

# FDA should raid fruit markets throughout the year

For the last few days, the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) has been raiding fruit markets across the State, seizing and destroying chemically ripened fruits. The FDA team seems to be doing a fairly good job at the moment, but the million-dollar question is: what are these officials doing for the rest of the year when fruits—particularly papayas and bananas—are routinely and forcefully ripened using chemicals and sold openly?

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The largest violations take place at the agricultural yard in the Mapusa market. Tonnes of green papayas and bananas are unloaded here, only to miraculously turn yellow overnight. This appears to be the biggest "miracle" happening in the



world right now. The ripened fruits are then dis-

patched across the State, only to be replaced by a fresh batch. These yellow papayas taste like soap, smell foul within a day, and develop black patches by the third day. One can only imagine what kind of impact such fruit has on human health.

The FDA shouldn't wait until mango season to suddenly wake up and conduct raids. Instead, it must consistently monitor markets throughout the year to crack down on violators. Authorities must also visit mango dealers in Siolim and surrounding areas to check for violations. Many of them pluck raw mangoes and artificially ripen them to meet the high demand in the market.

The authorities must not allow merchants to take the public for a ride. After all, health is wealth—and it's high time the system acted like it truly believes in that.

## Well begun is half done



**HERALD  
IMPACT**

## How long will the government abandon fields in Siolim-Sodiem?

For the last three decades, the once lush and green paddy fields in the picturesque village have turned into a swamp today. Thanks to the leaking Tillari Irrigation Project (TIP) which has been more of a curse than a boon to the Siolkars. The TIP has de-

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stroyed the hills by dividing it into two much to the annoyance of cashew farmers.



I would like to thank the O Herald as after constantly highlighting the issue of fallow fields through the Citizen Herald, the authorities have finally begun to de-weed the long abandoned land in Siolim-Sodiem. The fields were rendered uncultivable for almost three decades after they were flooded with the release of Tillari waters. Farmers in the area have heaved a sigh of relief that the fields are finally being cleaned in the area. The authorities should also press in more tractors into service and see to it that the work is expedited before the rains.

to be interested in bringing the land under the plough for reasons best known to them. Wonder if they have water sports in mind?

The migratory birds which would arrive in hordes and attract hundreds of ornithologists are nowhere to be seen today. All one can see today is some migrants who fish from the Gaunsa Vaddo link road for huge invasive species of catfish. At night, the same area turns into a safe haven for drug dealers and neddlers—both local and

## Place railings on the Duler culvert immediately

The retaining wall of the culvert on the main road leading to the famous Dr Jose's clinic has collapsed, and as a stop-gap measure, some genius from the PWD has fenced the area with bamboo sticks and iron pipes—perhaps as an austerity move or an eco-friendly way of "repairing" it.

People, mainly senior citizens and women, would

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wait for the bus and often sit on the bench placed there. With the retaining wall knocked off by a speeding vehicle, the area now poses a serious danger to motorists, with unsuspecting riders ending up in the dirty water squirming with maggots—waste released into the culvert by nearby residents. When the government receives crores of rupees for development,



what is stopping the authorities from properly repairing and reconstructing the retaining wall here? This amounts to nothing short of criminal negligence on the part of the authorities. The public pays road tax and most certainly has the right to travel safely.

Given the volume of

traffic that moves along this road to Camurlim, Siolim, and Pernem, the need of the hour is to carry out proper repairs. The Mapusa MLA and the concerned councillor must sit across the table and see that the culvert is repaired immediately in the public interest.

## Unpainted speed breakers pose hazard to commuters

The Public Works Department (PWD) recently constructed two speed breakers overnight at Xell-Siolim, reportedly to curb speeding, enhance road safety, and reduce accidents in a densely populated area. While speed breakers serve as vital safety measures by forcing vehicles to slow down, on Saturday, April

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19, they became a hazard due to negligence.

