

Goa's 'rabies-free' status hit as five cases reported this year

Rabies infections were recently identified in dogs at Colvale and Divar, and earlier in Bicholim and Tivim; alarming population of stray dogs on Divar Island, admit authorities

Team Herald

PANJIM: With five rabies cases reported in dogs in Goa so far this year, the State faces challenges in maintaining its rabies-controlled status, which it has enjoyed for the past five years. The recent detection of rabies in dogs at Colvale and Divar, and previous cases in Bicholim and Tivim, emphasise the urgent need to curb the spread of the viral disease, which has no treatment.

In Divar, rabies infections were found in both

a pet dog and a stray dog. Notably, the pet dog had not been vaccinated. Last year, rabies resulted in the death of a man from North Goa. Dr Murugan Appupillai, Director (Education) at Mission Rabies, highlighted the disproportionate stray dog population in Divar. "The stray dog population is very high here and is estimated to be about 1,500 which is highly disproportionate to the human population which is about 5,000 as per 2011 census and may be 6,000 now. I suspect that main-

“We have set a target to vaccinate all dogs on the island. We suspect that people cross the ferries and abandon puppies there. We have requested the authorities of the River and Navigation Department (RND) not to allow people to carry puppies with them. For vaccination, we have identified locations in two parts: one in the border talukas and the other in the central parts of the state. For border areas, we have planned a year-round vaccination programme

An official from the Animal Husbandry Department

land people might have dumped or abandoned puppies into the island. Or dogs who get fed well breed faster with reduced mortality," he said.

Dr Appupillai reassured that the situation is now under control, with over 1,000 dogs vaccinated, banners put up, and support sought from ferry

operators to prevent the transportation of dogs. Despite these measures, he noted that talukas bordering Maharashtra and Karnataka, where rabies is endemic, could see some cases. Last year, nine rabies cases were reported in Goa, with 37 cases from nearby talukas in Maharashtra and Karnataka. "Some border talukas have shown a higher number of cases of rabies and this affects Goa. Last year, nine cases of rabies were detected in animals in Goa while 37

cases of rabies were reported from four talukas of Vengurla, Sawantwadi, Dodamarg and Karwar," he said.

An official from the Animal Husbandry Department reiterated the alarming dog population in Divar, where the first outbreak was detected in a stray dog on June 7, followed by a pet dog on June 27. "All dogs should be vaccinated against rabies at three months, and then annually. We urge pet owners to follow the rules," he said.

IMD extends red alert to Monday, orange alert issued for July 16

Team Herald

PANJIM: The India Meteorological Department (IMD) on Sunday extended the red alert issued for Sunday to Monday, July 15 and issued orange alert for July 16.

It predicted that heavy to very heavy rainfall with extremely heavy rainfall is very likely at a few places with strong surface winds over North Goa and South Goa districts on July 15 and heavy to very heavy rainfall very likely at isolated places with strong surface winds over North Goa and South Goa districts on July 16.

However, it said that heavy rainfall with strong surface winds is very likely at isolated places over North Goa and South Goa districts of the state

on July 17 and 18.

"Continuous spells of rain with short intense spells and winds gusting to 50 kmph is very likely at Panjim and Mormugao," the IMD said.

According to the IMD, during a period of 8.30 am to 6.30 pm, Panjim received 3.8 inches of rainfall, Mormugao 1 inch and Pilerne Industrial Area (Goa Biodiversity office) 1.2 inches.

Meanwhile, speaking to reporters, Chief Minister Pramod Sawant said, "I am taking updates from District Collectors on the matter. Red alert has been declared but as I have told earlier also people should avoid coming out if it is not necessary. Even the Water Resources Department (WRD) is constantly monitoring the water levels at dams in the State.

'Decision to reject resort proposal at Old Goa unanimous'

Team Herald

MARGAO: Curtorim MLA Aleixo Reginaldo Lourenco, who is a member of the Investment Promotion Board (IPB) said it was a unanimous decision taken by the Board to reject the proposal of the setting up a luxury resort in Old Goa.

Lourenco was speaking to the media after the Curtorim Gram sabha on Sunday. He stated that he had been opposing this project from the beginning and had even written two letters to the Chief Minister urging that the project be dropped citing various conservation and other related problems of the heritage zone of Old Goa.

Lourenco said the CM and the Industries Minister, besides himself, had said no to the project considering the dissent towards the project from the public.

