

POST-MONSOON DELUGE OVERWHELMS GOA

Yellow alert issued for Oct 9, 10: IMD warns of thunderstorms, gusty winds

Team Herald

PANJIM: The India Meteorological Department (IMD), Goa, has issued a yellow alert for October 9 and 10, warning of thunderstorms accompanied by lightning and gusty winds in isolated areas across North and South Goa.

The IMD predicts that thunderstorms with gusty winds reaching speeds of 30-40 km/hour are likely in both districts during this period.

In the meantime, rainfall associated with the retreating monsoon caught many Goans off guard, as rain lashed the State on Monday evening. This pattern continued into Tuesday, leading to thunderstorms and causing disruptions to normal life. Traffic in the capital city of Panjim was severely affected, with waterlogging reported on the Atal Setu and

RAINFALL RECORDED AT VARIOUS GAUGE STATIONS OVER THE 24 HOURS ENDING AT 8.30 AM ON OCTOBER 8:

Sangem: 1.76 inches

Ponda: 1.6 inches

Old Goa: 1.64 inches

Mapusa: 1.4 inches

Sanquelim: 1.4 inches

Margao: 1.4 inches

Valpoi: 1.4 inches

Canacona: 1.2 inches

Panjim: 0.94 inches

Mormugao: 0.85 inches

Pernem: 0.81 inches

Dabolim: 0.54 inches

vehicles moving at a snail's pace thanks to poor visibility and easy-to-miss potholes filled with rainwater.

Lightning strike damages Holy Spirit Church, Margao reels from storm

Waterlogging around Municipal building and garden; house caves in leaving three injured; falling trees keep firemen busy

Team Herald

MARGAO: Lightning struck a turret of the 460-year-old Holy Spirit Church in Margao, causing a few stones to fall onto the courtyard below. Nobody was hurt, but a scooter parked below was damaged by the falling debris.

As news spread, a number of Margao parishioners and passersby braved the rain to gather in the churchyard, anguished at the damage to the formidable façade of the baroque-style church.



At first glance, it appears that a decorative pinnacle atop the church has borne the brunt of the strike. The crowd gathered at the church voiced their concern about whether the heritage

structure would be repaired properly and restored to its former glory.

In a separate incident, three people were injured when the walls of a house near the Margao flyover collapsed due to the incessant rain. The three occupants were rushed to hospital in an ambulance. Firemen responded to multiple instances of falling tree branches, one which damaged a car at Khareband.

Waterlogging plagued several areas of Margao, with the vicinity of the Municipal building and garden experiencing particularly severe flooding. The corridor surrounding the MMC building was submerged, disrupt-



ing hawkers and cobblers who struggled to keep their

goods dry. Vehicles driving through the flooded streets sent waves of water into the MMC corridor, leaving homeless people who typically sleep outside the building without a dry spot to rest for the night.

MMC councillors who had gathered for the civic body meeting said that waterlogging was due to the clogged drains, adding that they need to be kept clear even after the monsoon season.

Storm pushes Cortalim-Marcaim ferry off course, passengers stranded for three hours

Team Herald

PONDA: Panic gripped passengers on a ferry boat travelling from Cortalim to the Marcaim ramp after the vessel drifted off course and became stuck in the mud midway due to gusty winds and heavy rain. The incident occurred at around 6.30 pm, leaving passengers stranded on the ferry, exposed to the downpour for over three hours.

The ferry, packed with people and vehicles, was finally freed from the muck around 10 pm during high tide and floated its way to the Marcaim ramp. Ponda Fire personnel arrived on the scene to assist.

The ferry route, spanning around 1.5 kilometres, is commonly used by passengers, including factory workers and government employees traveling to the Verna Industrial Estate and Ponda. Many passengers expressed concern over the safety of this water route, which they feel is risky, especially during harsh weather conditions.

Marcaim Sarpanch Shailendra Panjikar acknowledged that such incidents are common during heavy winds, particularly given the length of the ferry route, which he noted as the longest in Goa. He suggested relocating the Cortalim ferry ramp to Agasaim, directly opposite to Marcaim ramp, which would significantly shorten the route and provide a safer journey. Panjikar added that the bandhara (embankment) at Agasaim has already been widened, making it suitable for light vehicles if a new ramp is constructed on that side.

Taleigao farmers hit as kharif crop is ravaged by rain

The standing paddy crop has fallen to the ground, making it difficult to harvest

Team Herald

PANJIM: Farmers in Taleigao are reeling from losses caused by the sudden heavy rains that lashed the State on Monday and Tuesday. The unexpected downpour destroyed or severely damaged their paddy crops, leaving many farmers struggling to salvage their hard work. Farmers who had already harvested their crops faced difficulties drying the grains, while those yet to harvest found their crops bent or flattened by the rains.



