

Activists write to TCP Dept, demand data on traffic flow

Unchecked construction, edu institutes adding to village's traffic woes, civic forum flags concerns

Team Herald

MARGAO: The Navelim Civic and Consumer Forum has raised concerns over the unchecked growth of educational institutions in the village, arguing that it has worsened traffic congestion and strained local infrastructure. In a letter to the Town and Country Planning (TCP) Department, the forum pointed out that approvals for new buildings have been granted without assessing the village's carrying capacity.

The forum highlighted that the influx of students, teachers, and staff traveling to and from these institutions has led to severe bottlenecks, particularly around the Navelim Church junction. Despite the opening of the Margao

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Western Bypass, residents continue to face daily gridlocks, as many students are dropped off in private vehicles, and teachers occupy parking spaces for long hours.

The issue is further exacerbated by sports activities at a village playground, which lacks designated parking. Vehicles spill onto internal roads, affecting

residents in areas like Ratwaddo, Sinquetim, and Davorlim. The forum also pointed out that these buildings have been approved without ensuring essential infrastructure such as parking, open spaces, and other facilities.

Calling for a review of all past approvals, the forum urged the TCP to conduct a fresh survey to determine whether the village's infrastructure can support further expansions. They also requested an immediate halt to any new construction until the existing congestion is addressed.

The forum warned that continued inaction would not only impact residents but also hinder the movement of emergency services and affect local businesses.

EDUCATION DEPT ORDERS INQUIRY INTO OVERCROWDING PLAINT

Team Herald

MARGAO: The Directorate of Education has formally responded to complaints against educational institutions in Navelim by ordering a thorough investigation into the matter.

In a letter, Deputy Director of Education (Academic) Sindhu Prabhu Dessai directed the Deputy Director of Education, South Educational Zone, Margao to inspect the situation and submit a detailed report.

The directive comes in response to a complaint letter from the Navelim Civic & Consumer Forum.

Dessai asked the South Education Deputy Director to submit a detailed report in a weeks' time.

Storm brews in Navelim over school extension proposal

FROM PG 1

The controversy intensified when residents learned about the application made for a construction licence to extend the existing HSS. The NCCF claims the panchayat body is "all set to give permission for the above-mentioned construction in a hurry and by keeping the gram sabha members in the dark".

The forum has accused various government departments of "mindlessly" granting permissions for educational buildings without considering basic infrastructure requirements such as parking, open spaces, and facilities proportional to the number of students. They alleged that the Zonal Education Office in Margao is "solely respon-

sible for this increase in students".

In their letter to the panchayat, the NCCF pointed out that schools from Panjim have been relocated to Curca, while Margao schools are being shifted to Davorlim to decongest those areas. They argue that Navelim faces similar congestion issues and should not add to the problem.

The issue of the proposed HSS extension has been raised at the previous gram sabhas, where the panchayat body had informed the gram sabha members that the matter couldn't be discussed as no formal proposal had been submitted. Nevertheless, the gram sabha members had "vehemently voiced

their opposition" to any extension, citing concerns about carrying capacity, parking, and traffic congestion. The NCCF alleged that the current rush to approve the construction is "done deliberately knowing that an overwhelming number of villagers are opposed to it".

The forum reminded the panchayat of its role in village planning, urging them not to "resort to granting permissions blindly without considering the fact that it is going to be disastrous".

It emphasised that the panchayat secretary and members would be 'equitably and collectively liable' for any decision that worsens Navelim's traffic situation.

Two youth mugged, beaten up by gang of 30 at Davorlim

Team Herald

MARGAO: Ajay Kamble and another young man were brutally assaulted by a group of approximately 30 individuals near the railway crossing in Davorlim on Wednesday evening around 5 PM. The attackers not only physically assaulted the victims but also stole a gold chain and a ring.

The incident has left the local community shaken, with both victims sustaining severe injuries. A complaint has been filed with the Maina Curtorim police station, but no immediate action has been

taken so far.

Upon inquiry, Maina-Curtorim Police Inspector confirmed that two cross complaints had been received, which had delayed the registration process. Police are currently investigating the matter to establish the sequence of events and determine the parties involved.

