

After 5 days without water, Ponda locals threaten 'rasta roko'

Within the same week, the PWD office in Daag has witnessed desperate residents from different parts of Ponda –Usgao, Bethora and now, Prabunagar-Curti—demanding an explanation for the water scarcity

Team Herald

PONDA: Frustrated residents of Prabunagar, Curti, staged a protest at the PWD office in Ponda on Thursday after enduring five days without water. Angry locals warned they would block roads in a 'rasta roko' protest if their water supply was not restored immediately.

The ongoing water crisis has intensified across Ponda taluka with temperatures soaring and taps running dry. Earlier this week, residents from Usgao and Bethora also confronted the PWD over similar issues.

Desperate Prabunagar residents met Assistant Engineer (AE) Kashinath Saraf at the PWD office, demanding urgent action. The locals, who have



been struggling without water for nearly a week, shared their ordeal — some were forced to purchase expensive water tankers, while others relied on bottled water even for cooking and flushing toilets.

"We are forced to use public toilets at the Ponda bus stand, nearly a kilometre away from

our homes," said one resident. Another resident complained of receiving only muddy water when supply resumed. The crisis has severely impacted daily life, with school students and working families facing significant inconvenience.

The residents, accompanied by social activist Dr.

Ketan Bhatikar, pressed the PWD to act swiftly. AE Saraf assured the protesters that his team would inspect the area and instructed staff to identify and rectify any faults in the supply system without delay.

With the summer heat intensifying early this year, the

ALREADY PARCHED, IT'S ONLY MARCH!

- People depend on neighbours with wells for water
- Many forced to use public toilet at Ponda bus stand, nearly a kilometre away from home
- Others depend on water tankers, buy mineral water bottles for essential needs

Authorities convene urgent meeting over unsafe buildings in Margao

Team Herald

MARGAO: The issue of unsafe buildings in Margao has resurfaced, prompting the South Goa District Collector's office, under the Disaster Management Authority, to schedule an urgent meeting to determine the next steps.



Srinet Kothwale, Additional Collector-I, confirmed that the office has initiated the process to convene the meeting and assess the current situation.

Margao continues to grapple with serious safety concerns as the matter of unsafe buildings remains unresolved, even as the case progresses to the High Court. Despite directives issued by the district collector several years ago, many identified unsafe buildings in the commercial city remain standing and have yet to be demolished.

The Margao Municipal Council (MMC) has stated that they have

completed their part of the process and instructed building owners to demolish their structures due to the safety risks posed. However, the issue persists.

The Additional Collector also revealed that a separate order had been issued to demolish one unsafe building in Margao where commercial activities were still taking place. Despite the civic body revoking the trade licence of the business operating in the building, business activities have reportedly continued, raising concerns about enforcement of the orders.

Civic inaction leaves Margao's unsafe buildings standing, fume locals

Disaster waiting to happen: 23 buildings identified for demolition years ago



Maharashtra youth lands in Cyber Crime net for Rs 38 lakh stock market scam

Team Herald

PANJIM: The Cyber Crime Police on Thursday arrested 23-year-old Rutik Nikam from Maharashtra for his alleged involvement in a Rs 38 lakh stock market scam.

According to SP Cyber Crime Rahul Gupta, Nikam had fraudulently convinced a resident of Old Goa to invest in stock market trading through the Fyers Trading App. The victim was also added to a WhatsApp group named "R1 Group," where he was misled with false promises of high returns.

Investigations reveal that the same bank account was linked to 22 other cyber financial fraud complaints across India, involving a total reported amount of Rs 11.5 crore

"On the false promise of high returns, the victim was manipulated into transferring a total amount of Rs 38 lakh into nine different bank accounts," Gupta said.

During the financial investigation, it was revealed that Rs 2 lakh was deposited in Nikam's account under the pretext of generating high returns. This trail led the Cyber Crime Police to Nikam, who was subsequently arrested.

Further investigation revealed that the same bank account was linked to 22 other cyber financial fraud complaints across India, involving a total reported amount of Rs 11.5 crore. The Cyber Crime Police stated that more suspects are yet to be traced and arrested. The investigation is being conducted under the supervision of PI Deepak Pednekar.

Police have urged citizens to exercise caution when investing online and to report any suspicious activities to the Cyber Crime Police Station.

SOLUTION IN SIGHT?



Farmers walk through their fields near Dadasaheb Temple, Nerul, which have been rendered unsuitable by sea water ingress during high tide. A white layer of salt can be seen on the soil. In 2020, the affected farmers had written to the authorities about the damage of the bandh along Siquarim River, but no action was taken.

A day after **O Herald** published a photograph of fields destroyed by seawater due to a damaged bandh in Maima Vaddo, Nerul, Saligao MLA and GSIDC Vice Chairman, Kedar Naik, along with ZP Sandeep Bandothkar, Nerul Sarpanch Rajesh Kalangutkar and farmers inspected the affected fields on Thursday

Cavelossim P'yat rejects floating jetties, demands action on beach hawkers

Team Herald

MARGAO: The Cavelossim panchayat has urged the government to halt the proposed floating jetties and cruise circuit project along River Sal, citing concerns over its impact on local fishermen and the area's peaceful environment.

Sarpanch Dixon Vas confirmed that the Panchayat has written to the Tourism Minister seeking clarification on the matter.

"It has come to our notice that floating jetties and cruise circuits are being proposed near the Cavelossim Betul Fort-Betul Lighthouse area," Vas said. "This has caused concern among local fishermen who depend on the river for their livelihood." The Panchayat stressed that the government must consult with local fishermen and the Panchayat before advancing such proposals, warning of potential harm to traditional fishing activities.

