

BEGGARS LAY SIEGE TO STATE'S COMMERCIAL CAPITAL

Residents find it difficult to navigate in Margao as aggressive paupers approach them for money; beggars occupying streets, obstructing access and living in unsanitary conditions pose hygiene concerns

Team Herald

MARGAO: The rising number of beggars in Margao is a persistent issue, causing increased unease among residents and visitors alike. The issue has raised concerns about safety and hygiene as reports indicate some beggars are aggressive, while others live in unsanitary conditions which could pose health risks. Many beggars are found occupying streets and obstructing access.

The public has voiced concerns over the growing problem, particularly in busy areas such as the bus stand, traffic junctions, markets, and commercial hubs. This has led to feelings of discomfort, with many citizens finding it increasingly difficult to navigate these areas without being approached for money.

Riyaz Shaikh, a local shopkeeper from Margao, noted, "While I recognise that some individuals may be in genuine need, the sheer volume of beggars on



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Despite repeated appeals from the community, the authorities' response has been slow. Although the Margao Municipal Council and local police have ac-

CALL FOR REHAB PROG & ENFORCEMENT OF ANTI-BEGGING LAWS

- The public has voiced concerns over the growing problem, particularly in areas such as the bus stand, traffic junctions, markets & commercial hubs
- Despite repeated appeals, the authorities' response has been slow
- Though MMC and police have acknowledged the issue,

a coordinated effort to tackle the root causes of begging and implement long-term solutions yet to materialise

■ The presence of beggars in Margao underscores the need for a more organised strategy, including rehab programmes for the homeless and stricter enforcement of anti-begging laws

“We understand the concerns of the residents and are working to address the issue. However, it's crucial to distinguish between those who genuinely need assistance and those who are exploiting the situation”
— Senior officer at South Goa District Collector's office

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grammes for the homeless and stricter enforcement of anti-begging laws.

Residents are optimistic that more extensive measures will soon be implemented to address the begging problem and ensure the safety and well-being of all citizens and those in need.

Hike support price for paddy: Salcete farmers

Call for fixing the rate at Rs 40-50 per kg; claim rising cultivation costs threaten the sustainability of farming

Team Herald

MARGAO: A group of farmers from Salcete has called for an increase in the support price for paddy to address rising cultivation costs that threaten the sustainability of farming.

The farmers have requested the support price be raised from Rs 22 to Rs 40-50 per kg, asserting that the current price does not adequately cover the increasing costs of agricultural activities.

Milagres Menezes, a farmer from Curtorim, spoke about the difficulties farmers face due to increasing labour charges and other cultivation expenses, stating, "The current rate of Rs 22 is insufficient and should be increased to Rs 40-50 to make cultivation viable."

Menezes acknowledged the support provided by Curtorim MLA Aleixo Reginaldo Lourenco, who facilitated access to harvesting machines and other resources in the constituency, helping maintain agricultural activity in the area.

He said, "Thanks to the facilities provided by the

“Farmers are facing difficulties due to increasing labour charges and other cultivation expenses. The current rate of Rs 22 is insufficient and should be increased to Rs 40-50 to make cultivation viable. Thanks to the facilities provided by the MLA, we are able to see greenery in the village and across the constituency”
— Milagres Menezes, a farmer from Curtorim

“The government must provide maximum and timely support to encourage farmers as many have stopped cultivation due to the heavy losses they have incurred”
— Vincent D'Souza, a farmer

MLA, we are able to see greenery in the village and across the constituency.”

Echoing these sentiments, Vincent D'Souza, also a farmer from the region, emphasised the difficult conditions farmers face.

D'Souza said, "The government must provide maximum and timely support to encourage farmers as many have stopped cultivation due to the heavy losses they have incurred."

MLA Lourenco acknowledged the necessity of increasing the support price and stressed the importance of the government providing timely subsidies.

"It's not just about in-

creasing the support price, but also ensuring that farmers receive timely assistance. I have already raised this issue with the government to encourage more farmers to continue cultivation," he said.