The MLA, who is also the Chairman of the Goa Industrial Development Corporation (GIDC) added that the board also kept aside a proposal for a cottage project in an eco-sensitive zone in Quepem.

MAN-MADE DISASTER

VINCENT BRAGANZA



Construction debris dumped along the side of the road in waterlogged fields at Guirim. Lack of proper drainage system and monstrous development projects cropping up in the area have created a flood like situation

Nuven villagers hell bent on opposing Waste Management Plant; call on Yuri for help

Team Herald

MARGAO: A delegation of villagers from Nuven constituency submitted a memorandum to Leader of Opposition (LoP) Yuri Alemo to represent their opposition to a 150 TPD Biomethanation plant plus 150 MRF in the proposed Integrated Waste Management Plant to be set up at Verna, Loutolim Industrial Area.

"The plant is slated to be set up on a huge aquifer that is the origin of various springs that feed the Ambulor lake, which is the starting point of River Sal that runs through entire South Goa upto Betul," said the delegation, while also pointing out that the plant is



being set up a mere 350 metres from human habitation and nesting close to a number of pharma industries.

The delegation also hit back at comments made by Nuven MLA and Environment Minister Aleixo Sequeira that the opposition has only sprung up now

after he got elected. They pointed out that they have been raising this issue from 2017 and there are number of letters, correspondence and details of meetings held with the locals and all the authorities concerned regarding their opposition to the plant.

Digitisation of records in Revenue Courts, Quasi-Judicial authorities getting updated, Govt tells HC

Team Herald

MARGAO: In a significant development for Goa's judicial system, the State government has made key commitments to the Bombay High Court at Goa regarding the digitisation of records across Revenue Courts and other Quasi-Judicial Authorities.

In the latest court proceedings, Additional Government Advocate Deep Shirodkar informed the court that the development work on the Case Management System (CMS) portal had been completed as per the earlier commitment of May 7, 2024.

The court was also updated on the ongoing implementation and configuration of the system across 117 locations in Goa, for which the

deadline was set as August 7, 2024. Adv Shirodkar assured the court that this work was progressing, prompting the judges to schedule the next hearing for August 12, 2024, to further assess the implementation status.

This initiative stems from a petition filed by the South Goa Advocates Association (SGAA) in 2018, by the then President Adv Antonio Clovis Da Costa, which had sought computerization of records in Revenue Courts, Administrative Tribunals, Industrial Tribunals, Labour Courts, and Children's Courts, among others.

Being argued by Adv Nikhil Pai on behalf of SGAA, the petition, which aims to curb potential manipulation of records, especially in revenue

departments, requested the implementation of a comprehensive Case Information System (CIS). This system would encompass various aspects of case management, including filing, registration, notice generation, court updates, cause list creation, disposals, case status updates and judgement publication. The petitioners emphasized the need for public access to this information through an internet portal.

The petitioner had said these reforms in the current judicial and quasi-judicial setup across the state, would benefit both advocates and litigants alike, thereby potentially streamlining processes and enhancing the overall efficiency of the legal system in Goa.

Residents fret and fume as South Goa keeps plunging into darkness

Team Herald

MARGAO: South Goa residents are up in arms over persistent power supply issues that have plagued the region in recent days. The erratic electricity supply has not only disrupted daily life but also caused damage to household appliances, leaving locals frustrated and demanding immediate action.

The situation reached a critical point on Sunday afternoon onwards when a major breakdown at the Xeldem power station led to a prolonged outage lasting several hours. This incident has intensified public outcry, with many residents expressing their disappointment in the state's power infrastructure.

"We've been facing frequent power cuts for weeks now, but

today's blackout was the last straw. How are we supposed to function when we can't even rely on basic utilities?" said Maria Fernandes from Velim.

Velim MLA Cruz Silva and other local MLAs such as Aleixo Reginaldo Lourenco from Curtorim said they spoke to the Power Department to see that the issue was rectified. While Silva was critical of the power department questioning the efficacy of the recently-concluded power shutdown to repair the infrastructure, Lourenco spoke of what measures were initiated to address the problems that began at the affected power substations.

It may be recalled that Power Minister Sudin Dhavalikar had recently blamed the heavy downpour and falling of tree branches for losses.

