

Farmers in Corgao struggle as hungry wild animals destroy crops

Farmers from Corgao in particular, and the entire Pernem taluka in general, are going through tough times as crops are being destroyed by bison. Wild animals have damaged fields in villages across the region during both the rabi and kharif seasons, leaving farmers in distress.

Extensive damage to crops here is caused by peacocks, bison, wild boar, and

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pigeons. Sugarcane, bananas, coconut saplings, pulses, chillies, seasonal vegetables, and other crops are destroyed overnight, plunging farmers into colossal losses. In fact, the entire Pernem taluka has been at the mercy of wild animals, with the maximum crop damage being inflicted by



marauding herds of bison.

Currently, three herds of bison are regularly spotted at Corgao, even during the day. Farmers try to do their bit by keeping a watch from mashans, but maintaining a night vigil is simply not feasible after a long day of toiling in the fields. They also live in fear of being attacked by wild animals, making it dangerous to guard their

land after dark.

One cannot blame the wild animals either, as their habitat has been deliberately destroyed by humans for construction purposes. Everywhere, hills are being set afire, land is being fenced, and animals are being left homeless. Constructions have cropped up in every nook and corner of Pernem taluka, forcing

wildlife to encroach upon farmland in search of food.

Compensation paid to affected farmers is a farce, as they are forced to run from pillar to post for measly amounts given by the agriculture department. The financial assistance provided is often inadequate and delayed, adding to their frustration.

Many farmers would

prefer to install solar-powered fencing to protect their fields, but they struggle with a hand-to-mouth existence and simply do not have the resources to do so. The agriculture department's policy of requiring farmers to pay upfront and claim subsidies later makes it even more difficult for them to adopt preventive measures.

Most farmers in the locality are senior citizens who have lived off the land for decades. Today, they are a helpless lot, watching their hard work go to waste. They hope the government will step in with a lasting solution to this pressing issue and that the Forest Department will take action against those responsible for destroying the natural habitat of wild animals.

shorttakes

1 GAMBLING RACKET BUSTED AT ZUARINAGAR, 3 HELD

PANJIM: The Crime Branch of Goa Police busted an online gambling racket at Zuarinagar and arrested three persons including a local agent involved in facilitating the illegal activity and seized three tablets, a router and a cash of Rs 18,500, all worth Rs 1,12,500 from their possession.

The accused have been identified as Nishant Pujari and Prashantha Shetty, both natives of Udipi, Karnataka, and Noorsab Sayed from Navelim.

They were arrested during a raid conducted in premises near Sapna Hotel, Zuarinagar, Sancoale, on March 7. Nishant and Prashantha were engaged in illegal online gambling in the premises.

2 GOVT HOLDS MEET TO ADDRESS MEAT SUPPLY ISSUE

MARGAO: A high-level government meeting was held to address the meat supply issue in Goa, following concerns raised by consumers.

Environment and Law Minister Aleixo Sequeira, who chaired the meeting, stated, "Chaired a follow-up meeting on the meat supply issue in Goa to address concerns raised by consumers."

3 GKF APPOINTS OVERSEAS REPS TO BOOST ROMI LIPI MOVEMENT

MARGAO: The Global Konkani Forum (GKF) has announced the appointment of overseas representatives to strengthen the Konkani movement in Roman script globally. The organisation has selected committed and dedicated members from the Goan diaspora settled across different countries to lead this initiative.

According to Jose Salvador Fernandes, GKF Secretary, the Overseas Committee has appointed representatives in multiple countries including Savio Rodrigues in California, Mackvin Dias in Canada, and Max Vaz and Severina Vaz in New Zealand. Other appointments include Bina D'Sa Fernandes in Muscat, Nelson Fernandes in Qatar, and Rosario Fernandes in Dubai.

The Forum has also named Menino Fernandes, Luis Fernandes and Treza Fernandes as representatives in Bahrain, Victor Sans Fernandes in Kuwait, and Agnelo Lobo, Sebastiao Fernandes and Felcy Rebello in the United Kingdom. Additional representatives include Gabru Noquero, Seby Pereira and Assis Fernandes in Cayman Islands, Ajoy Fernandes in Ireland, and Seby Cardozo in Israel.

