

Fire hazard: Garbage piles up at Margao's SGPDA retail market

Stench and frustration grow as waste from the fish market is left to rot on the roadside; last week's fire incident fails to spark clean-up at the fresh produce market

Team Herald

MARGAO: Despite a recent fire incident that raised serious concerns about safety and hygiene, the garbage menace continues unabated around the South Goa Planning and Development Authority (SGPDA) market in Margao, drawing mounting concern from vendors, shoppers, and nearby residents.

The market, one of South Goa's busiest commercial hubs, has long struggled with poor waste management. Overflowing bins, rotting garbage piles, and the accompanying stench remain a daily sight, posing significant health and environmental risks.

While the fire—suspected to have been sparked by accumulated waste or negligence—momentarily focused official attention on the issue, stakeholders say little has changed on the ground.



This stinking mix of fish innards, discarded crates, thermacol and other assorted waste has become a permanent fixture next to the fish-cutting section of the market

Shopkeepers and vendors expressed frustration over the lack of follow-through by authorities.

"The fire was a wake-up call. For a few days, officials visited and took stock of the situation, but now everything is back to the same dirty state. The stench is unbearable, and customers are avoiding certain

areas," said Filomena Dias, a vegetable vendor at the market.

Residents living in the vicinity have echoed these concerns, pointing to the increased risk of disease and fire outbreaks, especially with the ongoing rise in temperatures. "There needs to be a permanent solution, not just tempo-

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rary visits and photo-ops. We need strict monitoring and regular waste disposal," said Milagres Fernandes, a local resident.

Environmental activists have also come down heavily on the authorities, urging both the Margao Municipal Council (MMC) and SGPDA to implement a long-term, sustainable waste management strategy. Key suggestions include the installation of CCTV cameras to deter illegal dumping, daily garbage collection, and strict penalties for violators.

While the SGPDA has not

issued a fresh statement following the fire, civic officials have previously acknowledged the difficulties in handling the market's high volume of waste and had promised better coordination with waste collection agencies. According to MMC officials, regular waste collection is being carried out within the market compound.

However, with no visible improvement on the ground, pressure is building on authorities to act decisively and restore cleanliness and safety to this key trading centre in South Goa.

With nullah choked, fear of floods haunts Nagzar-Curti locals

Team Herald

PONDA: Residents of Nagzar-Curti are gripped with fear as the monsoon approaches, with the main nullah in the area choked by felled trees and plastic waste, raising the risk of yet another round of flooding.

Several large trees—both live and dried—have fallen into the nullah basin, blocking the natural flow of water. In addition, plastic waste has accumulated at multiple points, especially under the culvert near Nagzar, leading to stagnant water and increasing the threat of floods.

Locals said that the situation is particularly alarming given the area's history of flooding every monsoon.

"Even a short spell of rain causes the Nagzar Mahadev temple and nearby homes to be submerged. It's a recurring nightmare for us," said a resident. They also pointed out that a section of the nullah's retaining wall has collapsed, further compounding the risk. "If not cleared im-



A massive tree lies across the main nullah at Nagzar, Ponda, with plastic waste further choking the flow of water



tainning wall has collapsed, further compounding the risk. "If not cleared im-

mediately, the accumulated debris and waste will definitely lead to severe flooding," warned another villager.

Residents are urging the disaster management authorities and local administration to act swiftly. They have demanded that all logs, garbage, and obstructions be cleared from the nullah before the onset of the monsoon to prevent damage to property and religious sites.

Encroachments in Borda demolished

Team Herald

MARGAO: The Margao Municipal Council (MMC) on Wednesday undertook a demolition drive at Neovaddo, Agalli in Borda, removing compound walls and other unauthorised structures allegedly encroaching on land earmarked for road widening.

Accompanied by police personnel, municipal officials and workers arrived at the site to execute the planned operation. The structures demolished included portions of compound walls. However, the demolition has sparked controversy after one of the affected property owners claimed that the civic body had not served any demo-

lition order. According to the homeowner, the matter is currently sub judice and scheduled for hearing in court on July 16. "There was no formal order for demolition, and the case is still pending before the court," the resident said.

However, officials at the site maintained that due process had been followed. "These structures fall within the road widening zone. Notices were served well in advance to the concerned individuals. Today's action is part of our effort to clear public land and move forward with much-needed infrastructure development," an MMC official said.

The demolition was carried out under police supervision to keep the peace.