Bhoma village floods, locals blame gutters choked with mud due to repeated digging

Team Herald

PONDA: For the first time, the Bhoma Bazaar area near the Sateri Temple on the National Highway faced unprecedented flooding. The rainwater levels rose and entered a local house as well as the Sateri Temple hall. Residents blamed the flooding on unplanned development work, particularly the blocking of rainwater drains during the installation of underground power cables. This obstruction led to choked gutters and inundated internal roads, causing inconvenience to locals, commuters, and disrupting traffic on NH.

Sanjay Naik of Bhoma voiced frustration, urging



immediate action from authorities to prevent future flooding near the main Sateri Temple in the village. After many failed attempts to contact the contractor for assistance, locals took it upon themselves to clear choked gutters and drains and allow stagnant water to flow.

Meanwhile, the Housing Board Colony at Curti also faced flooding issues,

exacerbated by ongoing development projects such as underground power cabling and sewerage network expansions. Despite the construction of new concrete box gutters, residential areas continued to flood, prompting local social worker Sherli Dias to call on the Curti Khandepar Panchayat to address the persistent problem that has plagued the area for years.

Farmers wail, stare at losses as rains leave crops damaged in Salcete

Huge tracts of paddy fields inundated; agricultural officers warn of crop rotting

Team Herald

MARGAO: Torrential rains have inundated vast expanses of paddy fields across Salcete taluka, leaving farmers and agricultural officials deeply concerned about potential crop losses. When asked about the impact, the agricultural department has warned that paddy seedlings may rot if submerged for more than five days, intensifying worries among the farming community.

A farmer from Seraulim highlighted the severity of the situation, stating, "With the floodwaters yet to recede, we are concerned that the seedlings might have already rotted."

Farmers in Nuven and Mungul are particularly affected as well, grappling with severe flooding of their paddy fields.

The impact of the incessant rains has been widespread, affecting numerous villages including Verna, Betalbatim,

and the khazan fields of Loutolim and Curtorim. Farmers from Navelim, Telaulim, Chinchinim, Carmona, and surrounding areas, who had just completed sowing their crops, now face the prospect of significant losses due to widespread flooding.

"The recent heavy rains have wreaked havoc, leading many farmers to speak about losses," said a senior farmer. In response to the crisis, agricultural officers have urged affected farmers to file complaints with the agriculture office to seek compensation, following the established procedures.

As the rains continue to pound the State, the agricultural community in Salcete taluka remains on high alert, hoping for a respite that would allow their crops to recover. The coming days will be crucial in determining the extent of the damage and the potential impact on local agriculture.

Houses, walls and vehicles damaged by falling trees as rain pummels Salcete taluka

Team Herald

MARGAO: Salcete faced severe disruption on Sunday as heavy rains accompanied by strong winds wreaked havoc, damaging five houses, one hut, and five vehicles that were struck by fallen trees. Fortunately, no injuries were reported despite the significant property damage.

Major incidents included the collapse of a portion of a house at Shirvodem-Margao, where former Home Guard Vimal Shirodkar, the owner, narrowly escaped harm as he had just stepped out. Two large tree branches fell on the road, damaging three cars, with firefighters managing to save property valued at Rs 25,000 was reported.

In Velim, another house suffered damage due to the heavy rains, although the estimated loss remains undisclosed. Near Manohar Parrikar Indoor Stadium at Colmorod-Navelim, a tree fell on a house.

Additional incidents included a jackfruit tree col-



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lapsing on a house and vehicles in Mugali, Davorlim, and another jungle tree falling on a hut in Mugali. Despite substantial damage amounting to an estimated loss of Rs one lakh, property worth Rs two lakh was salvaged in these cases.

Further instances of damage were reported, including a tree falling on a house near the Masjid in Shirvodem and the collapse of a mud house near Meera

vehicles trapped under branches promptly across multiple locations, working in the heavy rain. Notably, incidents involved a tree branch falling on a compound wall at Ambajim-Fatorda, a jackfruit tree obstructing the road near Carmel College Nuven, and another tree blocking the highway near St Francis Xavier Chapel in Navelim.

Efforts are ongoing to clear roads by cutting branches of fallen trees, with several incidents reported at SGPA Market Margao, where a large branch fell on the road and damaged some metal grills, causing a loss of Rs 10,000.

Later in the evening, a coconut tree fell on a house located behind Damodar High School at Comba, and another collapsed on a compound wall near Fatorda Stadium.

Truptesh Naik, Station Fire Officer at Cuncolim, reported six incidents handled by his team, starting early in the morning and continuing until evening amidst heavy rains and communication challenges.

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