

Stray dog attacks rattle beach-goers, bite into Goa's tourist experience

Several foreign tourists badly bitten by free-roaming beach dogs; rue that their holiday was wasted in recovery or visiting hospitals for anti-rabies vaccinations; share bad experience on social media

Team Herald

MARGAO: Foreign tourists visiting Goa's popular beaches are increasingly raising concerns about stray dog encounters, with several reports of bites and aggressive behaviour marred their holiday experiences. From the southern shores of Cavellissim and Colva to northern hotspots like Anjuna and Vagator, tourists have reported unsettling incidents that have disrupted their vacations.

"This is an issue that urgently needs attention from the authorities," said Emma Thompson, a 45-year-old visitor from the UK. "Goa is such a beautiful destination, but the stray dog situation is affecting many tourists' experiences."

While victims have expressed gratitude to locals,

shack operators, fishermen, lifeguards, and accommodation staff for their swift assistance in arranging medical care, they describe these incidents as painful and unexpected disruptions to their holidays. Many tourists reported losing valuable vacation time as they were confined to their rooms recovering or making repeated visits to doctors for follow-up injections.

Robert Jenkins, a retired teacher from England, shared his concern: "I've visited Goa before, but this is something I hadn't experienced on previous trips. It's worrying to see this change in what has always been such a welcoming place." Frequent visitors, particularly from the UK, say these incidents have altered their

HOW TO WARD OFF TROUBLE

- **Never run or scream** – this triggers the dog's predatory instinct to chase after you
- **Stay calm, stand tall, speak in a low, firm tone** – This intimidates the dog. Most aggressive dogs that charge at humans do not intend to bite, and may back off
- **Create a shield between you and the dog(s)** – Use whatever is handy - a bag, bottle, shoe or umbrella – as a barrier to prevent the dog from reaching you. Do not throw it at the dog and excite it further, though
- **Enact a defensive stance** – If the dog still does not back down, protect your torso with your arm and fists, kick out at the dog to ward it off. If you fall down, curl into a ball and cover your face, head and body



“I have visited Goa earlier but this is something I haven't encountered during my previous visits. It's concerning to see this change in what has always been such a welcoming place”
– Robert Jenkins, Retd teacher, UK

The issue has gained traction on social media, with tourists sharing their experiences online — a development that tourism stakeholders fear could impact Goa's reputation as a leading holiday destination.

While some local authorities have taken steps to address the problem, including the Cavellissim panchayat's partnership with Mission Rabies to establish a dog shelter, tourism industry representatives stress that more comprehensive government intervention is needed. They warn that unless proactive measures are taken, the stray dog menace could pose a growing threat to Goa's tourism industry.

Mormugao council to raze MPA's 'illegal' wall blocking Baina flyover access

Team Herald

VASCO: The Mormugao Municipal Council (MMC) has unanimously resolved to demolish the wall and gates constructed by the Mormugao Port Authority (MPA), which have been blocking public access to the Baina flyover.

All 25 ward councillors backed the resolution during Thursday's ordinary council meeting.

Following the meeting, MMC chairperson Girish Borkar condemned the MPA's decision to construct the wall, particularly since it was built shortly after the inauguration of the Baina loop port connectivity flyover in January this year.

Borkar alleged that MPA officials had misbehaved with councillors and refused to apologise when confronted. He asserted that the

council would take necessary steps to safeguard public interest.

Borkar further claimed that no demolition notice was required as the structure was erected illegally.

Meanwhile, the council also decided to inspect and halt operations at Goa Shipyard Limited's (GSL) new building until compliance with construction conditions is ensured.

Councillor Deepak Naik highlighted that GSL had failed to shift its compound wall as previously agreed, contributing to traffic congestion. Naik pointed out that the road in front of GSL has become a bottleneck, with several mishaps reported in the area. Despite committing to the council, GSL neither demolished the wall nor obtained permission to operate from its new premises, he said.

