

Sullied by sewage and choked with trash, reeking creek remains Colva's shame

Residents blame Tourism Dept, Pollution Control Board for failing to clean up the water body that drains onto Colva beach, which has been chosen by the Centre to be developed into an 'Iconic tourist site'

Team Herald

MARGAO: Despite repeated demands to address the ongoing pollution, Colva Creek at the iconic Colva Beach remains choked with black sludge, sewage, and garbage, raising serious concerns among locals and tourists.

This unsightly pollution is tarnishing the beauty of the world-famous beach, while also posing a significant health hazard to locals and tourists.

Frustrated residents have blamed the Tourism Department and the Goa State Pollution Control Board (GSPCB) for failing to act despite consistent appeals from both the public and local MLA Venzy Viegas for regular cleaning of the creek.

Locals have once again urged the Water Resources Department (WRD) to implement at least short-term solutions to mitigate the pollution until a permanent



“There is so much garbage in the creek. In the past, we suggested installing a net to prevent people from dumping trash into it, but that hasn't happened yet – Judith Almeida, activist”

fix can be found.

Local resident and environmental activist Judith Almeida, convenor of the Colva Civic and Consumer Forum, shared her frustration with **O Herald**, calling the sight of the polluted creek “shocking.” She remarked, “There is so much garbage in the creek. In the past, we

suggested installing a net to prevent people from dumping trash into it, but that hasn't happened yet.”

Almeida also criticised the authorities for focusing on infrastructure development instead of tackling the ongoing environmental issues. She pointed out that despite multiple show-cause no-

tices issued by the GSPCB; no substantial action has been taken.

“The creek is completely polluted, and those responsible seem indifferent to their duties,” she said.

Simao Rodrigues, another resident of Colva, expressed his disappointment with the authorities' handling of the situation. “We have lost the beauty of Colva Beach. The authorities are failing to clean the creek regularly, even though they are aware of the pollution,” he said. Rodrigues added that local businesses are unfairly blamed for the contamination.

Local MLA Venzy Viegas has also been vocal in his criticism of the government, having raised the issue several times in the Legislative Assembly. Despite his efforts, the government's response has been lacklustre, and the problem continues to worsen.

Shift garbage collection point away from beach, locals urge Tourism Dept

Team Herald

MARGAO: The garbage collection site near Colva Beach has become a sore point for residents and tourists alike, with locals now demanding its immediate relocation to preserve the area's natural beauty and improve waste management.



Locals say the lack of proper management has led to severe air pollution and an increasingly unpleasant environment, particularly around the popular beach.

Tourists and locals have



Mixed waste from the shacks is collected in dumpsters near the beach, and left unattended for long hours before being transported by truck to the garbage treatment plant

reported that the waste, left at the site for long hours before transportation, emits a strong stench, making the area unbearable to even walk past. A recent inspection revealed that both dry and wet waste are dumped together before being transported to the treatment plant.

According to the site supervisor, the waste collected from shacks and

other establishments is first brought to this location before being segregated at the plant. However, residents argue that the system is inefficient and contributes to environmental degradation. Colva Sarpanch Suzie Fernandes emphasised the need for a new collection site. She clarified that while the Tourism Department regu-

larly collects waste from the shacks, the current collection site was not approved by the Panchayat. She pointed out that the site falls under the jurisdiction of the Tourism Department, making them responsible for addressing the issue.

BETUL BLAST: Firm booked for illegal gunpowder storage

Team Herald

MARGAO: The Cuncolim police have registered an offence against the management and staff of Hughes Precision Manufacturing Pvt. Ltd., Verna Industrial Estate, for allegedly violating safety regulations regarding the storage and transportation of propellant (gunpowder), leading to the blast and fire accident at Magazine No.1 of the warehouse last Thursday.

The police have booked the accused under Sections 223, 288, 326(g), and 125 of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS), as well as Sections 5, 6 read with 9B and 9C of the Explosives Act, 1884.

According to Cuncolim police, the case is based on a complaint filed by Deputy Collector and Sub-Divisional Officer (SDO) Manohar L. Karkar on March 20. The complaint alleges that the company failed to adhere to the safety guidelines and standing instructions issued during the licensing process for handling explosives.

Further investigations revealed that, on March 22, the company illegally stored 11,000 kg of

11,000 kg of gunpowder allegedly stored without licence in a separate section of warehouse; company risked lives of police and firemen attending to the blast site by not informing them of the stockpile

gunpowder in Magazine No.2 without obtaining the necessary licence from the Petroleum and Explosives Safety Organisation (PESO). This was in violation of Licence No. 34/01/2024/EXP/MAG/M.0.4555, dated November 12, 2024, issued by the District Magistrate, South Goa.