Faulty design, poor coordination plague ongoing works on MDR10 Siolim Road



The ongoing works on the MDR10 Siolim road appear to have been designed without proper planning or consideration by the engineers. A few months ago, I had reported a handwritten complaint

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about transformer centre poles being installed inside the newly constructed rain-storm drain. Following this, the electricity department engineers informed me that they had requested the PWD to dig another rainstorm drain—but at whose cost?

Now, a distribution box has been erected direct-

ly on the drain, which is meant to facilitate a footpath for the public. In the accompanying picture, a senior citizen can be seen struggling to navigate the so-called footpath. A closer inspection of the MDR10 road reveals numerous instances of poor design by the PWD and an evident lack of coordination with the electricity department.

Such flawed designs are nothing but a drain on the government's coffers, while contractors are compensated heavily despite shoddy execution. I hope this matter will soon be taken up by the Reconciliation Committee—the sooner, the better.

Margao's crumbling civic infrastructure puts pedestrians and motorists at risk

Several areas in Margao have become increasingly hazardous for both pedestrians and vehicular traffic. Raised road levels due to repeated retarring, uncovered drains, missing pavers, and broken gutter lids make navigation difficult and unsafe.

Minor accidents occur frequently, especially at night and in poorly lit

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areas, posing a constant risk to residents. The government authorities must take urgent action to inspect and repair this crumbling civic infrastructure before a major mishap occurs. After all, taxpayer money is meant for public welfare—not for politicians to feather their nests.



Rogue monkey terrorising residents of ward 5 in Cuncolim

For more than five months, residents of Ward 5 in Gouleacoto, Cuncolim, have been living in fear due to a rogue monkey that has been stealing fruits and eatables while brazenly entering homes. The monkey has also attacked several stray and pet dogs, mauling them

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inside compounds and even causing fatalities.

In the accompanying photo, the rogue monkey is seen perched atop a wall, seemingly waiting to attack. Despite mul-



multiple complaints to the authorities, the Forest Department has failed to trap the animal so far. Even a signature campaign initiated by res-

idents, urging action against the monkey, has not yielded any results.

According to locals, the monkey poses a serious threat, especially to young children, as a primary school is located nearby. This issue cannot be taken lightly by the authorities, as the risk to life and property is real. Immediate action must be taken to capture the animal and release it deep into the wild, far from human settlements.

Given the severity of the situation, it is imperative for the local elected representative to step in and ensure that the matter is resolved at the earliest.

Neglected utility box in Mapusa poses safety hazard



There has been a lot of talk about underground infrastructure in recent years—underground electricity cables, underground water pipelines, underground sewerage systems, underground hydrant systems, underground telecommunication systems, and more. Given this push towards placing essential utilities underground, one

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wonders what purpose this above-ground utility box still serves in the heart of Mapusa city.

Located right in front of Union Pharmacy, this box was once an important hub for landline telephone connections. However, over time, its relevance has diminished, and today, it stands as nothing more than an eyesore—rusted, covered with a tattered tarpaulin, and dangerously

in its current condition, the structure appears highly unstable and is quite capable of toppling over, potentially causing harm to pedestrians, motorists, or nearby property.

What is even more concerning is the apparent apathy of the authorities. Despite its deteriorating state and the obvious safety risk it poses, no action has been taken to either repair or remove it. One fails to understand why such a blatant hazard is being ignored. It is only a matter of time before an unfortunate incident occurs, at which point the authorities will scramble to act—too little, too late.

It is high time that those responsible take immediate steps to address the issue. If the box still serves a purpose, it should be properly maintained, reinforced, and kept upright. If not, it should be dismantled and removed without delay. Public safety should not be compromised due to negligence and bureaucratic inertia.

Well water contaminated with effluents for seven months, but no govt action

During the monsoon last year, the well at my home in Cunchelim-Mapusa suddenly became contaminated – the water turned murky, with a film of oil or grease over it. The water from our well was always clear and sweet, and we depended on this water for all our needs, from drinking and cooking to washing and watering our crops. During summers, when many people in the neighbourhood faced water shortage, this

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well would provide us all with clean water.

