that the government will initiate stern action against private schools seeking donations or high fees from parents, if the stakeholders concerned file a complaint with the government.

FIGHT AGAINST DRUGS



Police personnel use water cannon to disperse members of Kerala Students Union (KSU) during their protest demanding government action against alleged drug mafia in Kerala, Kochi, Thursday

HC scanner on illegal structures

Team Herald

PANJIM: The Bombay High Court at Goa on Thursday directed the State government to consider categorising illegal structures across the state and formulate an action plan for their demolition in a phased manner.

The court was hearing a PIL suo motu on illegal structures in Goa. It recommended prioritising action against commercial illegal structures first, followed by those on government and Comunidade land. Additionally, the court suggested categorising illegal constructions in municipal and village panchayat areas for a more systematic approach to enforcement.

"The court is investigating the rampant illegal constructions across Goa. It can issue an order in this matter. We suggested that the court categorize the structures into different groups to take effective action. For example, focusing first on commercial constructions, and then turning attention to residential ones. Illegal structures on government land, road-widening areas, Comunidade lands, and tenanted paddy fields should be addressed initially," said Advocate Vithal Naik, who has been appointed as amicus curiae in the case.

The HC had previously instructed both the Advocate General and the amicus curiae to submit their recommendations on the issue.

Pro-Khalistan extremists target EAM convoy in London

MEA condemns incident, calls on UK govt to live up to diplomatic obligations

PTI, LONDON/NEW

DELHI: A pro-Khalistani protester attempted to breach the security perimeter outside Chatham House here as External Affairs Minister **S Jaishankar** left the think-tank, drawing condemnation from India over the provocative activities of this 'small group of separatists and extremists'.

The small group chanting pro-Khalistan slogans and waving separatist flags was barricaded and monitored by a significant police presence outside the venue on Wednesday night, with officers rushing to restrain the man as he ran past the barricade in an attempt to block the path of the minister's car pulling at an Indian flag.

He was swiftly taken aside by Metropolitan Police officers and no arrests have been reported so far.

The Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) in New Delhi condemned the incident of the security breach and called on the UK government to "live up to their



While the UK upholds the right to peaceful protest, any attempts to intimidate, threaten, or disrupt public events are completely unacceptable. The Metropolitan Police acted swiftly to address the situation, and we remain fully committed to ensuring the security of all our diplomatic visitors, in line with our international obligations

– Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office spokesperson

diplomatic obligations". "We have seen the footage of a breach of security during the visit of the external affairs minister to the UK," MEA spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal said in New Delhi.

"We condemn the provocative activities of this small group of separatists and extremists. We deplore the misuse of democratic freedoms by such

elements. We expect the host government in such cases to fully live up to their diplomatic obligations," he said.

The UK strongly condemned the security breach, saying such attempts to "intimidate, threaten, or disrupt" public events are "completely unacceptable".

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Exorbitant airfares unacceptable: PAC chief Venugopal

PTI, NEW DELHI: Public Accounts Committee Chairman K C Venugopal on Thursday said exorbitant airfares during festival and peak seasons are not at all acceptable, and urged aviation regulator DGCA to control such spikes in ticket rates.

Venugopal, who along with PAC members visited the Delhi airport, also flagged concerns about increasing User Development Fee (UDF) at airports and said the issue will be thoroughly examined by the panel.

Apart from the Indira Gandhi International Airport (IGIA), they also visited Kherki Daula Toll Plaza and Dwarka Expressway in the national capital, and held discussions with the officials concerned.

Talking to PTI videos after the airport visit, Venugopal said, "one of the most important issues which we raised today is (about) the exorbitant ticket rates in festival seasons and peak seasons (that) are not at all acceptable. DGCA has to control (it). There are... provisions to control these exorbitant fare hikes".

There have been persisting concerns about steep increases in airfares during festival and peak seasons.

Venugopal, who had also served as Minister of State for Civil Aviation during the UPA regime, said the panel is discussing the fees, tariffs, and tolls on national highways and airports, especially UDF, which are going to affect the common man in a bigger way.

"We are conducting a thorough examination of all these things. As part of the process, Venugopal said they visited Delhi airport and held a meeting with airport authorities and civil aviation ministry officials. Our major concern is reports of an increase in UDF (User Development Fee), which will pose a bigger problem for common people.

"We are raising our concerns and talking to the concerned ministry to not take such steps," he said.

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Foreign assets worth Rs 29,000 crore declared in I-T Dept campaign

PTI, NEW DELHI: More than 30,000 taxpayers have declared foreign assets worth Rs 29,208 crore following Income-tax department's special 'Trust First' campaign that urged them to report income earned overseas accurately, official sources said Thursday.

The department and its administrative body – Central Board of Direct Taxes (CBDT) – began sending SMSes and emails on November 17, 2024 as part of this campaign.

