

Private bus operators slam revamped 'Mhaji Bus' scheme

Say govt should stop taking them for a ride; first clear pending subsidies

Team Herald

PANJIM: The All Goa Private Bus Owners Association (AGPBOA) has opposed the revamped 'Mhaji Bus' Scheme notified by the State government. AGPBOA General Secretary Sudip Tamankar said, "This scheme is jumla by the government. We have no faith in what the government has notified because it is yet to clear our pending subsidies. We are demanding a subsidy of Rs 34 per kilometre operated and not Rs 3, because the government was paying Rs 34 per kilometre to private bus operators on the Margao-Canacona route when they opted for the pilot 'Mhaji Bus' scheme."



REVAMPED SCHEME

- Private bus operators to receive a subsidy of Rs 3 per km operated
- 50% reimbursement of annual insurance premium, capped at Rs 30,000
- Operators replacing buses to receive Rs 10 lakh aid

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— Sudip Tamankar, AGPBOA general secretary

"In the revised scheme, the government has notified the annual insurance premium at Rs 30,000, but it

has yet to reimburse the Rs 20,000 insurance premium since 2017. Besides Rs 2.5 lakh subsidy for the replace-

ment of buses more than 15 years old is pending, and the government has now notified a subsidy of Rs 10 lakh.

The government should stop fooling bus operators and first clear the pending subsidies. Only then will

we decide on the revamped scheme," Tamankar said. The State government notified the revamped

'Mhaji Bus' Scheme 2025, replacing its pilot version from May 16. Under the revised scheme, eligible private bus operators will receive a subsidy of Rs 3 per kilometre operated. The scheme also includes a 50 per cent reimbursement of the annual insurance premium, capped at Rs 30,000. Additionally, operators replacing buses that are 15 years old or more with new buses (minimum seating capacity of 27) will receive financial assistance of Rs 10 lakh. Operators will retain the full fare revenue collected from passengers and are not required to deposit any amount with KTCL, the notification stated.

Private bus operators opting for the scheme will be required to install and maintain a functional Vehicle Location Tracking Device (VLTID) and Automatic Ticketing Machine (ATM) in the bus for fare collection.

FDA raids: Misbranded ice candies destroyed, restaurants shut

Team Herald

PANJIM/CALANGUTE: In a series of coordinated raids, the Food and Drugs Administration (FDA) has destroyed misbranded ice candies worth Rs 65,000 and shut down multiple eateries across Goa for flouting hygiene and labelling norms.

On Thursday night, FDA officials inspected 13 premises across Mapusa Housing Board, Tar Bridge and Khorlim. The team, led by Director Shweta Dessai and comprising officials Richard Noronha, Rajaram Patil, Shailesh Shenvi, Safia Khan, Sneha Gaude, Sujata Shetgaonkar, Amit Mandrekar, and Lenin de Sa, also collected banana samples from the Mapusa Yard for testing.

Three chicken centres at the Housing Board were fined Rs 5,000 each under Section 69 of the Food Safety and Standards Act, 2006, and ordered to shut down. Health Minister Vishwa-

jit Rane confirmed the action in a post on X, stating: "Our operations persist in Calangute, with teams on high alert. We're ensuring every vendor meets the highest safety standards."

In the coastal belt, six restaurants in Arpora and Calangute were closed following FDA checks on 11 establishments. The closures were due to unhygienic conditions, while others were directed to correct minor discrepancies. Among the premises raided was a biryani kitchen supplying food to numerous outlets in Calangute.

A large quantity of mislabelled confectionery items, falsely sold as chocolates, was also seized. "These are not chocolates. They are confectionery items made with vegetable oil," FDA officials clarified.

Expressing concern, officials noted, "Despite extensive media coverage, restaurants continue to violate rules. We expected better compliance."

Father, son granted bail in tourist murder case

Team Herald

MAPUSA: The District Judge-2 and Additional Sessions Court, Mapusa, has granted conditional bail to Agnelo Silveira and his son Shubert Allan Jude Silveira, both residents of Tivaivaddo, Calangute, who were arrested on charges of allegedly killing a 28-year-old tourist from Hyderabad on New Year's Eve.

District Judge-2 and Additional Sessions Judge Ram S Prabhudessai ordered their release on a bond of Rs 25,000 each, with one surety in the same amount. The court directed them to provide their permanent address and mobile phone numbers, and not to leave the State or country without its permission. They have also been asked to submit details of their passports, including copies, for the court's records.

The alleged accused have been instructed not to interfere with or attempt to influence, directly or indirectly, any witnesses, and not to tamper with the evidence in the case.

