

Stop sale of stationery, notebooks in schools, book sellers petition CM

Say this practice is eating into their business & forcing parents to pay inflated rates; claim these institutes are not registered with Commercial Tax & I-T Depts

Team Herald

MARGAO: Bookstore owners across Goa have urged Chief Minister Pramod Sawant to initiate immediate action against schools selling stationery and notebooks on campus.

The Goa Book Sellers Association has accused the schools of making it mandatory for students to make purchases from designated vendors linked to these institutions.

In the petition to the Chief Minister, the Association said, "Several schools have resorted to commercial activities within their premises, with some even involving their staff in conducting stationery sales."

"This practice is eating into the business of independent booksellers

CALL FOR CURBING ILLEGAL PRACTICE

Goa Book Sellers Association accuses schools of making it mandatory for student/ward to purchase items from the institute

Claims the value paid is much higher than the market rates

Points out that these institutes are not registered with Commercial Tax Dept

under the GST regime or with Income Tax Department

Complains that this practice has affected their businesses and total sales values have dropped

Calls for putting an end to the practice and initiate disciplinary action against erring institutions

and forcing parents to pay inflated rates under the pretext of supporting school infrastructure. We the members of the Goa Book Sellers Association would like to bring to your notice that many schools in the State are indulging in commercial activities like selling notebooks and school stationery items,"

said association president Chandrakant Pandit in the complaint addressed to the CMO.

He said, "Several management have made it compulsory that the student/ward purchase the items from the institute even though many a time the value paid is much higher than the market rates."

Pandit pointed out that these institutes are not registered with the Commercial Tax Department under the GST regime or with the Income Tax Department, and without disclosures.

"It is due to this that our businesses are suffering and our total sales values have dropped drastically," he said.

"Many booksellers in the State are dependent on the local schools in their area to run their businesses. It is our earnest plea to you to put an end to this long-standing problem and take disciplinary action against the erring institutions."

The association also noted that these practices violate recent directions from the Chief Minister, who had warned gov-

ernment-aided schools against collecting infrastructure fees from students in any form.

Speaking to mediapersons, a bookseller from South Goa said that some principals have been approached by outside vendors offering discounts and incentives at the start of the academic year.

"They do their business and leave, without any overheads. Most schools have started doing business instead of focusing on imparting quality education to students. Goan shop owners who pay rent and taxes suffer," he said.

The booksellers hope that the CM will intervene and ensure that schools stay focused on education rather than retail sales.

Footpaths near Margao Rly Stn used as dump sites, parking lots

Pedestrians forced to walk on the roads

Team Herald

MARGAO: The footpaths near the Konkarn Railway Station in Margao have become areas of neglect, functioning as dumping locations for scrap and garbage and misused for illegal vehicle parking.

These walkways, originally meant for pedestrians, now present considerable health and safety risks, deterring commuters and worsening the urban environment.

Residents and daily commuters have expressed worries about the area's worsening state, noting a lack of effective action from authorities. Despite past clean-up attempts by the Margao Municipal Council (MMC), the issue has unfortunately reverted to its previous condition.

Rohan Naik, a local resident, said, "The footpath has been a mess for a long time now. Many outsiders park their vehicles here overnight, and some scrap



Vehicles illegally parked near the railway station in Margao

dealers have started using the space to dump materials. It's a complete nuisance."

Iftiyaz Shaikh, another resident, emphasised the safety risk pedestrians encounter due to these encroachments, stating, "Pedestrians are finding it tough to walk on the footpath. They are forced to walk on the roads, risking their lives with the fast-moving vehicles."

Additionally, residents have reported that taxi owners frequently occupy the footpaths during the day, which further inconveniences pedestrians

and forces them onto busy roads. The presence of waste and scrap materials has increased the risk, rendering the area unhygienic and unsafe.

Although the MMC had previously carried out a drive to clear the footpaths following media coverage, residents assert that the absence of consistent enforcement has caused the problem to re-emerge.

The local community has now appealed to the civic body for strong and continuous measures to restore the footpaths, ensuring they remain free from encroachments and illegal dumping.

Raia murder: Villagers call for monitoring activity of migrants

Call for strengthening tenant verification process

Team Herald

MARGAO: The recent murder of a migrant worker in Raia has sparked concern and unrest among local residents, who have now called for increased monitoring of migrant activity in the village.

