

# Pharma co. faces backlash over out-of-state interviews for Goa jobs

**REPEAT OFFENDER: Politicians, activists rage at Verna-based company for advertising recruitment outside Goa; demand policy to mandate local hiring**

Team Herald

**MARGAO:** A familiar battle has reignited in Goa as pharmaceutical company has once again advertised job interviews for Goa-based roles—but scheduled these crucial selection rounds outside the state.

This tactic has drawn sharp criticism from Goan activists, youth leaders, and now political representatives, who argue it systematically excludes local talent.

Fatorda MLA Vijai Sardesai strongly condemned the company's move, calling it an "outrageous betrayal of Goan youth."

"The very fact that companies like Indoco feel bold enough to deny employment to Goans in their own state shows how indifferent this government is to its people," Sardesai said. "This is not just about one company—it's about a complete lack of will to safeguard Goan livelihoods."

Sardesai warned that such practices have become a disturbing trend in the pharma sector and stressed the urgent need for policy intervention

**Verna-based pharma firm cancels interviews in Mumbai following Opposition outcry**

to mandate local hiring. "We have repeatedly demanded job reservation for Goans. The government must act now, or companies will continue to exploit the vacuum."

In May 2024, a similar move by the company was met with mass protests. The pharma company had advertised walk-in interviews in Boisar-Mumbai, but was later forced to cancel the interviews. But despite this precedent, the company appears to be repeating the practice—prompting renewed outrage.

Sanjay Shirodkar, a prominent activist, called the firm a "repeat offender" and blamed the state government for enabling

such behaviour.

"They were forced to backtrack last year, but now they're at it again—this time with more confidence, knowing the government will do nothing," he said.

Christopher D'Souza, spokesperson for the Goan Youth Employment Forum, decried the move as "strategic and shameful," adding, "Holding interviews outside Goa for Goa-based roles unfairly shuts out local candidates before they've even applied."

Activists and youth organisations have issued a stern warning to both the company and the government: unless the company shifts its hiring

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process back into Goa and prioritises local applicants, public protests and blockades could follow.

"We are putting both Indoco and the Government of Goa on notice," the coalition declared. "If you think Goans can be taken for granted, think again. We will not stay silent while our youth are denied their right to employment on Goan soil."

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Additionally, attendees were shocked to learn that waste management facilities are being shifted outside city limits—an important change that had not been communicated to the public.

"There was no mention of how the elevated ring road will be made feasible or how it will affect the city's fabric," Coutinho added. "None of Margao's pressing issues were addressed—be it traffic, flooding, or public safety."

The session also highlighted a disconnect between the Master Plan and ongoing development works.

The Goa State Infrastructure Development Corporation (GSIDC) is currently implementing beautification projects worth crores of rupees in Margao. When asked whether these plans were integrated into the Master Plan, Studio POD representatives admitted that they were still awaiting documentation from GSIDC.

"What every Madgaonkar wants is clarity—what is being proposed and where. That's the essence of any planning exercise," Coutinho said. "Instead, we're being given incomplete data and half-truths."

## Ravindra Bhavan closure: CM assures work timeline

Team Herald

**MARGAO:** Chief Minister Pramod Sawant on Friday assured that he would soon assess the situation surrounding the closure of the Ravindra Bhavan auditorium in Margao. However, he declined to comment on recent political developments in the state.

"I will take stock of the situation from the concerned department. Once I understand the issues, I can provide a timeline for the repair work," he told reporters during his visit to Margao.

The Chief Minister's assurance follows growing frustration among artists and cultural stakeholders, as the main auditorium has remained shut for several days due to damage to its false ceiling. Sources said the closure was ordered as a safety precaution after structural issues were detected.

The delay in repair work and poor communication from authorities have left the tiatr fraternity in limbo. Several shows have been cancelled or relocated, leading to financial losses for performers, organisers, and local vendors who depend on cultural events for income.

## AVIAN ASSAULT



Besieged by birds and wildlife, a Sangolda farmer strings up fluttering ribbons across his field in a desperate bid to protect his crop. Peacocks, pigeons, and other animals have been wreaking havoc on farmlands, leaving local cultivators frustrated and helpless

## Rape-accused doc released on Rs 75k bail

Team Herald

**MARGAO:** Dr Samuel Arawattigi, arrested for the alleged sexual assault of a nurse employed at his clinic, has been granted conditional bail by South Goa Additional District and Sessions Judge Pooja Kavlekar.