In July 2024, I complained to all the relevant authorities in the hope of identifying the cause of this contamination and to get my well cleaned and restored. Health department officials visited my house after my complaint, collected samples and gave me a shocking report – my



well water was contaminated with E coli bacteria (likely from sewage) as well as various chemicals, making it unfit for human consumption. A test report from the Goa Pollution Control Board confirmed that the well was polluted with several petrochemicals - high levels of phenanthrene, benzo pyrene, indeno pyrene, fluorine and anthracene among oth-

ers were found in the water, which also has a petroleum smell.

For the last seven months now, I have been running from pillar to post to elicit action from the authorities. While I suspect that a fuel station close to my house may be the cause of the pollution, I require the authorities to conduct an investigation and take nec-

Parameters	Test Methods	Units	Test Results	Permissible Limits
Phenanthrene	8440 B, APHA 24 th Edition	mg/l	0.004	0.0001
Fluoranthene	8440 B, APHA 24 th Edition	mg/l	BDL	0.0001
Pyrene	8440 B, APHA 24 th Edition	mg/l	0.003	0.0001
Chrysen	8440 B, APHA 24 th Edition	mg/l	BDL	0.0001
Benzo(a)anthracene	8440 B, APHA 24 th Edition	mg/l	BDL	0.0001
Benzo(b)fluoranthene	8440 B, APHA 24 th Edition	mg/l	BDL	0.0001
Benzo(k)fluoranthene	8440 B, APHA 24 th Edition	mg/l	0.003	0.0001
Benzo(e)pyrene	8440 B, APHA 24 th Edition	mg/l	BDL	0.0001
Benzo(a)pyrene	8440 B, APHA 24 th Edition	mg/l	0.003	0.0001
Perylene	8440 B, APHA 24 th Edition	mg/l	BDL	0.0001
Benzo(g,h)anthracene	8440 B, APHA 24 th Edition	mg/l	BDL	0.0001
Dibenz(a,h)anthracene	8440 B, APHA 24 th Edition	mg/l	BDL	0.0001
Indeno(1,2,3-cd)pyrene	8440 B, APHA 24 th Edition	mg/l	0.005	0.0001

essary action to restore my drinking water source.

Despite repeated complaints, trips and letters to the Goa State Pollution Control Board, I have not received any helpful response. For months now, my family has been forced to purchase water and are facing great difficulty in obtaining tankers. With the scorching summer expected this year, we urgently need the well to be cleaned and the pollution source to be plugged, so we can get

on with our lives. Is it too much to ask for tax-paying citizens to receive assistance from the government for something as basic as clean drinking water? Is it not their duty to address our problem? I urge the authorities, including the pollution control board to take note of our predicament, and on humanitarian grounds, respond to my complaints.

As of now the well water smells of petrol and is unbearable.

Pushcarts and coconut hawkers obstruct the way outside Mapusa

Commuters who frequent the busy and often congested Mapusa Bus Stand are further inconvenienced due to the obstructions posed by food carts and hawkers just outside the entrance of the terminus.

The hawkers and their push carts take up precious space on the roads and the pavement, in blatant violation of the law, leaving pedestrians to walk dangerously amongst traffic on the road.

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These illegal businesses should ideally be shut down and penalised under Section 283 of the IPC, which prescribes a punishment/fine for anyone who, in any public way or place, obstructs or causes any danger to the life, health, or safety of people.

The tender coconut push carts are a menace at this spot for so many reasons-



first, it is not a designated vending space. Their customers crowd around the carts, creating an obstruction and crowd at the entrance of the bus stop. Some customers park haphazardly to enjoy their coconut, oblivious to the difficulties faced by other road-users.

Garbage management is very poor – often, one sees plastic straws and coconut shells littered around the area. Even if the coconut shells are cleared out at the end of the day, they are not disposed off properly,

and end up in a field or on a secluded stretch of road. Coconut shells take a long time to break down and being bulky, pose a risk to motorists. The government needs to implement a proper disposal system for coconut waste, as the shells also turn into receptacles for water, thus becoming breeding grounds for mosquitoes. I urge the Mapusa authorities to relocate these carts to a designated vending space and ensure that their waste is managed properly.