

# THE HEAT IS ON: TEN MARGAO EATERIES SHUT

GSPCB directs South DM to seal several restaurants for releasing wastewater into the drains; Addl Collector-I says 46 establishments have been issued closure orders

Team Herald

**MARGAO:** Continuing its crackdown on environmental violations, the Goa State Pollution Control Board (GSPCB) has directed the South Goa District Magistrate to seal several establishments, primarily restaurants in Margao for releasing wastewater into the drains.

According to Additional Collector-I Srinet Kothwale, a total of nearly 46 establishments have been issued closure orders.

"The sealing process commenced on Monday, and by the evening, around 10 establishments were sealed. Owners have been instructed to shut their businesses voluntarily or face further action," Kothwale said.

The action comes after an inspection by the GSPCB, which found that numerous hotels and restaurants in Margao, discharging waste and kitchen water into stormwater drains.

In addition to this, many of the establishments were operating without the necessary consent to operate from the Board, in clear violation of the Water (Prevention and Control of Pollution) Act, 1974, and the Air (Prevention and Control of

## POLLUTION CONTROL BOARD INSPECTION FOUND

- Many establishments operating in clear violation of the Water (Prevention and Control of Pollution) Act, 1974, & the Air (Prevention and Control of Pollution) Act, 1981
- Engaging in commercial activities—such as cafes and hotels—without GSPCB approvals
- Were sealed for discharging kitchen wastewater into a

stormwater drain & for operating without mandatory consent

- Issued show-cause notices, directed to cease operations until further orders

- The MMC had identified over 200 establishments conducting business without properly connecting their sewage to the sewerage network

Pollution) Act, 1981.

During the inspection, it was also noted that these businesses were engaging in commercial activities—such as cafes and hotels—without obtaining the required approvals from the GSPCB. The release of domestic wastewater into stormwater drains was another key violation highlighted by the team.

The GSPCB issued show-cause notices, pointing out that operating these units without valid consent from the Board violates key provisions of both the Water and Air Acts. The notice further instructed the establishments to cease operations until further orders.

Restaurants sealed on Monday were found to be discharging kitchen wastewater into a stormwater drain and operating without the mandatory consent. The Margao Municipal Council had earlier identified over 200 establishments in the town conducting business without properly connecting their wastewater and sewage to the underground sewerage network.

This move underscores the authorities' commitment to enforce environmental regulations and ensure that businesses comply with the necessary standards to prevent pollution.

## Respondents seek more time to file replies on River Sal pollution

**MARGAO:** Respondents, including the Margao Municipal Council (MMC), sought additional time to file their affidavits during the hearing on the River Sal pollution issue on Monday, as the High Court adjourned the matter to January 21.

According to sources, the respondents claimed to have compiled much of the required information and needed more time to address certain gaps before submitting their affidavits.

Professor Antonio Alvares, the petitioner, who filed the Public Interest Litigation (PIL), emphasised the urgency of addressing the systemic failures contributing to the river's pollution.

# Persistent sewage flow poses health risks at Comba Subway

Residents say the challenges vary by season, as the area gets flooded during monsoon, sewage overflows after rains and maintenance works disrupt traffic

Team Herald

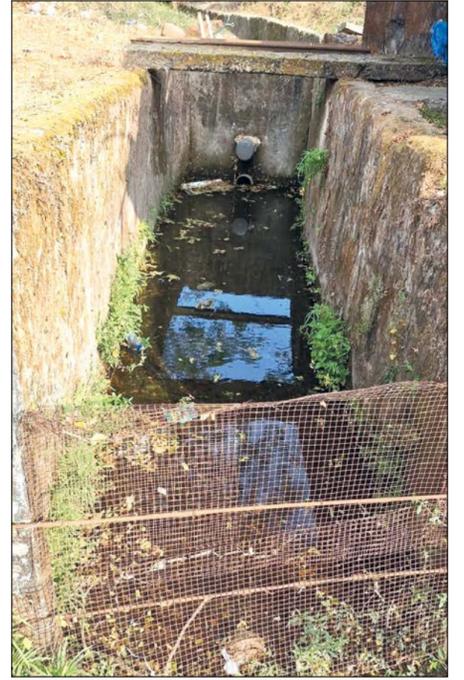
**MARGAO:** Concerns over sewage flowing through the Comba Subway in Margao have reignited debates about public health hazards and infrastructural shortcomings in the area. Sanjay Dessai, a college principal, whose institution is located near the subway, voiced his apprehensions about the health risks posed by the persistent sewage flow. He pointed out that sewage water was flowing along the side portion of the subway road.