A total of 19,501 taxpayers with "high" foreign account balances or "significant" foreign income from interest or dividends above a specified threshold were contacted.

These communications, according to the sources, requested taxpayers to revise their Income Tax Returns (ITRs) to reflect their foreign assets and income correctly.

Official sources told PTI that 24,678 taxpayers reviewed their ITRs and 5,483 taxpayers filed "belated" returns for the assessment year 2024-25 in which they declared foreign assets worth Rs 29,208 crore and "additional" foreign income of Rs 1,089.88 crore.

A total of 6,734 taxpayers also "revised" their residential status from resident to non-resident, they said.

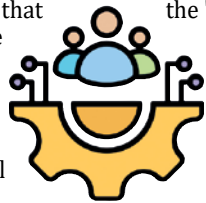
The I-T department had adopted the "Trust First" approach which prioritises voluntary compliance by taxpayers over enforcement or action or sending verification notices, they said.

This 'foreign assets' campaign was part of this philosophy which the Union government and finance minister Nirmala Sitharaman have also been underlining during their speeches including during Budget presentation, they said.

"Instead of immediate verification or intrusive actions, the tax department has trusted taxpayers first, giving them ample opportunity to make true and complete disclosures of their foreign income and assets," an official said.

About 62% of the taxpayers who were "nudged" as part of this campaign have responded positively, "voluntarily" "revising" their ITRs to declare foreign assets and income, the official said.

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A bridge connecting nothing to nowhere

Locals fear infrastructure built for farmers may open floodgates to real estate projects

AUGUSTO RODRIGUES

GANDAULIM BRIDGE, CUMBARJUA: The Krishi Setu bridge, constructed to assist 67 families in transporting farming equipment to cultivate 30 hectares of paddy fields, in Gandaolim, Cumbarjua, stands under scrutiny a year after its inauguration.

Despite being completed and opened to the public in February 2024, the land remains uncultivated, raising concerns among locals about potential real estate developments rather than agricultural benefits.

"The fields were not being sown before and now that the bridge has been completed, they are still left barren. There are rumours circulating that the government intends to build a road along the river front that leads to the bridge," said a worried local resident Pravin Naik, who fears that the project was never truly meant for farmers.

Cumbarjua Sarpanch Sachin P Gaude, however, questioned the farmers for not using the



The 50-metre single span arched bridge built by Goa State Infrastructure Development Corporation at a cost of Rs 3 crore, at Gandaolim in Cumbarjua. (Top right) The gated entry point preventing free access to the bridge

bridge. "The bridge was built because the farmers wanted a bridge to carry their equipment and it is best they answer, why they are not sowing their fields despite the government building a bridge for them," said Gaude.

"Before the bridge was built, we needed to requisition a ferry from the River Navigation Department (RND) to help the farmers ferry their tractors and it was a cumbersome process," said Gaude indicating that the Krishi Setu

was intended to ease this inconvenience.

However there are questions being asked as to why there is no road but a path to the bridge and why a gate with a padlock prevents free access to the bridge. Also, on crossing the river, the bridge again opens to vast fields or barren land that remains uncultivated.

Harish Adkonkar, Chairman of the Goa State Infrastructure Development Corporation (GSIDC), which undertook the project for a cost of Rs 3 crore,

refused to indulge questions on the purpose of the bridge or any post-construction concerns. According to the GSIDC website, construction of the fifty-meter single span arched bridge commenced on October 4, 2021, and was officially inaugurated by Chief Minister Pramod Sawant on February 24, 2024.

"Our job was to build the bridge and give it to them. It is not our problem how it is used thereafter because our involvement was in the construction,"

stated Adkonkar.

Sarpanch Gaude promised to investigate. "I will meet with the farmers to understand why they are not cultivating their fields," he said, suggesting that last year's late completion of construction work may have played a role. However, when reminded that the bridge was inaugurated well before the monsoon season, he hesitated, saying, "I cannot speak on behalf of the farmers."

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INDIA'S GOT LATENT ROW

Allahbadia, Apoorva appear before NCW, express regret

PTI, NEW DELHI: Social media personalities Ranveer Allahbadia and Apoorva Mukhija appeared before the National Commission for Women on Thursday in connection with the derogatory remarks made on comic Samay Raina's show 'India's Got Latent' and expressed regret over the entire episode, sources said.

Producers of the show – Saurabh Bothra and Tushar Poojari – and lawyers of comic Jaspreet Singh and YouTuber Ashish Chanchlani also appeared before the panel, they said.

They all appeared individually in front of the Commission. Sources said Allahbadia and Mukhija were quizzed for hours and they expressed regret over the whole episode.

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MAX. TEMP 35.2 °C
MIN. TEMP 25.2 °C

idharudhar



Not 'government'! 'G' stands for 'gunman'