

HC comes to the rescue of 37 daily wage SAG workers

Directs Sports Authority of Goa to grant parity to employees on a par with others

Team Herald

PANJIM: The High Court of Bombay has directed the Sports Authority of Goa (SAG) to treat 37 daily wage workers on par with 186 employees who were earlier granted temporary status and related benefits. The Court has also ruled that these workers be made eligible for the salary and allowances applicable to the 186 workers.

Swati Gaad and 36 others, employed as daily wage workers, had filed a writ petition seeking directions to the State authorities, including the SAG, to treat them on par with regular employees or those who had already been conferred with temporary status. The petitioners also demanded eligibility for salary, allowances, and all consequential

benefits, similar to those extended to 186 employees through an SAG order dated 21 February 2019.

The State government had introduced the 'Daily Wages (Grant of Temporary Status) Scheme' on 14 May 1997 to regulate the conferring of temporary status upon daily wage workers. According to its clause on applicability, the scheme applied to daily workers employed in various government departments as of the date of issuance of the notification.

Subsequently, on 6 April 2000, the government modified the scheme, making it effective from January 2000. It also substituted the requirement of "should have rendered a continuous service of at least five years as on the date of issuance of this Notification" with the

more inclusive phrase "who have rendered or on completing a continuous service of at least five years on or after the date of issuance of this Notification."

Advocate Shivraj Gaonkar, arguing on behalf of the petitioners, sought parity with the 186 Lower Division Clerks (LDCs). In a detailed representation, he urged for a similar benefit to be extended to his clients, arguing that the workers who had already been granted temporary status performed identical duties and held the same designations as the petitioners. It was further submitted that the petitioners had each completed over five years of service and were, therefore, eligible for conferment of temporary status.

Despite this, after deliberations at various levels, the

Directorate of Sports and Youth Affairs on 8 September 2023 rejected the proposal to grant temporary status to 41 daily wage and 65 contract staff of the SAG.

Additional Government Advocate Shubham Priolkar attempted to justify this decision by arguing that the petitioners were initially appointed on daily wages in 2011, but their services were discontinued in 2014. He added that the petitioners were reappointed on different dates in 2017, again on daily wages, on a purely compassionate basis, and have remained in service since.

However, the Court noted that the government advocate failed to demonstrate any material distinction between the 186 LDCs and Multi-Tasking Staff (MTSS) and the 37 petitioners. It

observed that, although the petitioners' services may have been interrupted in 2014, there was no dispute that they were re-engaged by the SAG in 2017 as daily wage workers. By the time they submitted their representation to the authorities, they had each completed five years of continuous service, qualifying them for 'temporary status' under the same terms granted to the 186 LDCs.

The Court ruled that the petitioners could not be denied this benefit, even on the grounds that the Scheme applied only to those working in government departments. It further emphasised that the 186 LDCs were granted temporary status by the SAG, and not by the State government, thereby supporting the petitioners' claim.

HC directs Dy Collector to complete probe into illegalities in 20-pt programme at Socorro

Petitioner alleges his structure was selectively targeted and razed due to political vendetta

Team Herald

PANJIM: The High Court of Bombay at Goa has directed the Deputy Collector, Bardez to complete enquiry in the implementation of the 20-point programme at Socorro and to submit the report to the North Goa Collector, within six months followed by an appropriate action by the government against the erring persons.

While hearing a writ petition filed by Nilesh Chari of Socorro, the High Court bench comprising Justice Bharati Dangre and Justice Nivedita P Mehta, found that the 20-point programme has been misused in Socorro village, Bardez as there are multiple encroachers and constructions carried out are more than the permissible limits and in some cases requisite permissions are also not sought.

The Deputy Collector and SDM, Bardez in his affidavit stated that the 20-point programme contemplated land admeasuring 100 sq mts to be provided to the eligible persons for construction of houses and also that in case the allottee had constructed house beyond 100 sq mts then the

same may be regularised up to the extent of 50 sq mts by paying a penalty.

The deputy Collector referred to two reports of the joint site inspection, the first by the Inspector of Survey and Land Records, Mapusa, demarcating the location of houses, qua the original plots as seen in the plan prepared in 1971. The second report of the Bardez Taluka Mamlatdar dated 08/10/2024, prepared by the Talathi of Socorro Panchayat providing necessary details.

The Deputy Collector based on the two reports by the Inspector of Survey and Land Records, Mapusa and the Bardez Taluka Mamlatdar stated that originally 31 allotments were granted under the 20-point programme scheme, while 67 structures exist on survey No. 12/1 of village Socorro and 9 plots are occupied by the families of the original allottees. However, the remaining plots and structures do not align with the records of allotment, raising a question about they being in an unauthorised occupation of the said premises.