The lack of prompt action by the authorities has sparked concerns among residents about the responsiveness of law enforcement in handling such violent incidents. Authorities are expected to take further action as the investigation progresses.

MIXED SIGNALS



For months now, a the second traffic signal installed at the Old Market Circle, Fatorda-Margao, ostensibly for motorists who may not be able to see the main signal at the junction, has been simultaneously flashing red (stop) and green (go) lights leaving drivers confused – and serving little purpose

Locals flag recurring accidents at traffic junction in Navelim

Team Herald

MARGAO: Local residents are demanding an alternate road solution following yet another collision at the problematic Navelim junction where it meets the Western Bypass. The latest incident involved a four-wheeler and two-wheeler, resulting in injuries to all occupants.

Local residents have expressed concerns about the junction's design, which they describe as "problematic and not well thought out." The increasing traffic volume has created a dangerous situation where two major highways converge—National Highway 66 (western bypass) and Na-

tional Highway 17 (from Navelim).

Residents fear that without prompt corrective action, similar accidents will continue to occur at this hazardous intersection. This latest incident has renewed calls for immediate infrastructure improvements to enhance road safety and prevent future collisions.

The accident history at this location has led to growing frustration among locals who have witnessed multiple similar incidents over time. They also allege that the authorities like the PWD have yet to respond to these concerns despite the recurring nature of these accidents.

IT officials inspect high-stakes Housie event in Navelim

Team Herald

MARGAO: A high-stakes housie game held at a venue near the highway in Navelim on Saturday night came under scrutiny from Income Tax (IT) authorities, sources revealed. The event, which also featured a karaoke tournament, had been widely advertised on social media, attracting significant attention.

According to sources, IT officials arrived at the venue in two to three jeeps late at night and initiated an investigation. However, details regarding the extent of their inquiry remain undisclosed.

The housie game offered lucrative prizes, with winnings ranging up to Rs 8 lakh. The authorities have yet to issue an official statement on their findings.

Incidentally, this intervention comes amid a rising trend of such housie programmes being organised across Salcete. Several similar events are scheduled between March and April, with some advertising prize money exceeding Rs 20 lakh. Recently, Colva police directed the organizers of a housie programme in Colva to halt their event, citing unspecified reasons.

With increasing scrutiny on high-stakes gaming events, further actions from authorities could follow in the coming weeks.

Quenching Panjim's thirst: Group proposes filtered water dispensers in public loos

Team Herald

MARGAO: Goa is facing a growing public health crisis as rising temperatures amid a prolonged heatwave expose the city's lack of accessible public drinking water infrastructure. In response, Sunny Side South, a climate communication organisation dedicated to bridging the gap between policy, media, and communities, has proposed a cost-effective solution: retrofitting existing public toilets in Panjim with filtered water dispensers as a pilot project to provide free and safe drinking water in high-footfall areas.

According to Sunny Side South, the initiative comes amid alarming projections from the

Despite the heatwave conditions, the city lacks free public drinking water points, leaving street vendors, gig workers, commuters, and tourists vulnerable to dehydration, heat stress, and heatstroke. Sunny Side South's plan involves installing filtered water dispensers at public toilets, utilising existing municipal water supply lines to minimise costs and ensure rapid deployment

India Meteorological Department, which recorded extreme heat levels in Panjim in 2024 and predicts even more intense heatwaves in 2025. Kabir Naik, the organisation's representative, emphasized the urgency of the situation.

"Panjim is facing an urgent public health crisis due to the lack of accessible public drinking water infrastructure. With rising temperatures and increasing risks of heat stress

and dehydration, gig workers, vendors, commuters, and tourists are left without safe and free drinking water options in high-footfall areas," he said.

Many are forced to purchase packaged water, adding to their financial burden.

The organisation's plan involves installing filtered water dispensers at public toilets, utilising existing municipal water supply lines to minimise costs and ensure rapid deployment.

The dispensers, which will be mechanical and robust, will be placed outside toilet complexes to ensure accessibility without requiring individuals to enter the facilities. Clear wayfinding signage in Konkani, Hindi, and English will also be installed to guide the public to the nearest water points.

