

# Blocked drains lead to flooding in Raia, water enters six homes

**Damon residents claim they had informed authorities of traditional gutters being filled with mud, but they weren't cleared; worry about sewage seeping into homes**

Team Herald

**MARGAO:** Heavy rainfall pounded Salcete taluka on Thursday, leading to flooding and causing water to seep into six houses in Damon-Raia. Numerous low-lying areas also experienced flooding due to the relentless downpour.

Residents in Raia attributed the flooding to the gutters being filled with mud, which caused rainwater accumulation. In response to the situation, the Sarpanch of the village panchayat Raia, along with local MLA Alexio Reginaldo Lourenco and other authorities, visited the site to assess the damage and provide assistance.

The water level rose to nearly two to three feet, making it difficult for the residents to access their homes. Concerns were raised about sewage poten-



tially entering houses due to toilet overflow caused by the heavy rainfall. Navnath Shirodkar, one of the residents, alleged that the traditional rainwater passage in the area had been filled with mud, leading to the flooding. He stated, "We had approached the concerned authorities raising the issue; however, despite orders from them, the situation remained unchanged."

Shirodkar further demanded that the authorities, including the local panchayats, take note of the

issue and initiate measures to address it promptly. Upon hearing the news, the MLA and other authorities rushed to the site to facilitate the drainage of rainwater. However, due to 'internal issues', the work could not commence until the afternoon.

The district collector's office issued an order in the afternoon, directing the concerned authority to initiate immediate works to prevent further flooding in the area. Raia Sarpanch Peter Quadros said that they had been at the site since morning,



actively working to resolve the issue. "The panchayat is putting all efforts to resolve the issue and has initiated safety measures," he said.

In addition to the flooding in Raia, heavy rains also caused flooding in many places in and around Margao. A blocked drain caused waterlogging at the Kadamba Transport Corporation bus stand in Margao, resulting in rainwater entering the kiosk and causing losses. Additionally, roads such as Old Station Road and the National Highway at Arlem were submerged under water due to the heavy rainfall.

# Trees uprooted, houses damaged as heavy rains lash Salcete

Team Herald

**MARGAO:** Heavy rains lashed Salcete on Thursday, disrupting normal life and causing substantial damage, including to three houses struck by fallen trees.

In one incident, a banyan tree fell on Seema Gaudé's house in Rumdamol, Margao, causing an estimated loss of Rs 15,000. However, fire personnel managed to save property worth Rs two lakh. The operation was completed within one and a half hours.

In another case, a gulmohar tree fell on a house near St Joaquim Chapel in Borda, trapping a person inside. Fortunately, the individual was rescued uninjured by the fire team led by Station Fire Officer Gil Souza. The damage was estimated at Rs 10,000, while property worth Rs 50,000 was saved. This operation took about two hours.

Additionally, a coconut tree fell on a house in Navelim behind a hospital, causing damage. Firefighters responded swiftly and saved property worth Rs 50,000.



Other incidents included a jungle tree falling on electrical wires near Mohiuddin Petrol Pump in Margao. Duty Officer A K Velip and his team cut the branches and separated the wires. Another jungle tree fell on the road near Gogol Junction, which was cleared by S R Naik and his team within an hour.

Further, a jungle tree fell on an internal road near Damodar Temple at Louis Waddo, Majorda, causing damage. The tree was cleared under the supervision of leading fire fighter P P Dessai within two hours, saving property worth Rs 30,000.

Flooding was reported on public roads, in low-lying areas, and at the Margao subway in the evening. Incidents of trees uprooting and ob-



structing roads were also reported in Navelim, Benaulum, Sirlim, and Fatorda.

In Benaulum, a bhendi tree fell on the road near Madhuban Complex at Tolleband, another fell near Sirlim Chapel at Bellavista, obstructing traffic and causing minor damage to an electric pole. In Fatorda, a tree fell near Ravindra Bhavan, blocking traffic. Fire personnel attended to these blockages and several others across Salcete.

SFO Souza reported that uprooted trees disrupted power and telephone services. Rainwater entered shops in low-lying areas, causing inconvenience to people and shopkeepers.

Rainwater flooded areas such as Chandor, Comba, Borda, Vidhyanagar, and

**Strong winds, heavy rain disrupt power in Calangute**

**CALANGUTE:** Strong winds and heavy rain on Thursday disrupted power supply in the coastal belt of Calangute and Candolim as well as across Salgao and Pilerne. Almost all localities did not have electricity for hours after tree branches crashed on electricity cables at many spots, bringing down the lines.

There were, however, no major incidents of trees being uprooted, Pilerne Fire Station officials said.

Some areas were without power for around three to four hours, with electricity department linemen and workers provided by the village panchayats responding to a large number of calls of collapsed cables.

