

# Goa's beaches to have demarcated zones for safe swimming

Safe swim zones have been divided into three categories: for families, men and women; there will be 100+ swim zones during peak season, 40 already set up

Team Herald

**MARGAO:** To enhance beach safety, Drishti Marine, the state government-appointed lifesaving agency, is in the process of demarcating 65 swim zones (SZs) along Goa's popular beaches, with 40 already in place across 10 beaches. One such beach is Colva while the others include the Calangute, Baga, Arambol and Colva stretches. The State will feature 100+ swim zones during peak season.



Swim zones have been set up at ten beaches and each zone features partition moorings to ensure clear demarcation for safe swimming

The initiative aims to create clearly designated swimming areas, reducing risks posed by strong currents, streamline movement of water sports vehicles

and for better vigilance and monitoring of swimmers.

Swim zones have been set up at ten beaches: Arambol, Morjim, Baga, Calangute, Miramar, Baina, Bogmalo, Colva, Baga-2 and Ashvem. Each zone features

partition moorings to ensure clear demarcation for safe swimming. Proper signage will be installed at all swim zone sites for clarity.

Currently, a total of 40 swim zones have been established, each divided into

three separate demarcated areas (depending on the quantum of footfall received): one each for families, men and one dedicated exclusively to women.

"Additional safety measures include the installation of speakers to provide real-time safety announcements and warnings. Water sports activities are prohibited in these swim zones in order to prevent any potential mishap. In case of rough sea conditions, red flags are erected to denote that beach swimming is not allowed," said Navin Awasthi, CEO of Drishti Marine. Public announcement systems have been installed at Miramar, Bogmalo, Colva and Baga beaches.

Awasthi also noted that the concept of a dedicated women's swim zone was introduced in order to ensure additional safety and comfort of women on the beaches. "Everyone should have a safe and enjoyable experience while visiting Goa's beaches and stepping into the water for a swim," he added.

Plans are underway to further strengthen safety measures with the introduction of 25 additional swim zones along other beaches.

## MMC fee hike row: Cong pushes municipality to suspend tax collection pending review

Team Herald

**MARGAO:** The Congress block in Margao has strongly criticized the Margao Municipal Council (MMC) for its recent fee hike, calling it unjust and in violation of council resolutions. The new fees, implemented on April 2, have sparked outrage among residents and political leaders alike.

Congress representatives have demanded an immediate halt to the increased fees, describing them as irrational and unfair. In a statement to reporters, they accused the ruling council, local political figures, and current councilors of imposing the hike without considering the financial strain on Margao's residents.

They also condemned the lack of transparency in the decision, arguing that it serves only those in power.

Congress leader Savio Coutinho alleged that the State government played a key role in pushing for the hike.

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**"The council is forcefully imposing this hike, and this is not fair. The civic body doesn't even have proper data on the premises being charged, and this will only create confusion and chaos"**

— Savio Coutinho, former Margao Chief

ises being charged, and this will only create confusion and chaos," Coutinho stated.

Congress members Damodar Onskar and Clifford Dias urged residents to challenge the municipal authorities when paying the increased fees, calling the hike an unnecessary financial burden.

"This is nothing but an additional financial strain on the people of Margao, and it must not be allowed to continue," they asserted.

The Congress party has demanded that the MMC suspend fee collection until a thorough review is conducted. They vowed to continue fighting for the rights of Margao's residents and hold local authorities accountable.

**Critics and residents question both the timing and reasoning behind the fee hike, as well as the council's lack of transparency in decision-making**

## Road for public use, permits in place: Cavelossim P'yat

Team Herald

**MARGAO:** In a strong rebuttal to allegations regarding the construction of a road in Cavelossim on Thursday, the Cavelossim Village Panchayat stated that the road is a public road and not a private one, as claimed by a section of villagers.

Officials from the South Goa District Collectorate also confirmed that the necessary permissions had been granted for the road. They presented a copy of the correspondence between the South Goa Deputy Collector for the Land Acquisition Authority (LA) and the Administrator of Comunidade South Zone from 2023, which stated that the Revenue Department, through a special committee, had approved the project after reviewing the matter.