The court released him on bail of Rs 75,000 with one surety and directed him not to tamper with witnesses or contact the victim. The alleged assault occurred on April 22 at Arawattigi's Benaullim residence under the pretext of a house visit.

The nurse's mother filed the complaint on April 25. Cuncolim Police registered the case under Section 64 of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita. A forensic team visited the site, and the charge sheet has been filed. PSI Kishor Velip is the investigating officer.

## ‘State film festival criteria a betrayal of Goan cinema’

Team Herald

**MARGAO:** The recently announced eligibility criteria for the upcoming Goa State Film Festival - 2025 have drawn sharp criticism from within the state's film fraternity, with former Entertainment Society of Goa (ESG) Governing Body Member Vishal Pai Cacode calling the guidelines 'disgraceful' and 'a betrayal of Goan cinema.'

At the heart of the controversy is the rule that allows films with just 15% of on-screen artists and 15% of key technicians of Goan origin to qualify as "Goan" entries. This means that up to 85% of a film's team can be from outside the state — a condition that Cacode says undermines the very idea of promoting local talent.

"We are expected to call these 'Goan' films? This is not the promotion of Goan cinema — it's calculated exclusion dressed up as inclusivity," Cacode said in a strongly worded statement. He pointed out that the

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Goa State Film Festival is being revived after a gap of more than a decade, but the government is still relying on the outdated Goa State Film Festival Regulations of 2014. These rules require irrelevant documentation, such as censor certificates and production timelines that date back over ten years.

"Shockingly, the government is planning to conduct the 10th, 11th, and 12th editions of the festival simultaneously in August 2025, yet the framework guiding this revival remains frozen in time. This shows a complete disconnect from today's industry dynamics," he added.

Cacode also noted that the idea to revive the festival only gained momentum after he raised the issue during a recent public debate and fol-

lowed it up with a detailed article exposing the neglect of Goan filmmakers. While he welcomed the revival, he warned that any attempt to conduct the event without meaningful consultation would reduce it to a "tick-box PR exercise."

"You cannot revive Goan cinema while excluding Goan filmmakers. If Goan identity is reduced to a symbolic 15 percent, then what exactly are we celebrating?" he questioned.

He has demanded a complete overhaul of the festival regulations, with wide-ranging consultation involving filmmakers, producers, and other stakeholders from Goa's creative community. "The rules must reflect today's ground realities and genuinely uplift Goan talent."

## Monsoon wreaks havoc on roads left unrestored after digging in Gogol, Vidyanagar

Team Herald

**MARGAO:** Residents of Gogol and Vidyanagar have raised concerns over the poor condition of roads in their locality following sewerage and piped natural gas excavation works. Despite repeated complaints, many roads remain unrepaired and unhotmixed, causing serious inconvenience during the monsoon.

Locals allege that the Public Works Department (PWD) failed to repair or hotmix roads before the rains, as was expected. While a few stretches were temporarily covered with mud, these sections have now washed away, worsening the road condition due to heavy rainfall.

Roads in areas like Gogol Housing Board, Vidyanagar, Ramnagri, Davorlim, and Rawanfond have seen patchwork repairs that have not held up. Potholes and waterlogging are now widespread, creating hazards for mo-



torists and pedestrians alike.

A retired PWD engineer said unseasonal rains severely impact road surfaces, leading to cracks, potholes, and overall deterioration. "Water penetration and poor maintenance accelerate damage," he noted.

Milind Naik, a Ramnagri resident, blamed the situation on prolonged excavation work and incomplete trench restoration. "These roadworks have also caused frequent power cuts. Two-wheeler riders are particularly at risk due to the pothole-ridden roads," he said.

Another local, Akash Naik, said that even

where digging was completed, trenches remain uncovered. "Workers are moving deeper into Gogol without restoring earlier sections. The roads are now dangerously narrow and unstable," he added.

Residents also pointed out that some roads were hotmixed, but questioned the quality of the work. "If proper metal mix was used, these roads could have lasted longer," one said.

Locals are demanding immediate action from the authorities to complete the pending repairs and ensure better coordination for future civic works. "Basic amenities like safe roads shouldn't be a luxury," they said.

## 11 days on, defunct traffic signal at Gogol reactivated

Team Herald

**MARGAO:** The major traffic signal at the busy Gogol four-road junction, under Fatorda police jurisdiction, was reactivated on Friday after remaining non-functional for 11 days. The issue was highlighted by O Herald, prompting swift action by the concerned authorities to address public complaints.



