

Four 'unhygienic' kitchens in Ashwem, Morjim shut

Food and Drugs Administration issues strict warnings to remaining establishments on proper hygiene

Team Herald

PERNEM: The Food and Drugs Administration (FDA) of Pernem taluka inspected 19 restaurants and hotels in Ashwem and Morjim and ordered closure of four kitchens found operating in unhygienic conditions.

The inspections carried out on late Wednesday evening revealed major hygiene violations in some of the establishments, resulting in the closure of four kitchens due to unsatisfactory cleanliness standards including broken floor tiles and drainage issues, which need immediate repair, the FDA inspectors said.

Strict warnings were issued to the remaining establishments to maintain proper hygiene.

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FILTHY CONDITIONS
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erating with satisfactory kitchen conditions, some minor non-compliance issues were noted. As a result, owners were issued notices, instructing them to address the issues.

A FDA official noted, "Overall, hygiene levels in the inspected establishments were quite satisfactory. However, the four premises that were shut down will need to address

Overall, hygiene levels in the inspected establishments were quite satisfactory. However, the four premises that were shut down will need to address civil issues such as tile repairs and drainage improvements before resuming operations -FDA official

civil issues such as tile repairs and drainage improvements before resuming operations." Additionally, the FDA has issued special instructions to vendors in Mapusa and the Goa Medical College (GMC), Bambolim, asking them to ensure that sanitary practices are strictly followed.

The ongoing inspections aim to ensure public health and safety standards are upheld across the State.

Cabbies fume over suspension of permission renewals

Term the current regulations impractical & detrimental; threaten to hit the streets in protest

Team Herald

PANJIM: Raising concerns about the suspension of permission renewals and vehicle replacements after 12 years, the members of the All Goa Rent-a-Cab Association questioned the practicality of current regulations and warned of protests in future.

The association members met with Assistant Director of Transport Ladu Gaonkar to address critical issues, including car replacement policies, traffic challans, and other operational grievances.

Ramdas Palkar, President of the North Goa Rent-a-Cab Association, expressed concerns regarding the suspension of permission renewals and vehicle replacements after 12 years of operation. "We need to know how to proceed. Should we shut down our businesses? The current regulations are impractical and detrimental. It seems we may have to take to the



streets in protest. We are struggling to understand these rules."

Nitesh Chodankar, Vice President of the North Goa Rent-a-Cab Association, highlighted previous assurances from Chief Minister Pramod Sawant regarding the resumption of renewals and replacements. "While renewals briefly restarted, interventions by the Transport Minister and others have halted the replacement process," he said.

Chodankar questioned the rationale behind mandatory speed governors and VLTD (Vehicle Location Tracking Devices) when vehicles are already equipped with trackers. "The cost of VLTD installation is around

Rs 12,000, with renewal fees of approximately Rs 4,000. Additionally, we are now required to pay a one-time road tax instead of the previous annual payment. A new rule stipulates that challans for traffic offences will be sent directly to rent-a-cab or rent-a-bike operators. However, by the time we receive the challan, the customer has already left and refuses to pay. Facing fines three to four times a month would ruin our businesses," he added.

Chodankar stated, "If the situation persists, all rent-a-bike and rent-a-car operators should consider surrendering our licences and registering our vehicles as private, as private vehicles

are not subject to these regulations."

The Directorate of Transport's recent decision to cease processing licences or permits under the rent-a-cab scheme, along with a public notice advising against submitting new applications, has further exacerbated the situation.

Rent-a-cab owners also reported instances of tourist intimidation by tourist taxi drivers at Mopa International Airport. One specific incident involved a tourist taxi driver allegedly seizing a tourist family's luggage from a rent-a-cab, placing it in their taxi, and pressuring the family to use their service.

Chodankar said, "Tourists should have the freedom to choose their mode of transport. While we respect all taxi operators, some at the airport are acting aggressively, seemingly because the airport is near their village. Who authorised them to stop our vehicles? Are they the RTO or the police?"

STINKY SITE



Waste dumped along the St Cruz-Bambolim service road of National Highway. The site has turned into an eyesore

LUPENDRA NAIK

Honda accident victim succumbs to injuries in GMC

Team Herald

PANJIM: Sahadev Gawas (28), a resident of Dabem, succumbed to his injuries sustained in an accident at Wadakade, Honda in Sattari.

According on April 8, Sahadev's scooter was hit by a tipper truck driven by Santosh Patekar, who allegedly veered to the wrong side while heading from Pissurlem to Honda, which led to the collision.

Sahadev, who was seriously injured, was shifted to Goa Medical College and Hospital at Bambolim where he succumbed to his injuries.

Siolim house owner booked for not letting police know of Atala stay

Team Herald

PANJIM: Following the arrest of alleged Israeli drug lord Yaniv Benaim, alias Atala with drugs worth Rs 8.7 lakh, action has now been initiated against the house owner for not intimating the police that he had rented out his premises to a foreign national.