Paroda. Water levels receded after a few hours, but several places in Margao and Fatorda experienced waterlogging.

## SEASHORE SNAPSHOTS

SAGUN GAWADE



A tourist clicks photos of his family enjoying the waters at the Miramar beach, on Tuesday. The Tourist Police informed that visitors now will have to take prior permission of the Tourism Department to click photos via DSLR cameras. The department has also banned the use of drones on the beach

## Banalkars anxious over flood risk posed by Western Bypass land-filling

Team Herald

**MARGAO:** With the onset of the monsoon season, residents of Benaulum, Seraulim, and Mungul are anxious about potential flooding, particularly in low-lying areas such as Tollebandh. This concern arises from the under-construction Western Bypass, which has previously contributed to flooding during heavy rains in the past couple of years.

Fatorda MLA Vijai Sardesai recently called for an inspection with the Public Works Department (PWD), highlighting a reverse flow issue where water is not draining as it should, leading to increased flooding risks. Farmers from Seraulim and Benaulum

Locals from Seraulim have demanded that the government address their concerns over repeated instances of waterlogging of the Seraulim underpass, which has posed difficulties to commuters. Locals had lamented that even in cases of moderate rainfall, the underpass would get flooded, and raised concerns about health issues too, as it takes time for water to drain, leaving the subway waterlogged for days

have also raised these concerns repeatedly.

Before the monsoon began, the South Goa district administration had instructed

the PWD and other relevant authorities to take precautionary measures to mitigate flooding risks linked to the Western Bypass construction. Areas identified as flood-prone due to the construction activities were to be equipped with necessary protective arrangements.

The district administration acknowledged the flooding potential in regions where land had been filled with mud as part of the bypass construction. Srinet Kothwale, Additional Collector-I, stated that authorities have been directed to monitor and remain vigilant regarding flood-prone areas not just in Benaulum but throughout the district during the monsoon season.

## Loutolim P'yat flags miszoning of agri land in Regional Plan 2021, calls for correction

Team Herald

**MARGAO:** In an interesting development, the village panchayat of Loutolim has officially written to the State government, highlighting critical discrepancies in the Regional Plan 2021 (RP 2021). The move comes in response to a resolution passed during an ordinary Gram Sabha meeting held on June 11, 2023, where concerned villagers raised the alarm over the misrepresentation of agricultural lands in the plan.

The letter, addressed to government officials including CM Pramod Sawant, Town and Country Planning (TCP) Minister Vishwajit Rane, Panchayati Raj Minister Mauvin Godinho and key departmental heads, outlines several instances where vital agricultural areas, particularly paddy

**The P'yat outlines several instances where agricultural areas, particularly paddy fields (morods) and khazans, have been incorrectly zoned as settlement areas in the RP 2021. This misclassification, according to the locals, poses a severe threat to Loutolim's biodiversity and agricultural heritage**

fields (morods) and khazan lands, have been incorrectly zoned as settlement areas in the RP 2021. The issue gained prominence when Chairman of the Loutolim Tenants Association, Albert Pinheiro brought these discrepancies to light during the Gram Sabha. Pinheiro's concerns resonated with other villagers, leading to the unanimous passing of the resolution. This assumes significance against the backdrop of ongoing protests by farmers against the land acquisition of khazan lands for the new high-level Borim bridge and its approach roads.

With evidence in hand, the farmers have pointed out that the plans submitted by the PWD for this bridge project have largely ignored khazan lands and CRZ areas and don't have the requisite permissions to carry out development work on such lands. These concerns have been presented in a petition before the National Green Tribunal (NGT), where farmers from Loutolim as well as their counterparts from Borim, are opposing the land acquisition proceedings to protect their khazan fields.

The Loutolim panchayat has requested the govern-

ment to conduct a thorough review of the zoning discrepancies highlighted in the Gram Sabha resolution. They have also called for physical site inspections of the affected areas in the presence of the Sarpanch before issuing any zoning certificates or permits.

The panchayat's letter also references an FIR filed regarding alleged irregularities in the preparation of the RP 2021. This suggests that concerns about the plan's accuracy and legitimacy extend beyond just zoning issues, pointing to systemic problems in the planning process. Accompanying the letter are several supporting documents, including the Gram Sabha resolution, a detailed list of affected survey numbers, zoning certificates, and photographic evidence of the lands in question.

## Govt to auction vehicles abandoned on streets of Margao and Fatorda

**31 vehicles identified by Margao Traffic Cell; owners given six months to submit claims**

Team Herald

**MARGAO:** Taking serious note of vehicles abandoned on the roadside, the South Goa District Administration has issued an order to initiate auctioning if the owners fail to submit claims promptly. District Magistrate Asvin Chandru issued an order on Wednesday addressing this issue. The Traffic Cell in Margao has already identified around 31 abandoned vehicles on the roadside in the vicinity of Margao and Fatorda.