Fatorda Traffic Cell Police Inspector Filomena Costa said the signal was repaired and a trial run was conducted on Thursday night. It became fully operational by Friday morning, bringing much-needed relief to motorists and pedestrians. The faulty signal had caused significant inconvenience, especially during peak hours, with vehicles rushing in from all directions and no proper system to regulate traffic.

Suresh Naik, a bank employee, said the junction is one of the busiest in Fatorda and the signal's failure had made commuting dangerous, particularly for students and office-goers.

## Domestic workers rally for legal rights

Team Herald

**MARGAO:** Marking International Domestic Workers Day, a large gathering of domestic workers from across Goa came together at Holy Spirit Church Hall, Margao, to demand urgent legal recognition and protection.

Organised by the Domestic Workers Movement Goa, affiliated with the National Domestic Workers Movement (NDWM), the meeting culminated in the unanimous passage of a resolution urging the government to implement the long-pending Domestic Workers Bill, as directed by the Supreme Court

of India.

Led by Sr. Tarcilla ICM and Shanta, the event focused on pressing issues faced by domestic workers, including lack of access to basic legal rights and social security benefits.

Adv. Dr Sabina Martins of Bailancho Saad delivered a powerful speech highlighting the significance of the day, commemorating the adoption of ILO Convention 189 in 2011, which recognised domestic work as legitimate labour deserving of protection and dignity. Despite legislation like the Social Security Act 2008 (now replaced by the Code of Social Security 2020), domestic

workers in Goa continue to remain outside the purview of implemented laws.

Dr Martins also pointed out that 11 states have made legislative progress, while Goa has yet to form even a draft committee for the Bill. Funds earmarked for unorganised workers under the Labour Welfare Board remain untouched for this sector.

The crowd, led by Noorbi and Milagrina, raised the slogan "Amka Zai, Amka Zai, Domestic Workers Bill Amka Zai", reinforcing their collective demand.

Sr Rajani ICM closed the event with a vote of thanks, praising the turnout despite heavy rains.

## Kranti Din observed in Margao with renewed call for unity and rights

**Shadow Council for Margao honours freedom fighters; Bhimshakti Sangatan to expand in Goa, vows to fight for marginalised communities**

Team Herald

**MARGAO:** The Shadow Council for Margao, in collaboration with Bhimshakti Sangatan, organised a programme at Grace Church Hall in Margao to commemorate the historic 18th June Kranti Din, which marks Goa's first major call for liberation from Portuguese rule in 1946.

The highlight of the event was the felicitation of Goa Freedom Fighters' Association President Rohidas Dessai and veteran freedom fighter Raya Shirodkar. The honours were conferred by Rajya Sabha MP Chandrakant Handore, who was the chief guest at the function. The programme drew a large

audience, including social activists, political leaders, and former elected representatives. Among the attendees were Zacarias Goes, Herculano Niaso, Rama Kankonkar, Anthony D'Silva, Pratima Coutinho, Jack Mascarenhas, Dyne-shwar Varkandkar, Adv. Snehal Onskar, Loyola Rodrigues, Anwar Naroo, Sadanand Vaingankar, and Lalan Parsekar—all recognised for their work in advocating for the rights of marginalised and underprivileged communities.

Speaking at the event, MP Handore praised the pivotal role played by Dr Ram Manohar Lohia and Dr Julio Menezes in igniting the Goan freedom movement. He also announced that Bhimshakti

Sangatan, which operates across more than seven Indian states, would soon begin working in Goa to unite the middle class, marginalised, and oppressed sections of society.

"Just as Captain Viriato Fernandes is voicing Goa's concerns in the Lok Sabha, I will take up Goa's issues in the Rajya Sabha," Handore said, pledging both political and organisational support for the struggles of ordinary Goans.

Rohidas Dessai, President of the Freedom Fighters' Association, offered a historical overview of the events of 18 June 1946, recalling the brutalities endured by freedom fighters following Dr Lohia's landmark speech. He stressed the importance of preserv-

ing the movement's legacy and continuing the fight for justice in the present day.

Savio Coutinho, Convenor of the Shadow Council for Margao, referred to present-day examples of suppression and harassment by those in power. "Through Bhimshakti Sangatan, we intend to build a united front to challenge these divisive forces," Coutinho declared.

Other speakers included Goa In-charge Bhushan Gaikwad, Dyne-shwar Varkandkar, Rama Kankonkar, and Anthony D'Silva, all of whom echoed the call for unity, community mobilisation, and grassroots activism to safeguard democratic values and human rights.