But Advocate Gener-

al Devidas Pangam told the Court that the State government is cognizant of misuse of the implementation of the 20-point programme scheme at Socorro and it will direct an inquiry to be conducted by the Deputy Collector of Bardez Taluka, who after adhering to principles of natural justice and carrying out appropriate site inspection/surveys and on inspection of the necessary records, shall take action against those who are not covered within the said programme and also against the structures which are not compliant.

AG Pangam also submitted that since the issue is pertaining to residential accommodation and people are occupying the premises, the authorities will have to tread carefully and for completion of the entire procedure, the authorities will be granted, longer time.

Meanwhile, last week, the authorities demolished the encroachment of the petitioner, who is also residing in the 20-point programme. The petitioner alleged that his structure was razed due to political vendetta by a Minister.

Five arrested in IPL online betting raids

Team Herald

PANJIM: In two separate cases, the Crime Branch and the Porvorim police arrested five individuals for accepting online bets on the ongoing IPL cricket matches.

Crime Branch officials apprehended three persons from Telangana for operating an online IPL betting racket during the match between Lucknow Super Giants and Mumbai Indians, played on Friday.

The accused - Tigulla Shrinivas (39), Gaddala Kiran Kumar (37), and Annathapuram Shrivankumar (36) - were caught red-handed in a flat at Alto Porvorim.

Police seized three mobile phones, a laptop, and

other accessories valued at approximately Rs 1.8 lakh. All three accused have been taken into custody.

In another case, the Porvorim police busted an IPL cricket betting racket and arrested two persons from Socorro.

Jigneshkumar Ashwinbhai (46) and Zala Kishankumar Jayantibhai (29), both hailing from Kheda, Gujarat, were caught red-handed while accepting bets via mobile phone and online platforms on the same T-20 match between Lucknow Super Giants and Mumbai Indians.

Police seized two mobile phones, one laptop, and other accessories, all worth approximately Rs 80,000.

Feasibility of water taxis in Goa under consideration: Minister

Team Herald

PANJIM: The State government is exploring the feasibility of operating water taxis in Goa, which would benefit both locals and tourists, according to Minister for River Navigation, Subhash Phal Dessai.

Phal Dessai conveyed this during a meeting with a delegation from the Goa Chamber of Commerce and Industry (GCCCI), which included its logistics committee chairman Chandrakant Gawas, director general Sanjay Amonkar, and San-ket Kaskar.

The GCCCI submitted a memorandum concerning the operation and management of ferryboat services in the State, aiming to enhance safety, efficiency, and financial sustainability.

The delegation suggested scrapping nine unserviceable ferryboats, which had become obsolete and were no longer capable of providing safe and reliable service. These ferries are currently lying idle in the River Nav-



igation Department (RND) yard at Betim. The GCCCI requested that the unserviceable ferries be scrapped at the earliest in order to reduce operational costs and free up space. The freed-up area, it proposed, could be converted into a parking area for private yachts and crafts, which could generate additional revenue for the government.

The GCCCI also strongly recommended discontinuing ferries operating with a single engine, citing significant safety risks, particularly in the event of engine failure mid-river. It further suggested implementing a Public-Private Partnership (PPP) model for acquiring and operating new ferries, taking into account the financial burden on the government in procuring and maintaining them. These

YOUTH TALENT



Students perform at the inclusive and accessible 'Khoshi Lokanchem Fest' hosted by Goa College of Home Science, Panjim and curated by Marius Fernandes known as Goencho at the college premises at Campal, Panjim, on Saturday

GSAI urges maritime reforms for seafarers

Team Herald

MARGAO: In a significant move coinciding with World Maritime Day, the Goan Seamen Association of India (GSAI) has sent a formal appeal to Union Shipping Minister Sarbananda Sonowal, advocating for comprehensive welfare reforms for Indian seafarers.

The letter, dated April 5, addressed to both the Union Shipping Minister and the Director General of Shipping (DGP) Shyam Jagannathan, highlights critical concerns regarding stagnant welfare contributions that have remained unchanged for over a decade.

While addressing the media in Margao, GSAI President Frank Viegas expressed appreciation for the Directorate General of Shipping's ongoing efforts in upholding the dignity, safety, and welfare of Indian seafarers globally. However, he emphasized the urgent need for increased welfare contributions from shipping companies to the Seafarers Welfare Fund So-

ciety (SWFS).