Encroachments on footpaths, traders warn legal action

Team Herald

MARGAO: Persistent encroachments on Margao's footpaths continue to inconvenience pedestrians, with no effective action from local authorities despite repeated complaints.

The situation has sparked growing frustration among shop owners, residents, and city officials. A group of concerned citizens and vendors is now preparing to file a public interest litigation (PIL) against the Margao Municipal Council (MMC), with plans to seek intervention from the High Court. Councillor Mahesh Amonkar, who has repeatedly raised the issue in council meetings, criticised the inaction. "Despite numerous appeals, no concrete steps have been taken," Amonkar said. "Vendors have taken over the footpaths, forcing pedestri-



ans to walk on the road and putting their safety at risk." He called for a comprehensive action plan to address the problem.

“Many vendors have taken over the footpaths, making it difficult for people to even walk. Some are forced to walk on the road, putting their lives at risk because the footpaths are blocked”
– Mahesh Amonkar, MMC Councillor

“The footpaths are often obstructed by large boxes, but municipal officials do nothing to address it. We will approach the High Court to ensure the authorities are compelled to act”
– Abdulah N. M. Abdul Karim, cloth merchant

Vinod Shirodkar, former president of the New Market Traders Association, voiced frustration over the authorities' inconsistent approach. "They conduct drives only when there's public outrage, but within days the encroachments return," he said, adding that vendors are also facing losses due to poor public amenities.

Abdulah N. M. Abdul Karim, a cloth merchant, accused the MMC of turning a blind eye to the worsening situation.

"Footpaths are cluttered with boxes and stock, yet municipal officials seem uninterested in resolving the issue," he said. With frustration mounting, vendors and residents believe legal intervention is the only way forward. "We will approach the High Court to ensure the authorities are compelled to act," Karim added.

Meanwhile, MMC Chairperson Damodar Shirodkar was unavailable for comment.

TTAG seeks budget boost for tourism

Team Herald

MARGAO: The Travel and Tourism Association of Goa (TTAG) has presented a detailed set of recommendations to Chief Minister Pramod Sawant, urging strategic budget allocations to enhance Goa's tourism sector. The proposals emphasise environmental preservation, improved infrastructure, and revised taxation policies to strengthen the state's tourism economy.

TTAG stressed the need to safeguard Goa's natural beauty, cultural heritage, and ecological balance — key draws for tourists. The association called for stricter cleanliness measures, better waste management, and tech-driven improvements to the transport system to ensure price transparency for visitors. Safety and security upgrades, including improved policing in tourist hubs, were also highlighted as urgent concerns.

On taxation, TTAG proposed slashing the Value Added Tax (VAT) on liquor to 10% for beer, wine, and locally distilled spirits. TTAG President Jack Sukhija argued that Goa's current high liquor taxes are pushing tourists to bring their own alcohol, particularly for weddings and conferences, resulting in revenue losses. Aligning taxes with Mumbai's rates, Sukhija believes, would encourage local purchases and

boost state earnings.

To expand Goa's global presence, TTAG urged participation in key international travel marts in London and Berlin, alternating with BTL Portugal and FITUR Spain. Annual participation in MITT Russia, ATM Dubai, and ITB Asia was also suggested.

Domestically, TTAG recommended Goa maintain visibility at major travel events like OTM Mumbai, SATTE Delhi, GITM Jaipur, and TTF Kolkata and Ahmedabad. Roadshows in Tier II and Tier III cities with direct connectivity to Goa were also proposed to expand the state's visitor base.

Highlighting the need for large-scale event facilities, TTAG called for the development of a world-class convention centre in Goa, aligning with the Union Budget 2025's Rs 20,000 crore allocation for 50 key tourism destinations.

To simplify event planning, TTAG proposed a single-window clearance system for weddings and functions, reducing red tape and attracting high-profile events to the state.

Sustainability formed another pillar of TTAG's recommendations. The association urged authorities to promote eco-friendly practices by banning flex plastics and thermocol at events, positioning Goa as a responsible tourism destination.

