

# Never Missing the Bus



Hundreds of employees, scores of foreign delegates, a team of celebrities, one event. The Aditya Birla Awards had promised to be a lot of things. All attendees, be it the organizing committee or the guests, were equally excited about the program and the significance it held.

For many, it was their first glimpse of India, for all it was a chance to enjoy the sunny skies and golden beaches of Goa. People were spread across 7 hotels and the ceremonies across 3 venues. It promised to be a grand and extremely successful weekend.

A day prior to the event, at 6pm, as the Aditya Birla team sipped tea at the end of a hard day's work, they received a call. The organizing committee informed them that the private bus operators had declared a strike. The first blow struck like

lightning. Then came the news that private taxis, in camaraderie, would also be off the roads. Goa was likely to come to a standstill the next day and so were the plans of making this occasion a smooth extravaganza. Priorities quickly changed and the team sprang into action, putting a need for control ahead of their anxieties. The passion that holds the company together and the commitment that is engraved deep within every heart was suddenly clear for all to see.

Hundreds of telephones began to ring at the same time, all across Goa. The small network of members, reached out to their wider networks seeking a promise of help. The Group grid buzzed with offers. Private cars were lined up and logistics were being planned. The team knew the plan would work but it seemed inefficient. They needed something seamless.

While the strike refused to cease, they were already going the extra mile. Key contacts in Goa were asked to assist. Gears turned, pieces fell into place and 50 public transport buses were assigned to the event. Aditya Birla Group's reputation and the earned goodwill through the years played an important role in achieving this. Though a humble means of transport, the non-AC buses could accommodate a large number of people. A breath of fresh air amidst the heat of the moment.

The team had just a few hours of the dark night in hand; they worked with speed to strategies new routes and logistics. Ranks and titles were kept aside. Even the most senior managers were seen designing plans, briefing drivers and even guiding traffic to reach the venue. All that mattered to each and every individual there was the best solution to the problem at

hand. The crisis was grave but there was never, not even for a moment, a crisis of confidence.

The searing sun taunted the suited and booted guests a little but overall the first day went smoothly. Attendees took it all in their stride, considering it an adventure. The strikes had created a hostile environment; the new drivers were accommodated overnight to keep them and their vehicles off the roads. The safety of those that had stepped in to save the day was as important as that of any VIP.

On the third day, the strike came to an end and life began to move at a normal pace. Today, when the team looks back at the times, they are filled with the same excitement and fervor. It was an endeavor that did not need an award. It was an award in itself.