The organisation pointed out that contributions from three key sectors have seen no increment despite rising costs: foreign flag - foreign going vessels, Indian flag - foreign going vessels, and Indian flag - home trade vessels. This stagnancy, according to GSAI, has directly affected the benefits available to retired or distressed seafarers and their families, with existing welfare contributions falling short of meeting even basic welfare expectations amid rising living costs, medical expenses, and socio-economic challenges.

The association has proposed several key reforms, including mandatory gratuity contributions from all shipping companies for eligible Indian seafarers in accordance with Indian labour laws. Additionally, they have called for direct government support for the Seafarers Welfare Fund to enhance financial security for maritime workers.

Fourth Mhadei PRAWAH meeting scheduled at Bengaluru on April 22

Team Herald

PANJIM: Chief Minister Pramod Sawant on Friday said that the fourth meeting of Mhadei PRAWAH will be held at Bengaluru on April 22.

Speaking to reporters at the Mantralaya at Porvorim, Sawant said, "We have submitted the site inspection report before the Supreme Court. We have raised our objections wherever required."

Recently, the draft agenda for discussion was circulated, while the final agenda and venue details were to be confirmed in due course.

Members wishing to add agenda points have been requested to communicate them to the concerned office at the earliest, states a communiqué by Mahadai PRAWAH, Ministry of Jal Shakti, Government of India, to its members and concerned persons in the three riparian states - Goa, Maharashtra and Karnataka.

The last meeting was held in Goa last year wherein the authorities had decided to seek a legal opinion from the central government regarding the Kalasa Nala joint inspection in Karnataka, as requested by the Goa government.

Taxi driver beaten by tourists over collision in Nerul

PANJIM: Joaquim D'Souza, a taxi driver from Tuem-Pernem, was brutally assaulted by a group of tourists travelling in a West Bengal-registered vehicle in Nerul on Friday morning. Recounting the attack, D'Souza stated, "Four persons attacked me in the morning at Nerul. First, they crashed into the rear side of my vehicle, and when I confronted them and asked for compensation, five of them attacked me." The incident has raised concerns over the safety of taxi drivers in Goa, particularly in disputes involving tourists. Police are currently investigating the case, and further action is expected against the accused.

Bishops' forum issues norms for watching Mass online

Stresses it can't replace physical presence, guidelines aim to preserve dignity and sanctity of liturgy in digital age

Team Herald

MARGAO: The Conference of Catholic Bishops of India (CCBI) has released a detailed set of directives governing how Mass and other liturgical events are to be shared online. These new norms, titled "Guidelines for the Electronic Transmission of the Celebration of the Eucharist and Other Liturgical Services", were officially promulgated and shared recently with the public.

According to the CCBI, the purpose of the guidelines is to safeguard the theological and spiritual sanctity of liturgical celebrations that are transmitted via electronic means. Archbishop of Goa and Da-

man Filipe Neri Cardinal Ferrão, President of the CCBI, addressed the faithful through a circular, underscoring the Church's intention behind the move.

"These guidelines are intended to ensure that the sacred liturgy, when transmitted through electronic means, remains faithful to its theological, spiritual and liturgical integrity, and continues to be a source of grace for the faithful who participate through such means," he wrote.

He further stressed that while online participation may offer spiritual nourishment, it is not a replacement for the actual presence of the faithful at the Eucharistic celebration.

Drawing from Church teachings, Cardinal Ferrão pointed to the Second Vatican Council's Sacrosanctum Concilium, which affirms the real presence of Christ in the liturgy.

He said, "The transmission of the Eucharistic Celebration and other liturgical services via electronic media can provide spiritual benefit to the faithful, it is not a substitute for actual, physical participation in the liturgical assembly, which remains the ideal and normative form of participation."

The new document sets out specific instructions for bishops, clergy, and laypeople engaged in broadcasting liturgical events.

Cardinal Ferrão expressed hope that the guidelines would deepen the faithful's engagement with the liturgy and reinforce the reverence it demands, whether celebrated physically or viewed remotely. "May these guidelines serve to enhance the dignity of the liturgy and promote a deeper participation of the faithful in the mysteries of salvation, whether in person or through electronic media, always maintaining due reverence and ecclesial communion," he said.

The drafting of these norms followed in-depth deliberations at the CCBI's executive meetings held in May and September last

year, culminating in their approval during the 36th Plenary Assembly in February this year. With the document now officially in effect, all members of the Latin Church in India—including bishops, priests, deacons, religious and laypeople—are expected to follow its provisions when involved in the digital dissemination of liturgical services.

By establishing a unified approach to how Mass is shared online, the CCBI hopes to protect the solemnity of the liturgy and promote more conscious and respectful participation, even when the faithful cannot be physically present. The full text of the guidelines is available online.

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