Nitin D'Souza, a young farmer who has been growing paddy since the age of 15, expressed frustration, noting, "When it rains like this, the crop bends. Farmers who were supposed to harvest now find their crops on the ground. Those who harvested earlier can't dry the grains properly."

Senior citizen Luciano, another local farmer, shared similar concerns. He explained that a group of farmers had pooled resources to request a harvester from

the government, enabling them to harvest the crops of 21 farmers before the rains hit. However, despite these efforts, the damage from the rains was considerable. "The compensation provided by the government is not enough to cover our losses, but we can't entirely blame them," Luciano said.

Luciano also discussed the challenges farmers face with the pricing of their crops. Farmers in Taleigao grow two varieties of rice—

Jaya (white rice) and Jyoti (brown rice). While the government's minimum price is Rs 20 per kg, buyers offer only Rs 17 per kg, which he described as uneconomical. "If they buy at Rs 75 and sell at Rs 100, we have no issues. But the current system is just not fair," he added.

Luciano emphasised the need for community farming to streamline the harvesting process, though some farmers prefer their independence. "Some farmers grow Jyoti and

some grow Jaya, so the harvesting time differs. A few of us have started growing the same variety to harvest at one time, but even this season, we suffered badly," he lamented. He also raised concerns about the financial strain caused by transportation and processing costs, which outweigh the benefits of government compensation.

"The government pays us Rs 1,700 per 100 kgs and we have to pay Rs 3,000 only to transport it there. So, there is no benefit. And to dehusk the rice is a big problem. I'm helping young Nathan because he is enthusiastic, and we work well together. I do take advice from him too and he helps me a lot in marketing," Luciano says with a smile.

Bicholim grapples with flooding, power outages; trees uprooted

Team Herald

BICHOIM: Heavy rains accompanied by gusty winds and lightning on Tuesday evening caused widespread disruption across Bicholim taluka, throwing normal life out of gear.

Incidents of uprooted trees and damaged electricity poles were reported throughout the taluka, resulting in widespread power outages. Many areas were plunged into darkness as electricity poles and wires sustained damage, while low-lying areas faced waterlogging after around two hours of heavy rain.

Rahul Dessai, Station Fire Officer (SFO) at Bicholim,



stated that fire personnel responded to 13 calls related to trees falling on roads and houses. Fire teams were dispatched to clear the debris, ensuring the re-opening of roads to allow vehicular movement. The fire department remained on high alert throughout the evening as they worked to address the various incidents caused by the storm.

Heated Margao Council meet tackles surveillance, finances, town projects

Municipality moves forward with building renovation, air quality monitoring and improving waste mgmt infra

Team Herald

MARGAO: Margao's iconic MMC building is set to undergo a full renovation, with a consultant engaged to submit plans by Diwali, including the installation of a lift and enhanced lighting. Minor repairs, such as painting, will be done in the interim.

He added that the consultant had carried out the inspection of the building, taken the measurements, and made suggestions, including installing a lift and illuminating the building. MMC has also decided to grant the Goa State Pollution Control Board (GSPCB) an NOC to set up an Ambient Air Quality Monitoring Station, while it was also decided to prepare a heatmap plan for the town.

Shirodkar added that proposals regarding sorting out technical issues about the traffic signal near the housing board, an NOC for a pumping station in Fatorda for the sewerage corporation, among others, had also been cleared. It



was also decided to study the road in Old Market near the Municipal Garbage area as there are demands to widen the road so that the use of the municipal property there is maximized.

MMC also passed a resolution to construct a concrete road with a gutter, rainwater harvesting tank, ramp, etc., on the eastern side of the Municipal Solid Waste Shed at Sonsoddo. Shirodkar stated that this would be beneficial in the long run as the quality of the road would improve and last for a longer period. A resolution

was also passed to supply packing strips of 12mm rolls for baling plastic waste within the jurisdiction of the MMC through the 14th Finance Commission Grants.

A decision was also taken regarding the construction of a shed on the existing MMC market building. It was also decided to renovate the Ganapati Pujan Hall in the municipal garden and the workers' room in the garden. A proposal was also made for opening a coffee shop in the garden, but it was decided to seek legal opinion first.