Lourenco reaffirmed his dedication to the farming community and mentioned his active involvement in initiatives aimed at promoting and supporting agriculture in the Curtorim constituency.

The call for increased support prices and timely subsidies underscores the mounting challenges confronting farmers in the region.

FDA seizes mawa worth Rs 1.89 lakh

Product disposed off; show-cause notices issued to two establishments

Team Herald

MARGAO: The Food and Drugs Administration (FDA) officials on Monday seized 540 kg of mawa, a popular dairy product worth Rs 1.89 lakh, which had been brought into Goa for preparing sweets. FDA officials said that the product was later disposed of to prevent public consumption.

The mawa, which was found stored improperly, posed a potential health hazard. Priced at Rs 3.50 per kg in the market, it was discovered in two establishments, stored in a vehicle instead of following prescribed safety standards.

South Goa FDA officer Sanjayot Kudalkar said that following a tip-off, the authorities inspected the mawa's storage conditions which revealed that the product was not kept in proper conditions, which could lead to contamination, posing serious health risks if con-

“Show-cause notices have been issued to the establishments involved. Further instructions have been provided for the proper storage of milk-based products”
— Richard Noronha, FDA official

sumed. Additionally, the packaging lacked essential information regarding preparation and packing dates, which is crucial for ensuring the safety of dairy products. As a result, the FDA took immediate action by seizing the product and disposing it off to prevent any public consumption.

Richard Noronha, a FDA official, said that show-cause notices have been issued to the establishments involved. Further instructions have been provided for the proper storage of milk-based products.

Unseasonal rains disrupt mango harvest

Soaring prices cause concern among vendors and consumers, affecting sales; wholesale rate in Margao is Rs 15,000 per 100 kg

Team Herald

MARGAO: Unseasonal rains have significantly impacted the mango crop in the State, leading to a noticeable reduction in their availability in local markets.

Consequently, there has been a sharp increase in mango prices at both wholesale and retail levels. In Margao's wholesale market, standard mangoes have soared to an astonishing Rs 15,000 per 100 kg, with retail prices climbing even higher. This surge in prices has created difficulties for vendors and consumers alike, as many struggle to afford the fruit during what is traditionally the peak mango season.

Local vendors in Margao report that the expected influx of mangoes has not yet materialised. Typically, the first week of April sees a large supply of mangoes due to harvesting, but this year, delayed fruit production, coupled with unseasonal rains, has severely affected the harvest, significantly reducing the quantity of mangoes available for sale.

This shortage has led to hesitation among vendors who typically visit the Margao market to buy



mangoes. The high retail prices are causing many to hold off on purchases, fearing they won't be able to sell the mangoes at a profit. As a result, the mango market in Margao has been unusually quiet, with vendors expressing frustration over the high prices and low supply.

Mango vendors emphasised that this year's situation differs signifi-

cantly from previous years.

Sarvanand Desai, a wholesaler in Margao, said, "In the past, the market would be flooded with mangoes by early April, making them more affordable for consumers. This year, however, the fruit has not yet arrived in large quantities, which has contributed to the continued high prices."

RATES SWELL

- Mangoes sold at **Rs 15,000** per 100 kg
- **Smaller mangoes: Rs 12,000** per 100 kg
- **Monserate (Mussarat): Rs 12,000** per 100 kg
- **Alphonso mangoes: Rs 8,000** per 100 kg
- **Kesar Mangoes: Rs 3,000** and **Rs 4,000** per 100 kg
- **Sinduri Mangoes: Rs 2,000** to **Rs 3,000** per 100 kg

Prices quoted by vendors

The unseasonal rains and changing weather conditions have delayed the mango harvest, directly impacting the fruit's market arrival.

The reduced availability has driven up prices, causing concern among vendors and consumers. Despite the current situation, there is optimism for the coming weeks. Mango vendors expect the fruit to start arriving in larger quantities within the next 15 days, which should help lower prices to more manageable levels, making mangoes more accessible to consumers and helping vendors manage their inventory.