Three strategic locations have been identified for the pilot phase: the Panjim Municipal Market Complex, a public toilet near the Immaculate Conception Church, and the SBM toilet near the Panaji Bus Stand. These sites were chosen due to their high pedestrian traffic and existing infrastructure.

Sunny Side South underscores the cost-effectiveness and scalability of the solution.

By retrofitting existing public toilets, the initiative avoids the need for expensive standalone infrastructure while ensuring equitable access to safe drinking water. The organisation also sees potential for public-private partnerships, with local businesses and corporate social responsibility (CSR) initiatives supporting long-term maintenance.

The organisation has conducted field assessments and prepared detailed materials, including an information sheet and a short video, to outline the problem and proposed solution. They are calling for collaboration with municipal authorities, policymakers, businesses, and citizen groups to bring the initiative to life.

Raia-Manora locals reject cell tower in schoolyard

Team Herald

MARGAO: The residents of Manora have decided to strongly oppose the installation of a mobile tower within the Government Primary School compound at the Raia Gram Sabha that will be held on Sunday.

"While internet services are essential, residents demand that towers be placed in suitable locations with due consultation. This installation, done without public discussion, has raised serious concerns," said one of the protestors, Joao Paulo Fernandes.

S Goa police ramp up tenant verification

Team Herald

MARGAO: In a bid to curb thefts, assaults, and other criminal activities, police stations across South Goa have intensified tenant verification drives, processing a total of 670 forms on March 12. According to a senior police officer from South Goa, there has been a significant rise in tenant verification forms across various police stations in the district. These forms involve background checks to ensure tenants have no prior criminal records or police charges.

Meanwhile, South Goa Collector and District Magistrate Egna Cleetus has issued an order mandating the verification of all tenants and guests by landlords, hoteliers, and property owners in the district.

The directive applies to house, building, and flat owners, as well as hotels, lodges, guesthouses, reli-



gious accommodations, and temporary rental properties across South Goa. Property owners must verify the identity of tenants and guests through documents such as Election Cards, Driving Licences, Aadhaar Cards, Passports, and Smart Cards.

The order strictly prohibits renting, subletting, or leasing any property within South Goa without informing the concerned police station. Landlords, tenants, and property owners are required to furnish full tenant details to the local po-

lice before occupancy. Additionally, all accommodation providers must facilitate inspection and record maintenance in a designated police software system.

The order came into effect on March 9 for 60 days unless withdrawn earlier. Deputy Collectors and Sub-Divisional Magistrates of South Goa have been authorised to investigate violations and file FIRs before the concerned court or police station.

Margao-based advocate Vinay Patker highlighted



that under the Goa (Verification of Tenants) Bill, 2021, there are strict penalties for property owners and tenants who fail to submit details to the local police station. In such cases, landlords may be held legally responsible for any criminal activities committed by tenants.

Police databases of migrant labourers are being created, and hotel and lodge management in South Goa have been instructed to retain copies of guest identification documents even after their departure. This

measure aims to prevent criminals from posing as labourers and renting accommodations, particularly in coastal regions.

Meanwhile, senior citizen Laxman Naik expressed concern over the rising number of theft cases in Salcete over the past nine months. Valuables such as gold, cash, and electronic items have frequently been stolen, with few cases solved. Chain-snatching incidents, particularly in Salcete and parts of Margao, remain a concern, with no significant arrests made.

OUT OF THE 670 FORMS PROCESSED:

■ Margao Police Station recorded 82 forms	■ Canacona Police Station recorded 27 forms
■ Maina Curtorim Police Station recorded 50 forms	■ Vasco Police Station recorded 53 forms
■ Colva Police Station recorded 15 forms	■ Verna Police Station recorded 67 forms
■ Cunclim Police Station recorded 22 forms	■ Mormugao Police Station recorded 11 forms
■ Fatorda Police Station recorded 70 forms	■ Ponda Police Station recorded 91 forms on March 11 and 102 forms on March 12
■ Quepem Police Station recorded 5 forms	■ Collem Police Station recorded 10 forms
■ Curchorem Police Station recorded 22 forms	■ Mardol Police Station recorded 27 forms
■ Sanguem Police Station	

MAX. TEMP	34.0 °C
MIN. TEMP	26.0 °C

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