Hunt on for staffer accused of embezzling feast fair revenues, says MMC Chairperson

Team Herald

MARGAO: Addressing allegations of misappropriation of funds during the Margao feast fair held in May this year, MMC Chairperson Damodar Shirodkar said legal counsel has been sought to resolve the matter. Shirodkar revealed that police are actively searching for the accused MMC clerk, whose services were terminated, while efforts to recover the embezzled funds are ongoing. The clerk had alleg-

Councillor Sagun Naik raised concerns about whether the MMC's records are stored properly and are not being manipulated for vested interests

edly misappropriated over Rs 17 lakh from the revenues generated from the fair stalls.

Councillor Sagun Naik raised concerns about whether the MMC's records are stored properly and are not being manipulated for vested interests. He gave the example of how a registration number provided by the MMC has two different party names.

In response, the Chairperson directed the Chief Officer to call the two parties concerned and also speak to the accounts section of MMC to investigate the matter promptly.

Fiery debate over pending bills for animal shelter, Shivaji Jayanti programme

Team Herald

MARGAO: A heated exchange took place at the Margao Municipal Council meeting over a backlog of payments owed to the animal/dog shelter. Former MMC Chairperson Lyndon Pereira and current Chairperson Da-

modar Shirodkar accused each other of negligence in clearing the 30-month pending bills. Questions were raised about the amount MMC has to pay and the need to verify these payment claims first, given that the total figure is substantially high.

Another flashpoint occurred regarding payments for a Shivaji Jayanti programme. Opposition councillors accused the administration of financial mismanagement, but Shirodkar firmly denied the claims, insisting that all financial records are transparent.

MMC approves phased installation of CCTV cameras to combat rising crime

Team Herald

MARGAO: The Margao Municipal Council (MMC) has finally approved the installation of CCTV cameras at 38 locations within its jurisdiction in the first phase. The project, funded through the MPLAD scheme, addresses growing concerns among residents over rising thefts.

A resolution was passed at the MMC meeting held on Tuesday, marking a step forward after years of delay. Chairperson Damodar Shirodkar emphasised the need for better surveillance as a response to public demand.

FRESH FISH, NO FOUL PLAY: Export units in Cuncolim deflect pollution blame to sole fish meal plant

Team Herald

MARGAO: The Seafood Exporters Association of India (SEAI) has firmly refuted allegations of environmental pollution linked to fish processing units, following criticism from political leaders over the operations of fish meal plants. In a statement, SEAI clarified that there is only one fish meal plant in the Cuncolim Industrial Estate, while the other six facilities are fresh fish exporters. The association believes that authorities and political leaders are unfairly targeting the entire sector, despite the fact that the pollution concerns stem solely from the fish meal unit.

Ibrahim Maulana, President of SEAI for the Goa region, as-

'SEAFOOD EXPORTERS HIT BY FISH FAMINE, LACK OF LOCAL EXPORT INFRA'

The Seafood Exporters Association of India (SEAI) has raised concerns about the challenges currently facing the fishing industry, particularly the significant reduction in fish yields this season. According to association president Ibrahim Maulana, a lack of local export infrastructure in Goa is compounding the issue. Fish caught in Goa must be sent to Mumbai for export, making the process more cumbersome and less efficient, particularly when yields are already low. The association is urging the Goa government to address this issue to support both fishermen and exporters

serted that their fresh fish exporting operations comply with

international hygiene and safety standards and operate under

Outrage as untreated waste from fish plants flows into water bodies at Cuncolim

MARGAO: The pollution caused by the untreated waste from fish plants flowing into water bodies at Cuncolim has caused an outrage among the local community. The waste, which is rich in oil and other pollutants, is being discharged directly into the water, causing a foul smell and posing a threat to the environment. The local residents have expressed their anger and demand that the government take immediate action to stop the waste from being discharged into the water.

Maulana invited Chief Minister Pramod Sawant, Leader of Opposition Yuri Alemão, and

other officials to visit their facilities and see firsthand the efforts made to address environmental concerns. He urged leaders to engage in informed discussions instead of placing unjust blame on the fish exporters.

SEAI also criticised the Goa State Pollution Control Board, claiming that the board has not offered constructive solutions but has only taken action against alleged violations. "Several steel plants are also contributing to pollution, and the authorities should look into their affairs instead of solely targeting fish

Despite our dedication to maintaining high operational standards, the misinformation surrounding our industry has impacted our reputation. Our clients are now questioning us due to false reports that have appeared in the media

-Ibrahim Maulana, Seafood Exporters Association of India President, Goa region

exporters," he urged. Maulana concluded by calling for recognition of the employment opportunities provided by fish processing plants and urged for a more balanced approach in addressing environmental issues in the area.

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