As I was travelling by bus to Mapusa, the vehicle suddenly jolted on hitting one of the unmarked speed breakers. Passengers were thrown in various directions, and the driver nearly lost control of the bus—a moment that almost ended in tragedy. The root cause? Neither of the two speed breakers had been painted by the authorities, making



them nearly invisible to oncoming traffic.

All the PWD had to do was paint the speed breakers in a chequered pattern—a standard practice to alert motorists in advance and ensure safety. Instead, due to the lack of basic precaution, commuters were put through unnecessary hardship.

It is deeply disappointing that the authorities appear to lack both the funds and the inclination to complete even

the most essential aspects of public infrastructure work. Poorly maintained and badly designed roads are a major cause of road accidents in Goa. Painted speed breakers are just as important to road safety as helmets are to bike riders.

It is imperative that the government acts swiftly and responsibly in the public interest—the Siolim speed breakers must be painted immediately before a serious accident occurs.

## Chaos outside Margao wholesale fish market



The wholesale fish market at Margao attracts huge crowds of fish-eaters during the mornings which is understandable. These citizens expect to lay their hands on fresh fish which is available at the wholesale market at an affordable price.

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However it is observed that outside the market, several vendors sell various types of goods along this

stretch of the road. These vendors occupy almost half the roads making it a nightmarish experience for road-users who have to pass through this road. This huge crowd is normally seen during the morning session probably because there are no checks by the civic authorities on road encroachment.

The Margao municipal authorities need to see to it that the roads are not occupied by these street-vendors in the morning or someone could get badly hurt in an accident.

## Save our farmers, hike support price for paddy

For many years now, the support price of paddy has remained stagnant at Rs 22 per kg, while the price of fertiliser has soared to Rs 1,650 per bag. Incidentally, whenever a farmer goes to purchase a bag of high-yielding Jyoti seeds from the Agricultural Yards, they have to pay Rs 725 per bag, which works out to around Rs 29 per kg. One fails to understand the government's logic—why ask the farmer to pay Rs 29 per kg for seeds when the same produce is lat-



steadily risen. No wonder many in Goa have abandoned their fields. If the government is serious about promoting agriculture in the State,

it must immediately revise the support price for rice and simultaneously ensure the availability of high-yielding seeds to maximise output. Every time input costs rise, the procurement price must be revised accordingly to keep the ryots motivated.

The Department of Agriculture must stop functioning solely from offices. Officers need to get out into the villages, especially to inspire youth to take up farming. They should also survey fields to understand why certain areas flood during the monsoon. Instead of compensating farmers for crop loss after the fact, Zonal Agricultural Officers must work with panchayats to identify and desilt culverts and clear natural drainage paths blocked by highway expansion. Development should not come at the cost of the farmer or the environment. Otherwise, Goa's green fields will soon turn grey.

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er procured by the very same authority at Rs 22?

The cost of labour stands at Rs 1,200 per day, and transplanting an acre of land comes to about Rs 10,000. By the time the produce is harvested, a farmer ends up spending roughly Rs 22,000 per acre. Even if the yield is good, the farmer takes home only about 800 to 1,000 kg of produce from an acre. If the cost of cultivation outweighs the return, what is the incentive for a farmer to continue tilling the land?

Moreover, the support price has remained unchanged for over a decade, while inflation and input costs have

## One rule for citizens, another for vendors?



It seems like the Mapusa Municipality and the local traffic police are vying for a spot in the Guinness Book of World Records—for turning a blind eye to what's right in front of them while cracking down elsewhere. The prime example is the mobile tender coconut cart parked right in the middle of the two-wheeler parking zone, opposite the taxi stand in Mapusa. This area is clearly demarcated for two-wheelers, but that hasn't stopped a vendor from occupying the space to do brisk busi-

ness. Beside him, another hawk selling mangoes seems equally undisturbed, casually operating from a public parking spot.