Road improvement work begins in Chandor

Team Herald

MARGAO: The long-awaited road improvement work in Chandor has officially begun, with the hot-mixing of roads starting on Monday.

The initiative aims to resolve the issue of bad roads and enhance transportation infrastructure in the area, which is known for its rich heritage and historical significance.

Chandor, a heritage village that attracts hundreds of tourists, researchers, and students annually, has long faced challenges related to its road conditions.

Local residents had been advocating for better roads and infrastructure, which has now been addressed through these improvement works.

Local MLA and Leader of Opposition, Yuri Alemao said, "This asphaltting work will provide a safe and smooth ride for vehicular traffic, improving overall connectivity and facilitating easier travel, especially with the monsoon season approaching," Alemao said.

Locals fear incomplete roadwork will flood Fatorda during rains

Point out the situation will worsen, making the roads slippery and dangerous for commuters

Team Herald

MARGAO: With the monsoon season approaching, Fatorda residents are worried about the ongoing road digging in the area, fearing significant hardships once the rains arrive.

The roadwork has left key roads dug up, construction materials scattered around, and patches of road incomplete. Locals are concerned that these unfinished projects will worsen once the monsoon commences, potentially leading to flooded streets, traffic disruptions, and damage to vehicles.

"We are already facing difficulties navigating through these partially dug-up roads, and with the rains approaching, it will only get worse. The roads will become slippery and dangerous, causing more problems for commuters," said Jose Dias, a resident.

Beyond traffic issues, there are also concerns about water logging in the dug areas, which could create health hazards and increase mosquito breeding. The lack of proper



The work has left key roads dug up, construction materials scattered around, and patches incomplete.

drainage in certain spots only adds to these worries.

While local authorities have assured residents that the work will be completed before the full onset of the rains, many remain doubtful given the current pace of construction.

"We have been promised that the work will be finished soon, but with the monsoon just days away, we are left wondering if it will be enough

to avoid complications," said Agnelo Araujo, another resident.

The situation in Fatorda underscores the urgent need for improved planning and timely completion of infrastructure projects, particularly in areas vulnerable to the challenges posed by the monsoon season.

The residents hope for swift action to minimise inconvenience and risks before the rains begin.

STREET VOICES

Churchill Brothers have done extremely well to provisionally top the I-League table with 40 points. Though their fate as table toppers will be decided on April 28, O Herald asked sports enthusiasts, "Will Churchill Brothers performance in the I-League be a big boost to football in Goa?" Here are the responses...

WILL CHURCHILL BROS' PERFORMANCE BOOST FOOTBALL IN GOA?



“I think the I-League title has not yet been decided due to the dispute between Inter Kashi and Namdhari SC. The result will be known on April 28. It is good for Goans with a second Goan team coming in the ISL. Sporting Club are fighting for an I-League spot, they are in the second division now. It's good since more youngsters and more players from Goa will come up. And I hope to see a great future for Goa”
— Antonio Da Silva, goalkeeper from Navelim

“With this superb performance of Churchill Brothers in the I-league a number of players will be inspired and they will get an opportunity to play in ISL. I feel extremely great that Churchill Bros have an opportunity to get into the ISL. There will be a lot of benefits of Churchill's performance for Goa, since this is a Goan team that will be getting into the ISL. Churchill gives a lot of opportunities to Goans”
— Lorry Dias, football fan



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“Hearty congratulations to the Churchill Brothers team for presently emerging as the number one team. It's more good news since there is a possibility of them getting into the ISL. Churchill Alemao has done a lot of good to the progress of football in Goa. He has given an opportunity and brought up many players. So we Goans are extremely happy because there is a great possibility of Churchill Brothers qualifying for ISL. This will definitely boost Goan football since many more players can get into the ISL teams. Goan football will benefit in the long run”
— Luis, football fan