Both were operating a shack on Calangute beach at the time of the incident.

While granting conditional bail, the Court observed that the accused had cooperated with the police from the day of the incident. They surrendered voluntarily and did not attempt to destroy evidence, including CCTV footage. The judge remarked that if the accused had intended to commit murder, they would likely have also attacked others who were accompanying the deceased, which they did not do.

Advocates Michael Nazareth and Vinayak Porob appeared on behalf of the accused.

LET IT RAIN, WE WILL DIG



Even as the PWD has banned the digging of roads across the State, an earthmover pressed into service by the Electricity Department was found digging trenches along the road at Sodiem-Sioim. Villagers wonder whether the dug up roads will ever be repaired before monsoon

IAS, IPS officers transferred out of Goa

Team Herald

PANJIM: The Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA), New Delhi, on Friday effected the transfer of IAS and IPS officers serving in the State. In a major bureaucratic reshuffle, 66 Indian Administrative Service (IAS) and Indian Police Service (IPS) officers of the AGMUT cadre were transferred by the MHA.

According to the official order, IAS officers Chief Electoral Officer Ramesh Verma, Secretary (Environment) Arun Kumar Mishra and Secretary (Tourism) Suneel Anchipaka have been transferred from Goa to Delhi. Former North Goa Collector Sneha Gitte, Aswin Chandru (who was Secretary to the Chief Minister), and North Goa Collector Yashaswini B have been transferred from Goa to Arunachal Pradesh.

IAS officers Sanjiv Gadkar and Shakeel Ul Rehman Rather have been transferred from Jammu and Kashmir to Goa, while Yetindra Maralkar and Santosh G Sukhadeve have been transferred from Ladakh to Goa. Arjun Mohan has been transferred from Lakshadweep to Goa. Notably, Sanjiv Gadkar and Yetindra Maralkar are IAS officers from Goa.

In the IPS cadre, Omvir Singh Bishnoi, who was serving as Inspector General of Prisons, Goa, has been transferred to Delhi. Keshav Ram Chaurasia, IPS, has been transferred from Delhi to Goa.

CM promises to release funds to Street Providence

Team Herald

PANJIM: Members of the NGO Street Providence met Chief Minister Pramod Sawant at his official residence in Panjim on Friday to voice their grievances regarding the delay in funding and the lack of mental health infrastructure in Goa.

Speaking to reporters after the meeting, Donald Fernandes, Founder Trustee of Street Providence, said, "Today the Chief Minister called us for a meeting. He has looked into our grievances. He has assured us that within the next seven days, he will provide funds for the next two months."

Bosco George, a volunteer from the organisation, added that while some pro-

cedural formalities remain, the Chief Minister was receptive. "Some nitty-gritty is left to be done because now the funds are to be released from the Social Welfare Department instead of the Women and Child Development Department. However, it was suggested that funds can be given in advance from the existing budget so that homes are not affected," he said.

Fernandes noted that, until March, funds for

Street Providence were being disbursed through the Women and Child Development Department. However, since April, the file has been transferred to the Social Welfare Department, causing a disruption in the release of financial support.

During the meeting, the NGO raised several broader concerns regarding the care of vulnerable individuals in the State. "The Chief Minister was briefed that there are no shelter homes in Goa, there

is no ward for children in The Institute of Psychiatry and Human Behaviour (IPHB), Goa Police are not supporting people on the street, and that districts in Goa do not have mental hospitals," Fernandes stated.

He also emphasised that Street Providence will no longer accept mentally ill individuals from other states. "We told the Chief Minister that we will not take people with mental illness from other states,

which the Chief Minister said he will write to other states to take back their people and take care of them," Fernandes said. Additionally, the NGO submitted a proposal to conduct outreach visits in villages across Goa to identify individuals in the early stages of disability. "We gave a proposal to visit villages across Goa and get people to come out and register themselves if they are having mental health issues."

— Bosco George, Volunteer

Govt amends iron ore dump policy

Team Herald

PANJIM: The State government has amended its policy on the regulation of iron ore dump handling, introducing a new financial obligation in the form of a premium to be paid by applicants, particularly erstwhile lease holders.

According to the amended notification, a "premium" amount will now be applicable in addition to the existing royalty and statutory compliance requirements for handling iron ore dumps. The revision specifically alters Clause 2.2 and Clause 5.8 of the earlier policy.



In Clause 2.2, the phrase "Premium, royalty and compliance of all statutory requirements" replaces the earlier wording, reflecting the additional financial burden. Additionally, a new Explanation 3 has been inserted, clarifying that the premium per tonne, payable by the applicant or erstwhile lease holder, will be determined by the government from time to time.