The incident, which took place two days ago, involved the fatal stabbing of a male migrant labourer under circumstances which remain under investigation. Police suspect another mi-

TWO ODISHA NATIVES ARRESTED

Maina-Curtorim Police arrested two Odisha natives, Sashibant Majhi, 43, and Rabi Majhi, 28, in connection with the murder of Khageswar Sabar, 38, also from Odisha. Sabar was found dead in his rented room in Sonarwaddo, Raia. Sabar lived with the two

suspects in the rented room. Following the murder, both fled. Sashibant was apprehended near Margao Railway Station, while Rabi was caught at Bambolim while trying to leave Goa. Both have been remanded to 8 days police custody by the JMFC, Margao.

grant to be the culprit, and are working to determine

the motive. Though the authorities

have termed the incident as isolated, it has amplified the existing community concerns regarding the lack of regulation and oversight of the migrant population in the village.

"We're not against migrants, but there needs to be a proper system in place," said Christopher Dias, a local resident.

He said, "We need to know who is residing in our village."

The locals want law enforcement agencies to strengthen verification process and ensure that all residents are accounted for.

LANDFILL SITE?



Debris dumped in a field along the Agassaim-Siridao stretch of National Highway 66, even as the North Goa District Collector's office constituted a flying squad at the taluka level to curb illegal land filling, hill cutting, and unauthorised construction

Autorickshaw stands to regulate tourist transport ops in Benaolim

MARGAO: Two new autorickshaw stands have been set up along Benaolim's beach road to regulate tourist and local transport operations. Inaugurated near the Maria Hall junction and Kader Supermarket junction, the stands aim to bring order to the area's previously unstructured rickshaw pick-up system.

The initiative, launched by local MLA Venzy Viegas, seeks to improve mobility for visitors while supporting autorickshaw drivers, who play a key role in the region's transport network.

MAX. TEMP 34.4 °C
MIN. TEMP 25.2 °C

Despite facelift, wholesale fish market plagued by poor hygiene, illegal vending

Team Herald

MARGAO: With just over two weeks remaining until the formal inauguration of the re-constructed wholesale fish market on April 30, concerns are growing over persistent issues that continue to affect operations at the site.

Despite the market's facelift and infrastructure upgrades, problems such as nuisance, poor sanitation, and illegal trading continue unabated, raising questions about the effectiveness of the redevelopment effort.

The project was launched with the aim to modernise the market, improving hygiene standards, and streamlining commercial activities. Despite the structural improvements including the newly paved floors and upgraded drainage systems, dumping of waste, and roadside illegal business activities at the market paint a different picture.

Vendors and local residents report that the area around the market remains littered with fish waste, plastic

packaging, and stagnant water, creating an ongoing health hazard and a breeding ground for pests.

"The new building is definitely better to look at, but the smell, the flies, and the filth are still the same. If you come here after peak hours, you'll see garbage lying everywhere," said Francisco Fernandes, a fish vendor.

According to several vendors, the waste disposal system is still inefficient, with municipal garbage trucks arriving late or failing to pick up all the waste generated during daily trade.

Another key issue plaguing the market is the presence of unauthorised vendors and traders who continue to conduct business outside the designated area. These not only contribute to congestion, but also undercut legitimate traders operating within the sanctioned premises.

"They're setting up stalls illegally on the road right outside the market, selling fruits and even clothes. It's not just unfair to us, it's unsafe and chaotic," Fatima Barreto, a trader.

Despite repeated complaints, enforcement by Margao Municipal Council has reportedly been inconsistent. "We've raised these issues several times with the municipal officers, but no one seems to act until there's a major inspection or VIP visit," Barreto added.

Commuters voiced frustration over the disruption caused by unregulated activity. They cite noise, traffic congestion, and unsanitary conditions as major concerns.

"Even after the renovation, the roads around the market are clogged with handcarts and waste. During monsoon season, it's going to be worse if this is not addressed now," said Rina D'Souza, a resident from a nearby housing society.

Public health advocates warn that without a robust waste management plan and enforcement of licensing regulations, the market may remain a hub for disease outbreaks and environmental degradation.

36 lives lost in 187 accidents in Feb

Slight decline in fatalities compared to 54 deaths in 239 mishaps reported in Feb last year

Team Herald

MARGAO: Goa's roads continue to be a concern, with 187 accidents reported in February 2025, resulting in 36 fatalities - slight decrease - compared to the 54 deaths in the 239 accidents reported in February last year.

Laxman Naik, a prominent citizen from Fatorda, believes that road accidents can be decreased through a combination of improved road safety infrastructure, advancements in vehicle technology, stricter enforcement of traffic laws, and increased public awareness campaigns.

He acknowledged the Traffic cell's efforts in displaying posters and signboards, as well as installing speed breakers at various locations, which have helped reduce accidents. However, he noted that simply issuing challans may not be sufficient to significantly decrease accidents.

Kishore Naik, another resident, pointed out that the tendency among people not to use safety belts and helmets while driving is a major factor contributing to fatalities. Rash driving is another significant cause of accidents. While the police do book cases for rash and negligent driving, such behaviour persists, leading to accidents.

