

Smuggled booze laden container truck catches fire at Dhargal

Vehicle's cabin gets damaged; driver flees before authorities arrive

Team Herald

DHARGAL: A Nagaland-registered container truck laden with smuggled liquor suddenly caught fire early Tuesday morning while parked along the roadside at Dhargal on National Highway 66.

Alerted by passersby, personnel from the Pernem Fire and Emergency Services (FES) rushed to the site and successfully doused the blaze. Despite their efforts, the truck's cabin was damaged.

The driver reportedly fled the scene before the authorities arrived. Police and excise officials are investigating the ownership and legality of the liquor transported in the vehicle.

Speaking to mediapersons, a Fire and Emergency Services (FES) personnel said, "We received a call at around 7.45 am. We reached the spot within 10 minutes. We extinguished the fire and during the search, liquor bottles were found inside



the vehicle. We immediately contacted police and excise officials."

Meanwhile, Pernem Congress leader Jitendra Gaonkar alleged

that such illegal activities are going on, on a regular basis and blamed the chief minister for it and demanded a crackdown of such activities.

Last month, Goa excise officials unearthed a tax evasion scheme involving a Haryana-based liquor distribution company that attempted to smuggle premium



liquor brands such as Chivas Regal, Absolut Vodka, Johnnie Walker, and Black Label into the State without paying over Rs 1 crore in duties.

The operation was intercepted at the Patradevi checkpoint, where a Haryana-registered truck, falsely claiming its consignment was for "Customs",

was found carrying retail-sized bottles (mostly 750 ml and under) instead of the 1,000 ml packaging required for Customs shipments.

CM, EXCISE DEPT NOT SERIOUS ON LIQUOR SMUGGLING: CONGRESS

People have started questioning as to how can such things be smuggled in the State without blessings of the Chief Minister? Had the chief minister and the excise department been serious then this type of smuggling would have been stopped by now. But we

have not seen any vehicle being caught by the excise department officials. So now it is becoming clear that if chief minister is not changed then incidents like this will keep happening

— Jitendra Gaonkar, Pernem Congress leader

AAP DEMANDS PROBE INTO LIQUOR SMUGGLING

The liquor bottles are being smuggled in and out of the State. It must be investigated how these liquor bottles are going out of the State. There is serious doubt over RTOs, police personnel posted at various check posts. Excise is a big scam. In fact it is one of

the biggest excise scam in the country. It requires an investigation by ED and CBI. The excise department personnel are interesting in collecting Rs 10 or 20 at checks post but big sharks are left unchecked

— Amit Palekar, Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) Goa Convener

Police crack down on tobacco sales near schools in South Goa

Shopkeepers warned against selling tobacco products within 100 yards of educational institutions; 1,474 COTPA cases booked in 2025 so far

Team Herald

MARGAO: Police stations across South Goa have been directed to visit shops selling tobacco products in their jurisdictions and strictly instruct them not to sell within a 100-yard radius of educational institutions. Sanguem PI Ditenra Naik confirmed that his beat staff have already begun informing local shopkeepers of this regulation.

This initiative comes under the enforcement of the Cigarettes and Other Tobacco Products Act (COTPA), 2003. The law prohibits the sale of tobacco near educational institutions and restricts smoking in public spaces, allowing it only in

designated smoking areas at hotels, restaurants, airports, and select open areas.

City advocate Vinay Patker highlighted that the Act clearly prohibits smoking in places such as auditoriums, theatres, hospitals, public transport, restaurants, hotels, government and private offices, courts, markets, and educational institutions. "The person selling tobacco is required to verify that the buyer is not a minor, but such checks are rarely done. This negligence is making smoking increasingly common among under-age children," he said.

According to Patker, Section 6(b) of the Act specifically restricts tobacco sales within 100 yards of schools

and colleges to discourage access by youth.

Police in South Goa have actively enforced COTPA, registering 1,474 cases until April 20, 2025. In 2024, a total of 5,480 cases were booked. The Vasco Railway Police recorded the highest number of violations this year with 194 cases, followed by Margao Police Station with 183 and Dabolim Airport with 170.

Retired teacher Michal Fernandes supported the initiative, noting that schools are doing their part by advising students on the dangers of tobacco. He also reiterated the law's stipulation under Section 6(a) and 6(b) of COTPA, which prohibits the sale of tobacco to

and by minors, and within 100 yards of schools.

Milind Raiker, a concerned parent, stressed the need for sustained awareness campaigns to educate the public on the health hazards of tobacco. "Public Health is a State subject. It is the duty of authorities to ensure the effective implementation of COTPA," he said.

Another parent, Sandeep Pednekar, emphasised the role of families in preventing tobacco use. "Parents must communicate openly, educate children on the dangers of tobacco, and set a positive example," he said, adding that family influence can significantly shape children's attitudes toward tobacco.

Govt to begin sluice gate repairs from Oct

Team Herald

PANJIM: The Water Resources Department (WRD) will begin repairing sluice gates from October this year, and the government will also provide support for cleaning salt pans, Chief Minister Pramod Sawant assured salt farmers from Sant Andre constituency on Monday.

More than 50 salt pans, each spread across four to five acres of land, exist in Sant Andre and the Goa State Biodiversity Board (GSBB) is actively involved in the process of identifying market opportunities for Goan salt, including its use in food, cosmetics, and other sectors, informed Sawant.

The State government is in the process of drafting a policy for long-term revival and sustainability of this traditional industry, Sawant said.