The move comes after the Anti Narcotic Cell (ANC) DySP Nerlon Albuquerque yesterday filed a complaint against Param Varty, 36, from Siolim, for leasing his studio apartment to Atala and failing to fill a 'C' form regarding Israeli's stay with the Anjuna Police.

The DySP stated that as per the law, hotels and guest house owners have to mandatorily submit the details through the 'C' form to the local police if there are foreigners staying with them which Varty had failed to do so.

"Whether a person has an Aadhaar Card, Passport or any other document, the details of the tenants/guests, basically foreigners, has to be furnished to the local police station," Albuquerque said.

Sources in the police revealed that the ANC sleuths had demanded the name of the officer and the documents submitted by Atala to obtain an Aadhaar Card in a nationalised bank. However, they were yet to receive the same as there were a couple of holidays in Maharashtra where the UIDAI headquarters are based



Police sources revealed that Varty had taken 19 studio apartments on rent from original owners and was subletting them to tourists on a daily basis through leave and licence agreement. He has been booked under section 16 of Foreigner's Order 1948 (any foreign national found staying the country by violating visa conditions) and under Section 14 C of Foreigner's Act 1946 (if convicted, is liable for penalty and imprisonment of five years).

In Goa, a leave and license agreement allows the licensor to permit a licensee to temporarily occupy their property for a specific period, without transferring ownership, and

is often used for residential or commercial rentals.

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It may be recalled that Atala, whose arrest 15 years ago had exposed the police-politicians-drug mafia nexus and resulted in the suspension of seven policemen, was arrested early on Saturday, April 6, by the Anti-Narcotics Cell (ANC) with drugs worth Rs 8.7 lakh.

Calangute schools report higher attendance

Team Herald

CALANGUTE: The two Calangute schools which had seen low attendance by students since the beginning of the new academic year on Monday reported increased attendance on Thursday, with senior officials stating that the reports of "mass boycott" are misleading.

The boycott was called by parent-teacher association (PTA) of the two schools to express their opposition to the shift in the start of the new academic year to April 7.

Little Flower of Jesus school said 349 students were present on Thursday. Requesting anonymity, a senior management official said, "The call given by the parent-teacher association (PTA) was only for a boycott on Monday. The low attendance by students on subsequent days was because many of them have gone to their native places and they have their return tickets booked in advance and could not return in time for the commencement of classes. The boy-

cott by parents and students was only for Monday. The teachers have not been part of that decision. The attendance was low on Monday, but it has increased and 349 students were present on Thursday."

Meanwhile, St Joseph High School Headmaster Bro Bhaktinathan, in a statement on Thursday clarified: "Schools of Calangute, specifically St Joseph High School, boycotted the reopening of the school on April 7 was incorrect. It is the parents, specifically the PTAs of the

schools that boycotted the classes by not sending their children and the school is functioning as per the instruction of the Directorate of Education with teachers teaching in their respective classrooms with the minimum students that have been attending school."

"As per our school records, only eight students from Class IX and nine students from Class X were present on April 9. The news report claimed that 89 students from Class IX 9 and X attended school which is completely false," he said.

'Skill-on-Wheels' initiative launched

Team Herald

PANJIM: In a significant step toward enhancing safety awareness across the State, Chief Minister Pramod Sawant on Thursday launched the Rs 2 crore 'Skill-on-Wheels' programme, aimed at delivering hands-on industrial and occupational safety training to rural communities.

The 'Skill-on-Wheels' initiative was launched on the opening day of the three-day Goa Occupational Safety and Health Expo and Summit 2025 organised by the Inspectorate of Factories and Boilers at Dr Shyam Prasad Mukherjee Indoor Stadium, Bambolim. Minister for Factories and Boilers Nilkanth Halarnkar, Secretary (Factories & Boilers) Sanjit Rodrigues, IAS and Chief Inspector of Factories & Boilers Anant Pangam were also present.

"Skill-on-Wheels" will not only empower rural youth with practical knowledge but also help create a safer and more resilient Goa, said the Chief Minister.

The initiative is expected to roll out across various talukas in the coming months, engaging with educational institutions, local industries, and community groups.

The mobile training unit will provide hands-on industrial safety training in rural areas. The initiative will also introduce safety awareness in schools and colleges, focusing on industrial fire and electrical safety, disaster management, and mental well-being.

The initiative will also reach schools and colleges, equipping students with essential knowledge on safety protocols and preparedness.

The mobile training units under this programme will focus on key areas such as industrial fire safety, electrical hazard management, disaster preparedness, and mental well-being.

Sawant emphasised that the initiative is designed to bridge the gap in safety education outside urban centres and foster a safety-first mindset among youth and workers alike.

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