This approval was also cited by Sarpanch Dixon Vaz, who said that permissions had been obtained from other departments. He pointed out that the permission granted by the Town and Country Planning Department (TCP) also showed that it was as per the Regional Plan 2021 (RP2021). It was revealed

that the Comunidade body had also granted permission for the road's construction and confirmed that it would be for public use. Given that the land belongs to the Comunidade, the Sarpanch referred to a resolution passed by the Comunidade body. He also clarified that the road

**Following opposition from some locals, Sarpanch clarified that the road, being built on Comunidade land with approval, will be handed over to the panchayat for the village to utilise**

is being built 100 metres from the main road, is not in any CRZ area, and does not involve the cutting of sand dunes, as alleged.

Additionally, Vaz outlined the conditions imposed by the panchayat for the road's construction. One of the conditions states that once completed, the road will be handed over to the panchayat. Another clause in the permission allows the panchayat to extend the road if necessary in the public interest. Furthermore, if any future development or construction takes place on properties adjacent to the road, a mandatory five-metre access will be maintained on both sides.

Vaz blamed political rivalry for the recent allegations made by some members of the public opposing the project. He also pointed out that other roads are being constructed in Cavelossim for public benefit and dismissed claims suggesting otherwise.

## DRAIN PAIN



An open drain at the North Goa Planning and Development Authority's former office in Mala has turned into an eyesore, emanating a stench and leaving local residents worried that it could turn into a breeding ground for insects and parasites. They are calling on the authorities to act quickly and clean and cover the drain, to safeguard public health

## Viriato demands UNESCO recognition for Tiatr in LS

Team Herald

**MARGAO:** South Goa Congress MP Captain Viriato Fernandes has called for Tiatr to be inscribed as a UNESCO cultural and heritage entity, making the demand in Parliament during zero hour. He urged the Ministry of Culture to establish a task force in collaboration with the Government of Goa and members of the Tiatr community to facilitate the recognition process.

Fernandes highlighted the need for sustained support to Tiatr and placed four key demands before the government. He called for financial assistance in the form of grants, scholarships, pensions, and other benefits to support the Tiatr community. Additionally, he stressed the im-

portance of engaging with the Goan diaspora to take Tiatr to a global audience.

To ensure the preservation of Tiatr's historical, artistic, and socio-cultural significance, he advocated for national and international research initiatives, academic collaborations, and the digital archiving of performances. Fernandes also pressed for the development and implementation of a policy framework that would support artists, playwrights, musicians, and support staff through financial aid, scholarships, and heritage promotion programs, including pension schemes.

The MP had recently announced that he would be taking up this cause, a move that was welcomed by the Tiatr community of Goa.

# Chinchinim villagers dead set against flyover, push for bypass instead

Team Herald

**MARGAO:** The Chinchinim Panchayat has formally urged Chief Minister Pramod Sawant, South Goa MP Captain Viriato Fernandes, Rajya Sabha MP Sadanand Tanavade, Goa's Chief Secretary, and Union Highway Minister Nitin Gadkari to consider villagers' demand for a bypass instead of the proposed flyover at Dandeavaddo. The timing of this appeal during the ongoing parliamentary session is

**The Chinchinim-Deussua Panchayat previously passed resolutions in 2008 and 2009 supporting bypass construction at the 39.8 km and 42 km points of the highway. They advocate for "Alternate 1" route to minimise local displacement, citing the 1989 land acquisitions that already affected area residents**

strategic as villagers hope to gain Central government attention to their cause.

The letter sent by Sarpanch Frank Viegas calls for examination of residents' objections to the NH 66 expansion through Chinchinim village, emphasizing preservation of the area's socio-cultural fabric. The Public

Works Department's NH Executive Engineer recently confirmed to a Dandeavaddo resident that the Panchayat's bypass request has been forwarded to the Ministry of Road Transport and Highways Goa Office for reconsideration.

Viegas pointed to the government's decision to ex-

tend the Verna flyover to Nuvem's western bypass as precedent.