Sawant visited Batim salt pan and met local salt farmers. During his visit, he assured them that the government will provide full support for the revival of salt pan activities and promised assistance to sustain the livelihoods of salt farmers.

Later, the Chief Minister inaugurated new water storage tanks at Agassaim and Nauxim, which will enhance the reliability and capacity of local water supply systems in both the villages.

CII hails new 'Goa Transport Aggregator App Guidelines'

Team Herald

PANJIM: The Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) has lauded the introduction of the new 'Goa Transport Aggregator App Guidelines', aimed at transforming the State's transportation landscape.

During an interactive session held with the Directorate of Transport, Pravin Abhishek, Director, Directorate of Transport, engaged with CII members to outline the key objectives of the new guidelines. He emphasised that the initiative seeks to create a level playing field for all taxi operators and drivers in the State, while also benefitting local businesses and improving last-mile connectivity between industrial hubs and residential zones.

Abhishek highlighted the guidelines' alignment with Goa's broader sustainability goals, particularly through the promotion of electric vehicle (EV) adoption.

"We are stepping into the future while conserving the Goan heritage," he said, adding that effective implementation could significantly reduce the transportation sector's carbon footprint.

The session featured an open forum, where stakeholders from tourism, logistics, app development, and other sectors raised queries. Abhishek assured attendees that all industry feedback would be carefully considered in shaping the final framework.

Arjun Chowgule, Chairman of CII Goa, welcomed the initiative and pledged the industry's full support for its implementation.

"The proposed framework would bring transparency, enforce compliance, and promote inclusivity in the State's evolving transport sector," he stated.

Chowgule also reaffirmed CII's commitment to supporting initiatives that strike a balance between growth, inclusivity, and sustainability.

HEALING WATERS

JOSEPH FERNANDES



Following the early monsoon showers, the Pomburpa spring is already in full spate. Locals flock to bathe in its cascading waters, believed to have health benefits, and many also collect the spring water for drinking

Utilise CSR funding for child welfare, HC asks govt

Team Herald

PANJIM: The High Court of Bombay at Goa has directed the government authorities to look into the pragmatic suggestions for the utilisation of CSR funding for child welfare and rehabilitation of children forced into street begging.

Adv Moses Pinto, who had filed a public interest litigation (PIL) writ petition submitted pragmatic suggestions for the utilisation of CSR funding for child welfare and rehabilitation.

The Court took these suggestions on record and asked the State government to make its stand clear as to which of these suggestions were feasible and which can be implemented by the government either in its entirety or in its modified form.

The Court has also asked the additional government advocate to apprise the respondents namely the Department of Women and Child Development, the Goa State Commission for Protection of Child Rights, the Directorate of Education and the Directorate of Transport, of these suggestions and also, on his own, can advise the State government on the issue. The matter has now been posted for further hearing on June 30.

HC quashes lookout circulars against directors of Idyllic Goan Gateways

Team Herald

PANJIM: The High Court of Bombay at Goa quashed and set aside the Lookout Circulars (LOCs) issued against the directors of Idyllic Goan Gateways in connection with an alleged investment fraud case involving Myron Rodrigues and Deepali Parab.

The petitioners Nolan Antao, Joaquim Pires, Vijay Joil, Navnik Pereira and Sushant Ghodse had approached the High Court after police issued LOCs against them despite the fact that their names were not included in the charge sheet filed by the Crime Branch.

Arguing on behalf of the petitioners, senior advocate Nitin Sardesai stated that the names of the Petitioners do not feature either in the complaint or in the subject FIR.

While disposing of the criminal writ petitions filed by five petitioners the court observed that since no chargesheet has been filed against them on account of lack of evidence

Disposing of the criminal writ petitions filed by five petitioners, the court observed that since no chargesheet has been filed against them on account of lack of evidence and since they are not prosecuted in connection with the subject FIR, the action under the lookout circular definitely must fail.

The directors were initially named as co-accused after funds from the prime accused were traced to the bank account of Idyllic Goan Gateways. However, the petitioners clarified their non-involvement and, under court direction, voluntarily deposited the said funds with the investigating agency.

Timely action averts major tragedy as fire breaks out in school bus

Team Herald

MARGAO: A major tragedy was narrowly averted on Monday morning after a minor fire broke out in a Balrath school bus near a secondary school in Margao. Fire and Emergency Services were promptly alerted and swiftly brought the situation under control.

The incident occurred at approximately 11.30 am, shortly after the schoolchildren had been dropped off for the day. No one was inside the vehicle at the time and no injuries were reported.

"It was a scary experience," said one parent who happened to be passing by the roadside as the fire broke out.

According to Station Fire Officer (SFO) Gil Souza of Margao Fire Station, the fire was first noticed by a passing scooter rider while the driver was manoeuvring the bus. The rider quickly alerted the driver, who then took immediate precautionary measures. SFO Souza stated, "At around 11.35 am, we received an emergency call informing us that a fire had broken out in a school



Sub Officer R S Khutker, along with our team and one fire tender, rushed

to the site. Fortunately, no one was inside the bus at the time, and no injuries were reported."

He added, "In the morning, school children had already been brought to school. The incident occurred afterwards. Locals and other passers-by rushed to the spot upon hearing the news."

The fire was determined to have started due to a short circuit in the electrical wiring connected to the bus battery. However, the timely response by fire personnel prevented the flames

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from reaching the engine or causing major damage to the bus.

"The driver did a wonderful job in restricting the fire by using a fire extinguisher before our team arrived," said SFO Souza.

While the estimated loss has been pegged at Rs 20,000, the quick action of the fire department saved property worth Rs 3,00,000.