Govt offers up to 25% tax relief for scrapping old vehicles

Team Herald

PANJIM: The State government has announced tax exemptions on the registration of new vehicles when old vehicles are scrapped at a Registered Vehicle Scrapping Facility (RVSF).

According to a public notice issued by the Directorate of Transport, vehicle owners can now claim a reduction in registration tax by submitting a valid Certificate of Deposit obtained from an RVSF. The revised benefits, based on a notification dated April 1, 2025, include a 15 per cent tax exemption or Rs 75,000 (whichever is lower) for transport vehicles, and a 25 per cent tax exemption or Rs 75,000 (whichever is lower) for private vehicles.

To avail of this benefit, vehicle owners must scrap their old vehicles at an authorised RVSF, obtain a Certificate of Deposit, and submit it during the registration of a new vehicle. A list of authorised RVSFs is available at www.parivahan.gov.in.

Assistencia meets to plan next step after Missionaries' exit

Team Herald

PANJIM: The Assistencia, Goa has convened an extraordinary general body meeting at its premises in St Inez, Panjim, at 10:30 am on Sunday, May 25, to decide the next course of action following the departure of the Missionaries of Charity from the premises last month.

According to the agenda, the meeting is expected to discuss issues arising from the time the Missionaries of Charity sisters handed back the premises to the Assistencia. The situation has necessitated the calling of the extraordinary general body meeting. A road map for the future of the Assistencia, Goa will also be deliberated upon during the session.

Readers may recall that **O Herald** was the first to report the decision of the Missionaries of Charity to vacate



the premises. All members have been requested to attend the meeting.

After serving thousands of poor, orphans, and destitute individuals for nearly 49 years, the Missionaries of Charity closed its doors at St Inez on April 28 this year. The 44 inmates have since been

relocated to the congregation's homes in Carambolim and Cota-Fatorpa.

Subsequently, the Missionaries of Charity headquarters in Kolkata confirmed that it had decided to shut down its Panjim house due to difficulties in continuing services, citing a sharp decline in vocations.

Resort manager booked for child drowning case

Team Herald

MARGAO: Canacona Police have booked the manager and owner of a beach resort at Agonda, in connection with the death of a three-year-old girl who drowned in the resort's swimming pool on May 4. The offence has been registered under Section 106 (1) of the BNS 2023, following a complaint by the child's father, Imdad Afroz Saizy of New Delhi. Saizy stated that the pool was left unfenced and unsupervised, with no lifeguard or watchman, and lacked proper warning signs.

Police said the deceased, Fatima Imdad Afroz Saizy, 3, of Jamia Nagar, Okhla, South Delhi, was found drowned in the pool at around 1.30 pm. She had reportedly wandered into the water unnoticed while the family was having lunch at the resort. A doctor at the Community Health Centre, Canacona, declared the child brought dead after she was rushed there by her parents.

Initially treated as an unnatural death, the case was later upgraded after investigations revealed negligence on the part of the resort management.

APPOINTMENTS

Private MULTISPECIALITY HOSPITAL in North-Goa is HIRING the following Staff

1) RESIDENT MEDICAL OFFICERS	4) X-RAY TECHNICIANS
2) STAFF NURSES	5) LABORATORY TECHNICIANS
3) RECEPTIONISTS	6) AMBULANCE DRIVERS
	7) ACCOUNTS PERSONNEL

Interested persons should send their CVs on WhatsApp No. 9096067859, latest by 30th May 2025.

PRIME PLOTS FOR SALE IN SOUTH GOA

- 500m² PLOT with 3 Bedroom DUPLEX BUNGALOW, with parking, behind Damodar Temple, Comba, MARGAO.
- 11,000m² PLOT, compounded, on Cuncolim - Karwar NH on Fatarpa Temple Junction, CUNCOLIM.
- 2,000m² & Above PLOTS (2 Nos.) on Goa Bottling-Stadium Road, near Sincro Hotel & PWD, FATORPA.
- 725m² PLOT, near KTC & Rebello Hospital, MARGAO.
- 12,000m² PLOT with Sanad, near Tropica & Umija Mercado, on KHAREBAND - VARCA Road.
- 700m² PLOT with G+3 Bungalow, near Nagesh Garden, above Hospicio Hospital, Alto Monte, MARGAO.
- 10,000m² PLOT near Marriott Fairfield, walking distance from beach at BENAULIM.
- 5,000m² PLOT on Nh66, near Nosi Hospital, DHARMAPUR.

Interested Buyers Kindly Contact (BROKERS EXCUSE)
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