He emphasised the need for greater awareness among drivers and the general public regarding safe driving practices.

BREAKDOWN OF ACCIDENT DATA



Overall (Feb 2025): 187 accidents (102 in South Goa, 85 in North Goa)

Overall (Feb 2024): 239 accidents (124 in South, 115 in North)

SOUTH GOA (Feb 2025)

Total: 102 accidents

Key Locations: Maina Curtorim (18), Ponda (14), Verna (13), Fatorda (7), Quepem (8), Cuncolim (9), Colva/Canacona/Vasco/Margao (4 each), Curchorem (5), Sanguem/Mormugao/Collem (2 each), Mardol (6)

Fatalities: 17 total (Verna (5), Vasco (1), Maina Curtorim (3), Margao (3), Ponda (4), Collem (1))

NORTH GOA (Feb 2025)

Total: 85 accidents

Key Locations: Old Goa (13), Panjim (11), Agassaim (12), Mapusa (12), Colvale/Anjuna (6 each), Porvorim (9), Calangute/Saligao (3 each), Pernem (4), Mandrem/Bicholim (2 each), Valpoi/Mopa Airport (1 each)

Fatalities: 19 total (Anjuna/Mandrem (3 each), Old

Goa/Bicholim/Mapusa/Calangute (2 each), Agassaim, Porvorim, Pernem, Mopa (1 each))

SOUTH GOA (Feb 2024)

Total: 124 accidents

Key locations: Verna (19), Ponda (17), Maina Curtorim (15), Cuncolim (11), Canacona (9), Vasco (10), Margao (6), Colva/Fatorda (8 each), Quepem (5), Collem/Curchorem/Mormugao (3 each)

Fatalities: 25 total (Maina Curtorim (6), Ponda (4), Vasco/Verna (2 each), Fatorda/Colva (3 each), Collem/Margao/Curchorem/Cuncolim/Canacona (1 each))

NORTH GOA (Feb 2024)

Total: 115 accidents

Key locations: Old Goa (18), Porvorim (16), Agassaim/Mapusa/Panjim (11 each), Pernem (9), Colvale/Calangute/Bicholim (6 each), Mandrem/Valpoi (4 each), Mopa Airport (3)

Fatalities: 29 total (Bicholim/Mandrem/Pernem/Porvorim/Valpoi (3 each), Old Goa/Agassaim/Panjim (4 each), Saligao (2) Colvale/Calangute (1 each))

STREET VOICES

WHERE GOANS ARE HEARD

IS THE GOVERNMENT CONSTANTLY IGNORING LOCAL COMMUNITIES IN DEVELOPMENT?

Of late there are a number of agitations initiated by locals against government projects. Most projects are launched by the State or Central Government without taking the stakeholders into consideration. In this context, O Heraldo asked people, "Is the govt constantly ignoring local communities in development, as seen in Kapreshwar Devasthan Highway issue, Malim private jetty and Bhoma highway issues?"

"Maybe this infrastructure is needed for development. But in so many cases, maybe intellectuals, activists, citizens have persuaded the government to come up with studies and these studies have to percolate down to the constituency, village and ward level. But it appears that the government just does not care for it. The Panchayati Raj Act has been just cast aside. Five six months in advance, the government has to send a professional team to the panchayat and the wards to take the people into confidence, so that people are mentally prepared. Otherwise they are caught unawares, then there are agitations, and the government blames the people for coming on the roads

— Anthony D'Silva, social activist

"Yes, I would be straight forward that the answer should not be long. In a situation like this when you have a sledgehammer majority in the Assembly and Parliament, this is what happens. So now no one cares for anyone and this is going to be the trend unless someone like the Congress or someone else does something else, does something about it and brings the government to check. I have not given up, but I have taken a backseat, because it is of no use. However much you make noise, however much you may say things, it is happening across the board. In Goa if you see the frontage of the Mandovi River, which was a pleasure of any senior citizen, it is all gone to the dogs. It's all gone to the casinos, one by one.

— Armando Gonsalves, founder of Goa For Giving

"Niz Goenkars have become a minority. There are attempts to divide the Goans based on caste and religion. And who is doing this? Those we have elected to save Goa. And they try to disturb the peace by creating distinction among people. Those who were elected to unite and lift us up are putting us down. Whom are they supporting? They are supporting outsiders by creating vote banks to keep them in power. It pains me to tell you that wherever we go we have to protest. We see destruction everywhere. Why does this destruction happen? Because attempts are made to benefit the outsiders. They are given the assurance that they should come to Goa and we (politicians) will support you

— Mariano Ferrao, social activist

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