"The Chief Minister managed to get the Verna flyover extended even though the project had already been tendered. Meanwhile, the highway expansion between Navelim and Cuncolim, which involves four-laning through Dan-

deavaddo, is yet to be tendered," Viegas stated.

It may be recalled that recently, Viegas had presented a memorandum to MP Fernandes and Velim MLA Cruz Silva, who both expressed support. PWD documents show three potential bypass routes were considered before an alignment was finalised, noting that despite villagers' preference for Alternative 1, a different route was selected partly because 30-40 metres of land was already acquired in 1990.

## 25,695 traffic violators booked in January, but accidents remain high

Team Herald

**MARGAO:** In January 2025, the Goa Traffic Cell booked 25,695 cases under the Motor Vehicles Act as part of preventive measures to curb road accidents. However, despite these enforcement efforts, the number of accidents and fatalities has not decreased as expected.

Ponda recorded the highest number of violations at 3,531, followed by Margao (3,494), Panjim (2,768), and Mapusa (2,408). Other hotspots included Vasco (1,773), Canacona (1,609), and Anjuna (1,606). Even smaller areas like Calangute (805) and Mopa (579) saw significant cases.

A retired police inspector, speaking anonymously, emphasized that reducing accidents requires strict enforcement of traffic laws,

**Total traffic violations booked under Motor Vehicles Act. in January 2025 : 25,695**

**TRAFFIC UNITS WITH HIGHEST CASES RECORDED**

- Ponda Police: 3,531
- Margao Traffic Cell: 3,494
- Panjim Traffic Cell: 2,768
- Mapusa Traffic Cell: 2,408
- Vasco Traffic Cell: 1,773
- Canacona Traffic Cell: 1,609
- Anjuna Traffic Cell: 1,606
- Curcholem Traffic Cell: 1,390



**OTHER TRAFFIC UNITS:**

- Calangute: 805
- Mopa: 579
- Bicholim: 929
- Porvorim: 937
- Pernem: 1,205
- Colva: 1,061
- Quepem: 640
- Dabolim: 664
- Airport: 296
- Notice Branch: 296

defensive driving, infrastructure improvements, and public awareness. He stressed the importance of safe driving habits such as adhering to speed limits, avoiding distractions, maintaining vehicles, and wearing helmets and seat belts. He noted that while

accidents have slightly declined compared to last year, the police have also installed posters and signboards marking accident-prone areas.

Sandeep Naik, a local resident, observed that despite traffic officials, including head constables

and police station officers, actively booking violators, accidents have not reduced significantly. He criticized the practice of police stopping vehicles in the middle of the road, creating traffic congestion instead of ensuring smooth enforcement.

## Tanavade urges Centre for flyover to ease traffic at Davorlim rly junction

Team Herald

**MARGAO:** Responding to demands from local residents, Rajya Sabha Member of Parliament Sadanand Shet Tanavade has urged the Central government to construct a flyover at the Davorlim railway crossing in the Navelim constituency.

He highlighted the severe traffic congestion and daily challenges faced by thousands of commuters. The Davorlim railway crossing serves as a crucial link between Davorlim, Aquém-Baixo, and major towns such as Quepem, Cuncolim, and nearby villages.

Due to heavy train traffic, with over 20-30 trains passing through daily, the railway gates remain closed for 20-25 minutes per cycle, leading to significant bottlenecks. This causes delays for students, professionals, and daily commuters, often forcing them to take longer detours, resulting in increased fuel consumption and extended travel time.

A flyover at this junction would



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benefit more than 30,000 people, including residents of Curtorim, Navelim, Velim, and Margao. Moreover, sufficient land is available near the railway crossing, making the project technically feasible without displacing any residential areas.

Local MLA Ulhas Tuenkar welcomed the proposal and thanked the MP for raising the issue in Parliament. Expressing his support for the

demand, he acknowledged the difficulties faced by commuters at the Davorlim crossing. "The locals and commuters have been struggling with this issue for a long time, and there has been a continuous demand for a flyover," he stated.

Tuenkar expressed hope that the flyover's construction would alleviate the hardships faced by both locals and commuters.