In a separate plea, the Panchayat called for stricter

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measures to curb the persistent nuisance of beach hawkers harassing tourists.

"We have repeatedly raised this issue," Vas said. "Despite fines and enforcement efforts, hawkers continue to disrupt the peace that tourists seek."

The Panchayat has requested the Tourism Minister to address this issue in the upcoming Legislative Assembly session, suggesting stronger penalties, including jail terms, to deter offenders.

Staff crunch hits Curchorem Traffic Cell as inspector post remains vacant for two months

Team Herald

MARGAO: The Curchorem Traffic Cell has been functioning without a Police Inspector for over two months.

According to police sources, a recent transfer saw the Police Inspector previously attached to the Curchorem Traffic Cell moved to the Ponda Police Station. However, no replacement has been appointed, leaving the post vacant for over two months.

Sources in the Traffic Cell revealed that the Police Inspector of the Quepem Traffic Cell is currently holding additional charge of the Curchorem Traffic Cell. Given that the Curchorem Traffic Cell covers both municipal and

Police Inspector of the Quepem Traffic Cell holds additional charge of the Curchorem Traffic Cell. Given that the Curchorem Cell covers both municipal and panchayat areas, the absence of a dedicated Police Inspector has raised concerns about traffic management and enforcement in the area

panchayat areas, the absence of a dedicated Police Inspector has raised concerns about traffic management and enforcement in the region.

Sources also indicated that several traffic cells are facing a staff shortage, hampering their ability to effectively enforce the Motor Vehicle Act. Despite growing public frustration over frequent road accidents and increasing demands for stricter enforcement, staffing levels in some South Goa

traffic cells have dwindled.

However, one Assistant Sub-Inspector noted that additional staff, including two Assistant Sub-Inspectors, have recently been deployed at Colva and Margao to help address these issues.

Authorities have indicated that the number of traffic cells is likely to increase soon. Additionally, there are calls to empower head constables once again to issue challans, improving enforcement

efficiency.

Meanwhile, a group of over six police personnel, including one Sub-Inspector from the Curchorem Traffic Cell, are stationed at Xeldem, on the main road. They have been actively issuing challans to vehicles, including loaded trucks. Due to the *nakabandhi*, heavy vehicles stopped for inspection remain parked on either side of the road, obstructing the free flow of traffic.

This enforcement activity has inadvertently slowed down traffic on the Margao-Curchorem route, as vehicles navigating through the congested area are forced to slow down before crossing the crowded stretch.

Vasco court summons Mormugao PI, SP over EE Shetye's complaint

Team Herald

VASCO: The Judicial Magistrate First Class (JMFC) Court, Vasco, on Thursday, issued notices to the Mormugao Police Inspector (PI) and the Superintendent of Police (SP) South Goa, directing them to appear before the court on March 17 at 10 am.

The court has taken cognisance of the application filed by Kashinath Shetye, Nodal Officer and Executive Engineer of the Electricity Department, under Section 175(3) of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS) and issued the order after reviewing the application.

"You are therefore required to appear before this court on March 17 at 10 AM to file your reply/say, failing which the matter will be dealt with as per law," the notice issued by JMFC Judge Pooja S Desai stated.

It may be noted that Shetye had filed a petition alleging the failure to register an FIR on his complaint.

MAX. TEMP 35.4 °C
MIN. TEMP 24.6 °C

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Why spend on colours when dust comes free?

Xaxticars turn to tender coconuts for heatwave relief

Coconut vendors struggle to keep up; say demand has resulted in short supply, hike in prices

SHYAM ZAMBAULIKAR

MARGAO: The ongoing heatwave and soaring temperatures in Salcete taluka have turned into a boon for tender coconut vendors, who are enjoying brisk business as locals seek relief from the sweltering conditions.

In Salcete, which comprises over 50 villages, more than 200 tender coconut vendors are spread across the region, particularly along the coastal belt, selling coconuts daily. The surge in demand has seen large numbers of people visiting these vendors to quench their thirst with refreshing tender coconut water.

Hassan Ali, a vendor near

Gogol Circle, shared that his sales have significantly increased due to the extreme heat. "I have been selling tender coconuts for years, and demand always rises during summer. But this time, the severe heatwave has brought even more people to my stall," he said.

Ali mentioned that on regular days, he typically sells around 300 coconuts, but with the recent spike in temperatures, he now sells approximately 400 to 450 coconuts daily.

Another vendor, Suresh, who operates near Davorlim Junction, said he has been selling tender coconuts for over three years to support



his family. "The demand has shot up because of the heat and increasing health consciousness among people," he explained.

Suresh noted that the rising demand has led to a shortage in supply. "Earlier, we sold each tender coconut for Rs 40, but now, due to the shortage,

the price has been increased to Rs 50. Despite the price hike, customers are still turning up in large numbers," he added.

He acknowledged that summer is the only profitable season for tender coconut vendors. "During the monsoon, there's hardly any business, so I'm grateful for the earnings during this period," Suresh said.

Meanwhile, senior citizen Laximan Naik from Fatorda said he frequently visits a vendor near the Sports Complex in Fatorda. "These days, there's a rush by 11 am, and by noon, the vendor often runs out of coconuts," Naik explained, adding that he

prefers to hydrate with coconuts as they are naturally well-packaged and free from flies and contamination, compared to fruit juice.

He added that getting tender coconuts at any time of the day has become difficult due to increased demand. "This particular vendor used to cater to many senior citizens who visit the stadium area for jogging, but now the supply struggles to meet the growing demand," he said.

Naik also highlighted that alongside tender coconuts, there has been a noticeable increase in the demand for watermelons, with vendors in Fatorda reporting a rise in customers seeking hydration.