MP slams tree felling for highway expansion at Nuvem

Team Herald

MARGAO: South Goa MP Captain Viriato Fernandes has strongly criticised the State government's decision to cut trees along the old Nuvem highway to facilitate road widening, questioning the necessity of the project.

Fernandes, who has engaged in multiple discussions with the District Administration opposing the expansion, argued that the widening is redundant since most traffic has already shifted to the Western Bypass.

He pointed out that prior to the bypass opening, the old highway had been identified with black spots — known accident-prone areas — but since the bypass became operational, traffic and accidents on the old highway have declined significantly.

Supporting local residents' calls to halt the expansion, Fernandes questioned the motives behind the project. He challenged the decision of the PWD engineer who sought permission to cut trees and speculated that the move could be influenced by the size of the road widening contract. Fernandes warned that locals would oppose not only the PWD official but also the Minister responsible if the project proceeds against public sentiment.

He maintained that since the bypass effectively manages traffic, expanding the old highway is unjustified need for effective allocation and management of these funds for the benefit of local communities.

Cong moots online, door-to-door campaign to raise awareness on Margao municipality fee hike

Team Herald

MARGAO: The Margao Congress Block has launched a social media campaign to inform residents about a sharp increase in taxes and fees proposed by the Margao Municipal Council (MMC), set to come into effect from April 1. In addition to the online initiative, Congress workers will begin a door-to-door awareness drive on March 16.

Congress leader Savio Coutinho said that many residents were unaware of the significant hike, with some mistakenly believing it to be just a 20% increase. "When we showed them the

The MMC's revised fee structure includes over 50 different categories, which make it challenging for residents to understand the extent of the hike

MMC's public notice detailing the new rates, most were shocked and criticised their elected representatives for failing to inform them earlier," Coutinho said.

The MMC's revised fee structure includes over 50 different categories, making it challenging for residents to understand the extent of the hike. To simplify this, the Congress

team is circulating short video clips explaining the new fees for establishments such as hardware stores, clinics, restaurants, and gyms.

"We will distribute copies of the public notice starting March 16 to show people exactly what they'll face from April 1. Our aim is to pressure the MMC to withdraw these proposed rates," Coutinho added. He further criticised the Council for targeting law-abiding taxpayers instead of expanding the tax net to include unassessed properties, which he said would significantly boost revenue. Coutinho urged residents to demand that their elected representatives

MAX. TEMP 34.2 °C
MIN. TEMP 26.0 °C

idharudhar

SAMAJWADI PARTY CHHAAVA MOVIE

He's just fascinated by the actor, not the character



Revellers from various backgrounds - Goan locals, North Indian residents of the State, foreign and domestic tourists - forget their differences as they dance and play Holi together during celebrations at Azad Maidan on Friday



Children of the village celebrate Holi, bringing joy and vibrancy into the quiet Sai Nagar in Aldona

Holi hai! Panjim drenched in colour as Gulalotsav kicks off festive week

PANJIM: The streets of Panjim came alive on Friday as residents and visitors enthusiastically celebrated Holi, the Festival of Colours, at Azad Maidan.

Revellers gathered in large numbers, joyfully applying gulal to one another, exchanging greetings, and indulging in traditional sweets. Homes, streets, and public spaces were bathed in vibrant hues as participants splashed colours and celebrated the spirit of togetherness.

Holi, which marks the arrival of spring and the victory of good over evil, is deeply symbolic. The festival's colourful traditions reflect the bounty of nature and the renewal that follows the end of winter.

Adding to the festive spirit, the Gulalotsav event drew a sizable crowd, with prominent attendees including Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) Goa unit President Damu Naik, Corporation of the City of Panaji (CCP) Mayor Rohit Monserrate, Rajya Sabha MP Sa-



Young members of Sai Kala Sanskruti Mandal in Sainagar, Aldona, prepare to perform 'Romot' a traditional Goan folk dance and procession taken out during Shigmotsav.