Meanwhile, the average citizen is left circling the city, desperately looking for a place to park. If a private vehicle dares stop in a restricted area, it is promptly clamped or towed away to the police station, and the owner has to cough up a hefty fine to retrieve it. That's how the rules apply to the common man. But some-

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how, those rules don't seem to apply to these hawkers.

Just a fortnight ago, traffic police were seen clamping vehicles parked near the Karaswado circle—even though there were no clear restriction signs there. They were quick to show off their efficiency by uploading photos of their enforcement drive on social media. But when it comes to dealing with illegal vendors occupying public parking space just a stone's throw from the police station and municipal office, their

enthusiasm vanishes.

One is left wondering—are the authorities simply oblivious to these violations taking place under their noses, or is this selective enforcement? Shouldn't the same rules apply to everyone? If the public is expected to follow traffic and civic regulations, so too should vendors who illegally occupy parking zones and public spaces. The authorities must act—evict these vendors and restore fairness and order in Mapusa's already congested town centre.

## Need for focused action on noise pollution control in commercial establishments

I would like to bring attention to an important issue concerning noise pollution in commercial areas and the actions being taken to address it. While the installation of CCTV cameras in these establishments is often seen as a measure for security, it seems to be a misplaced focus that diverts attention from the real concern at hand: noise pollution. This issue has been raised in the context of PIL/WP 7 of 2021, and it is crucial that we approach it with the seriousness it deserves.

Instead of relying on CCTV cameras, a more effective solution would be to collaborate with the Goa State Pollution Control Board (GSPCB) to monitor and assess the ambient noise levels in and around commercial establish-

ments. According to the Revised Noise Action Plan of May 2024, the permissible noise limits for commercial areas are set at 65 dB(A) during daytime hours and 55 dB(A) at night. These limits are established to mitigate the harmful effects of noise pollution and protect public health.

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To ensure compliance with these standards, it is essential to conduct noise level measurements during the operational hours of these establishments, specifically at the boundaries of com-

mercial properties. This would provide a more accurate representation of the noise generated by business activities, while excluding non-activity periods when noise is less likely to be an issue.

By adopting this approach, we can focus on the core problem—excessive noise—and ensure that businesses are held accountable for their environmental impact. The primary goal should be to safeguard the health and well-being of the public, which can only be achieved through effective monitoring and enforcement of noise regulations.

I urge relevant authorities to prioritize this matter and take the necessary steps to ensure that noise pollution is effectively controlled in our commercial zones.

## Seraulim underpass road now turning into garbage dump

The Seraulim underpass has been a persistent problem ever since it was constructed. Intended to provide a smooth link between the Western Bypass and the Margao-Colva road—thus

individuals have turned the stretch into a dumping ground. Both sides of the road are now strewn with garbage—bags of trash flung carelessly from moving vehicles, often bursting open upon impact. The



saving commuters from the delays at the railway crossing near Seraulim church—it has instead turned into a source of endless frustration.

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The underpass is functional only during the dry months. Even in summer, a mysterious leak keeps the area perpetually waterlogged. During the monsoon, the situation worsens drastically. The water level rises to such an extent that even SUVs cannot pass through. Year after year, despite several inspections by various departments, no one seems to have been able to determine the cause of the leakage or find a lasting solution to the flooding.

To make matters worse, the underpass is poorly lit. Taking advantage of this lack of visibility, some

contents are then scattered further by stray animals, making the entire stretch not only unhygienic but also an eyesore. What was meant to be a convenient route has now become an embarrassment.

If authorities are unable to resolve the waterlogging issue despite repeated visits and evaluations, can they at least make an effort to keep the area clean? The first step should be to install proper street lighting along the entire stretch of the underpass. This will act as a deterrent to those attempting to dump waste in the dark. If possible, surveillance cameras should also be installed to catch and penalise offenders.

It's high time the authorities acted decisively—not just to fix the drainage issue, but also to restore basic cleanliness and dignity to this vital stretch of road.