Authorities have accused the company of failing to inform police, fire officials, and other emergency responders about the additional stock of explosives in Magazine No.2 during the rescue operation at Magazine No.1. The negligence allegedly endangered human lives and property.

Meanwhile, Salcete Mamlatdar has sealed the godown used to store gunpowder, and Cuncolim police have sealed the exhibits at the scene of the explosion.

LAST DITCH EFFORT?



Panjim's M G Road, where Don Bosco Higher Secondary school is located, remains in disarray - an open trench on one side and broken pavers on the other, only four days before the HC deadline

Quepem govt employee arrested for loan fraud

Team Herald

MARGAO: The Quepem police on Wednesday arrested Viresh Gaonkar, a government employee working as a Multi-Tasking Staff (MTS) at the Deputy Collector's Office in Quepem, for allegedly securing loans from multiple financial institutions using forged official documents. He has been remanded to police custody.

Quepem police confirmed the arrest and stated that Gaonkar will be produced before the Judicial Magistrate First Class (JMFC) in

Quepem on Thursday, where his remand will be sought for further investigation.

According to the police, Gaonkar fraudulently obtained loans amounting to Rs 37 lakh by submitting fabricated salary certificates, forged office seals, and falsified specimen signatures, none of which were ever issued by the Deputy Collector's Office in Quepem.

Gaonkar allegedly misused these forged documents during the sanctioned leave period of the Deputy Collector, when the official was out of state.

New Mandovi Bridge closed for traffic from today; to be opened on April 5

Team Herald

MARGAO: The New Mandovi Bridge will be closed to all vehicular traffic from March 27 to April 5 to facilitate road resurfacing, safety upgrades, and painting work, the Public Works Department (PWD) has announced.

The PWD Executive Engineer, Works Division-VII (NH), Panjim, who oversees NH-66 from Patradevi to Zuari Bridge, issued the closure order to ensure smooth execution of the maintenance work.

During this period, traffic will be diverted as follows: Vehicles up to 12 tons GVW will be routed via the Old Mandovi Bridge. Vehicles exceeding 12 tons GVW will be redirected to the Atal Setu Bridge.

Commuters are advised to plan their travel accordingly to avoid inconvenience, and four-wheelers are urged to use the Atal Setu bridge.

MAX. TEMP 34.6°C
MIN. TEMP 23°C

idharudhar



Actually, I'm the heart patient. He brought me up the stairs.

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- Food Businesses are also advised to keep their contact details up-to-date under User Profile Section to receive regular 'Updates and Alerts' from FSSAI.

For more information:

Refer FSSAI Order dated 13th Nov 2024
Contact the Helpline: 1800112100;
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Tourism Minister Rohan Khaunte admitted that the project file of the 'facilitation centre' at Old Goa was not submitted to the Se-Old Goa Panchayat. Earlier, they had said they had obtained all the permissions.

In today's edition of Street Voices, Herald Media asked citizens and activists if they believe the project should now be scrapped, since it did not receive the green light from the local body

SINCE APPROVAL WAS NOT OBTAINED FROM THE SE OLD GOA P'YAT, SHOULD THE TOURISM PROJECT BE SCRAPPED?

“It is very sad to say that our Goans do not have faith in the government. They are even scared of the government's shadow, because their past record is so bad, they have purchased Goan lands at 25 paise and sold it for crores of rupees to private parties. So many lands all over Goa have been finished. Now they have reached Se-Old Goa. Now they want to put up a project there. All this is done in the name of Goans and Goa. But over a period of time, there is metamorphosis. They change. No project whatsoever should be allowed to come up at Old Goa – Anthony D'Silva, social activist”

“The tourism department project at Old Goa should be definitely scrapped. Old Goa is a world heritage UNESCO site. And in order to protect this world heritage site, no mega or any other project should be allowed to come up there. If we lose this world heritage status, we will never be able to retrieve it. Then all the religious and other monuments will be finished. Because of this reason, we, all the stakeholders, including the village panchayat and religious bodies, and Goans demand a well planned Master Plan – Mariano Ferrao, social activist”

“There is no doubt that the project should be scrapped. This project should not go ahead till a Master Plan for the village of Old Goa is prepared to save this prestigious UNESCO site. Unless there is a proper plan, with proper regulated zones, forget this project, no construction should be permitted. The Chief Minister should intervene and say that all construction should be frozen till a Master plan is put in place and this site is preserved. The Tourism Minister wants to file a police complaint to see who started the Mall proposal. I challenge him to a debate on this topic. I wonder whether he understands the meaning of a mall. – Trajano D'Mello, political commentator”



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