It is pertinent to note that this portion is designed for rainwater drainage. Dessai also shared photographic evidence to highlight the gravity of the issue.

The Shadow Council for Margao (SCM) convener Savio Coutinho highlighted the recurring hardships faced by commuters and residents at the Comba level crossing. According to him, the challenges vary by season, with flooding during the monsoons, sewage overflow in the post-monsoon period, and maintenance works disrupting traffic at other times.

Coutinho recalled a similar instance last year when the local MLA, Digambar Kamat, inspected the site following reports of sewage flooding. While Kamat had attributed the issue to a septic tank in the vicinity, even clearing the suspected source failed to resolve the problem, as the seepage continued.

The SCM convener criticised the substandard work carried out by contractors of the sewage corporation, alleging that the seepage of raw sewage into the surrounding soil is evident at nearly every manhole. This, he said, leads to sewage flowing into open spaces, exacerbating the problem. Despite repeated warnings, the sewage corporation is unwilling to



Sewage flows along the side portion of the subway road at Comba

## INFRA SHORTCOMINGS

- The locals accuse contractors of the sewage corporation for the substandard work
- Allege that the seepage of raw sewage into the surrounding soil is evident at nearly every manhole
- Claim Sewage flowing into open spaces has exacerbated the problem
- Say despite repeated warnings, the sewage corp is not acknowledging the flaws
- Warn of a potential crisis, stating that the unchecked seepage could contaminate the town's wells

acknowledge the flaws.

Coutinho warned of a potential crisis, stating that the unchecked seepage could contaminate the town's wells, leaving residents with no choice, but to abandon them.

The Margao Urban Health Centre (UHC) had taken note of the situation, urging the authorities to address the issue. Despite inspections in the past, the

problem persists, indicating lack of effective solutions. The SCM called upon the PWD to ensure a watertight surface in the subway to prevent seepage and investigate the root cause of contamination.

Citizens continue to demand immediate action to mitigate the health and environmental hazards posed by the sewage flow through the subway.

## Forest Dept daily wage workers demand pay hike and job security

Team Herald

**MARGAO:** Calling upon the government to address their plight in the Goa Legislative Assembly, daily wage workers from the Forest Department demanded a hike in salary, claiming that they continue to face job insecurity and lack basic benefits such as insurance, paid leave and travel allowances despite being in service for the past 18 years.

Frustrated by unfulfilled promises, the workers met with Benaulim MLA Venzy Viegas recently to press for their demands. They accused the government of focusing on political gains and neglecting their welfare. Highlighting the gap between pre-election commitments and post-election actions, they emphasised that their concerns raised earlier, have remained unresolved.

To safeguard their future, the employees have demanded temporary appointments to secure their rights and improve their livelihood. They urged authorities to take concrete steps to address their long-standing grievances without delay.

Viegas criticised the State government for overlooking the demands of these workers and for making empty promises. He assured to raise their issue up in the Assembly and with the Forest Department too.

## CAPTURING THE RIGHT FRAME

SAGUN GAWADE



Domestic tourists capture the scenic view on their mobile phones as they enjoy a boat ride at the Bhagwan Mahavir Bal Vihar popularly known as Children's Park, Campal, Panjim. The leisure activity resumed at the park after a long time

# Fisheries union chief threatened, harassed by two 'cops'

Union writes to CM, demanding immediate action; calls for strict enforcement against illegal sand mining in River Mandovi

Team Herald

**MARGAO:** The All Goa Small Scale Responsible Fisheries Union has alleged threats and harassment to its president, Shaila D'Mello, by two men claiming to be police officials.

In a letter addressed to Chief Minister Pramod Sawant, senior officials and law enforcement authorities, the Union detailed a series of incidents and demanded immediate action to address these concerns, urging strict enforcement against illegal sand mining in the Mandovi River.

Represented by its

secretary Laximan Mangueskar, the union has claimed that the harassment started on January 2, 2025, when D'Mello received a call from an unidentified number- 9325085806, instructing her to visit a police station without formal notice.