Citizens of Fatorda raised the issue of abandoned vehicles during the Viksit Bharat Meeting held with Power Minister Ramakrishna 'Sudin' Dhavalikar at Ravindra Bhavan, Margao, on February 29. It was discussed that these abandoned vehicles occupy prime parking spaces and create a

nuisance in the area.

The order states, "Such abandoned vehicles are likely to cause a nuisance, pose a risk to public safety, and may be used for criminal activities or unlawful purposes. Therefore, I call upon all persons interested in these vehicles to submit their claims, along with documentary evidence, to the office of the Deputy Collector within a period of six months."

The District Magistrate further stated that if no objections or claims are received within the stipulated time, the vehicles will be forfeited in favour of the State government. They will then be disposed of by public auction as provided under the law, and no further claims will be entertained from anyone. The proceeds from the auction will be forfeited to the government.

## Manora-Raia chapel ropes in youth to cultivate fallow paddy field, sets precedent for churches

Team Herald

**MARGAO:** The initiative to revive an abandoned paddy field, dormant for nearly four decades, has sparked renewed enthusiasm among the parishioners, particularly the youth, of Our Lady of Monserrate Chapel in Manora-Raia. This year marks the fourth season of cultivating the once-neglected land, led by Chaplain Fr Cristo Pinto.

In July 2021, under Fr Pinto's leadership, the barren land was first cultivated, marking a significant milestone for the chapel. This pioneering effort not only revitalized the neglected land but also set a precedent for several other churches across Goa. This season, over a thousand square metres of

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**Fr Cristo Pinto, Chaplain**

land will be cultivated.

Fr Pinto emphasised the importance of safeguarding the environment and cherishing the natural world created by God. "For the first time, we cultivated the barren land - not for profit, but out of respect for the God-given gift of nature and the environment. It's unfair to leave fertile land unused, so we took the initiative to cultivate it. Today, we've ob-

served not only parishioners but also the youth of Manora expressing their love and interest in agriculture," Fr Pinto stated.

Fr Pinto's primary goal is to inspire parishioners and attract more youth towards agriculture, fostering a renewed appreciation for farming practices. He expressed a desire for the youth to learn the importance of agriculture and the



hard work of farmers.

Cosia Oliveira, a youth from Manora, shared her experiences with **O Herald**. "Initially, I was a little hesitant when Fr Pinto explained his plans to cultivate the land; however, things have changed a lot since then. According to me, cultivating agricultural land is a small step towards protecting our environment," she said.

Menino Quadros, a parishioner, praised the efforts of Fr Pinto and the youth, and appealed to members of other churches to follow Manora's example and take steps to cultivate the land owned by their churches. "As a result of youth migrating abroad, agricultural lands have been left abandoned in many places. However, many fail to understand

**As a result of youth migrating abroad, agricultural lands have been left abandoned in many places. However, many fail to understand that it is our duty to protect agricultural land and earn a livelihood from it**

**Menino Quadros, parishioner**

that it is our duty to protect agricultural land and earn a livelihood from it. There are numerous people who own agricultural land but have no one to cultivate it," he stated. He added, "Let this serve as a new example for the youth of other parishes in Goa."

## 4 Jharkhand man dies after falling off electricity pole during repair

**PANJIM:** A 28-year-old worker from Jharkhand died allegedly after falling from an electric pole at Canca. The deceased, identified as Bhaleshwar Mahto from Bagodar, Jharkhand, was working at the site where a broken electricity pole was being replaced. According to police, Mahto was rushed to Goa Medical College in Bambolim but succumbed to his injuries while undergoing treatment. An offence has been registered under Section 174 of the CrPc and PSI Abhijit Naik is investigating. Earlier, in April this year, an Electricity Department lineman lost his life after being electrocuted while working on an electricity pole at Housing Board, Bicholim.

## 5 Mapusa fatal assault: Police arrest two more in Maharashtra

**PANJIM:** Five days after arresting the main accused in the brutal assault case, the Mapusa Police arrested two more accused in connection with the case. According to North Goa SP Akshat Kaushal, Narayan alisa Babu Uttam Bhalekar, 33, and Mutappa alisa Sunny Bagappa Nikode, 34, both residents of Laxminagar Housing Board, Mapusa, were arrested in Banda, Maharashtra. Earlier, on June 21, the police had arrested Ramkrishna alisa R K Uttam Bhalekar (32), the main accused in the case. Devadi, who was brutally assaulted by a gang on May 30 at Housing Board, Mapusa, succumbed to injuries on June 18 after battling for life for 15 days at Goa Medical College. So far, the police have arrested nine persons in connection with the case.



A traffic police officer shelters a cyclist under his umbrella from the rains as he awaits the Ribandar-Chorao ferry