"The president refused to comply with such arbitrary demands," Mangueskar stated. Matters escalated on January 10, when two men arrived at D'Mello's residence in Cacra, Tiswadi, at 3.30 pm and requested her to accompany them to a local temple, which she refused. The men, dressed in plain clothes without identification or badges and then entered her home.

Mangueskar noted that the men strongly objected to the Union's activities, including its official communications with government departments, media engagements and complaints against illegal sand mining, particularly around Chorao Island.

"They specifically warned that D'Mello would face harm for signing documents in her capacity as the union's president," he said.

Under duress, the men allegedly coerced her into signing a blank sheet of paper, the contents of which remain unknown. After leaving her residence, one of the men reportedly called her twice using abusive language.

## Margao Comunidade panel elected

Team Herald

**MARGAO:** The managing committee of the Comunidade of Margao for 2025-2028 was elected unopposed.

Sávio Joaquim Filipe Correia has been elected as President, while Celestino A B de Noronha and Jesus Gomes will serve as Attorney and Treasurer respectively. The substitute positions will be held by Gino de Piedade Collaco (President), Franz Schubert Cotta (Attorney), and Joao Bush Miranda (Treasurer).

The election proceedings were conducted under the supervision of Rohan Naik (Awal Karkun), assisted by Varsha Naik (Talathi) and Amaro Afonso (Escrivão). Savio and Celestino have se-



Members of the Comunidade of Margao managing committee

lected their fourth Comunidade committee position this year, having previously won elections in Aquem, Dicarpale and Davorlim.

The Comunidade election season in South Goa will conclude

next Sunday with four remaining polls scheduled in Salcete and Sanguem talukas. The last phase of elections will be held in Verna and Gandaulim (Salcete taluka), and Cavrem and Cusmona (Sanguem taluka).

# Benaulim locals now turn to CM to halt 'illegal' resort construction

Allege that the 'illegal' construction is carried out within 150 mtrs of HTL and in a residential complex

Team Herald

**MARGAO:** Fed up with the vague and evasive replies from various departments, the Benaulim locals have now sought Chief Minister Pramod Sawant's intervention to halt the alleged illegal construction of a resort within 150 metres of the high tide line (HTL) and that too in a residential complex in the village.

In their complaint to the CM, they highlighted that the construction is taking place near Maria Hall, in the heart of the village.

They hope the CM will intervene to prevent escalation of what they describe as an unlawful construction project.

H C Pant, a member of the Lotus Hermitage Residents Association, stated that the violations were reported to the panchayat, Urban Development Department, Tourism Department, and CRZ authorities. He said the responses received were vague and evasive.

"Applications under the RTI Act were submitted to these depts, but their replies were either inadequate or irrelevant. We are now compelled to approach the CM to halt this illegal construction, which will cause significant harm to the

## RESIDENTS CLAIM

- Violations were reported to panchayat, Urban Development & Tourism Departments, and CRZ authorities
- Applications under RTI Act were submitted, but the replies were vague & evasive
- The illegal construction will cause significant harm to the residents
- In the past year, the complex's management partially demolished the interiors and the front
- façade of the building, converting it into a full-fledged hotel
- Construction work has reportedly been ongoing 24/7, with floodlights being used at night and workers brought in from outside the State
- Despite complaints, only a few inspectors visited the site, but no action was initiated
- Instead, the construction has accelerated in recent months

residents," Pant said.

He explained that the Lotus Hermitage Complex comprises 166 residential units, most of which are owned by Non-Resident Indians (NRIs). In addition, 33 units were sold in 1992 for time-sharing purposes to a Mumbai-based party. Initially, these time-sharing units were used as a hotel, but following numerous complaints from residents about noise and misuse, the management attempted to convert it into a guesthouse in 2013.

Pant claims that the complex's management has

partially demolished the interiors and the front façade of the building, converting it into a full-fledged hotel. Construction work has reportedly been ongoing 24/7, with floodlights being used at night and workers brought in from outside the State, as far as Kolkata.

Despite several complaints over the last eight to nine months, Pant said the situation has worsened, with a few inspectors visiting the site, but no significant action taken. Instead, he claimed that the construction has accelerated in recent months.

MAX. TEMP 33.8 °C  
MIN. TEMP 22.4 °C

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Sorry! We can barely fit you, forget your car!