AFTERMATH OF A GOOD TIME

ANISHA FRANCIS



Picnickers have left the casuarina grove on Betalbatim beach littered with garbage and food waste, attracting stray dogs. The panchayat had recently announced that they would collect a deposit from people visiting the beach, which will be refunded only if they leave the spot clean. However, it appears as though nobody has been posted at the beach to monitor this as yet

Solar panels at MMC garden non-functional

Civic body blames contractor's lack of maintenance

Team Herald

MARGAO: Solar panels installed under the Goa Energy Development Agency (GEDA) scheme at the iconic Municipal Garden and around the Margao Municipal Council (MMC) building have turned defunct just 2-3 years after their installation. The panels, which were set up at a cost of Rs 3.5 lakh, reportedly stopped functioning due to poor maintenance by the contractor responsible for their upkeep.

MMC Chairperson Damodar Shirodkar confirmed the development and expressed concern over the lack of follow-up by the agency tasked with maintaining the solar infrastructure.

He said the municipality had no choice but to intervene after the panels ceased functioning, failing to deliver the promised clean energy benefits.

In an effort to restore and improve the upkeep of the Municipal Garden, the MMC has now handed over its maintenance responsibilities to the Forest Department. "We hope the Forest Department will be able to maintain the garden better and help revive its greenery and public appeal," said Shirodkar.

The failure of the solar panel project has drawn criticism from citizens and environmental groups, who have called for better oversight and accountability in the implementation of renewable energy initiatives.

The MMC, meanwhile, has not clarified whether the defunct panels will be repaired or replaced, leaving questions about the future of green energy adoption in the town.

The chairperson also provided updates on other key civic projects. He stated that work on the much-delayed parking plaza in the heart of Margao will begin very shortly.

The project is expected to ease the severe parking issues plaguing the town, especially in the busy commercial and market areas.

In addition, beautification work at the Sonsodo dump yard—long considered a symbol of Margao's waste management challenges—is also set to commence soon.

'Poor response from P'yats derails PFA's stray sterilisation efforts'

Only 7 of 10 panchayats in Ponda taluka sign MoUs to capture, neuter and vaccinate free-roaming dogs in their villages

Team Herald

PONDA: Stray dogs continue to pose a serious threat in Ponda, with the Sub-District Hospital (SDH) reporting an alarming average of 80 to 90 dog bite cases each month. The issue returned to the spotlight after the tragic death of 1.5-year-old Anaibya Sheikh, who was mauled by a pack of dogs at Durgabhat, Ponda, on April 19.

Sarita Parab, Director of the People for Animals (PFA) Centre at Curti, Ponda, said that despite repeated efforts, poor response from local panchayats is derailing ster-



Stray and abandoned dogs await sterilisation surgery at PFA's shelter

ilisation drives. Of the 19 village panchayats in the Ponda taluka, only seven have signed Memorandums of Understanding (MoUs) with the PFA for dog sterilisation under the Stray Dog Management Scheme, 2014.

"The problem is that these MoUs are signed only for short periods — three months to a year — and once they lapse, our previous efforts are undone. For sustainable population control, agreements must be continuous," Parab said. "We've held meetings with all panchayats, supported by the BDO, to encourage participation, but the response remains slow and inconsistent."

She added that the PFA is a non-profit NGO operating on an honorarium basis and relies heavily on such agreements for staff salaries and veterinary

services. "We also need veterinary doctors, more cages for sterilisation and rescue, and support from the animal husbandry department to meet the costs of salaries and medical care," she added. Parab confirmed that after the fatal attack in Durgabhat, the PFA team visited the site. "The dogs appeared friendly. Two of them had already been sterilised. But in some cases, locals are unwilling to send their dogs for sterilisation, which hampers our work. Their cooperation is essential."

Sharing the PFA's progress in 2024, she said, "We sterilised 540 dogs, administered anti-rabies vaccines to 1,333, and attended to 250 rescue cases." She stressed that if panchayats actively signed up for the Stray Dog Management Scheme, it would ease the process of funding sterilisation programmes. "Without panchayat support, the issue cannot be resolved," Parab concluded.

Pipe bursts, potable water flows to waste

Team Herald

MARGAO: A major pipeline burst along the main road in Nuvem on Monday led to the wastage of thousands of litres of water, sparking anger among residents and raising serious concerns about the concerned authorities' response and maintenance practices.

The damage, which reportedly went unchecked for several hours, formed large pools of water along the roadside, disrupting traffic flow and posing risks to both motorists and pedestrians. It was

"It is shocking to see so much water going to waste when many households in the State are parched due to irregular supply. We informed the authorities early in the morning, but no one showed up for hours. This is sheer negligence – Leocadio Monteiro, Nuvem local

only after public outrage and complaints that PWD officials arrived at the site to initiate repairs.

Although the damaged pipe was eventually fixed, residents questioned the delay and pointed to repeated failures by the department to address known weak points in the water supply system.

"It is shocking to see

so much water going to waste when many households in the State are parched and dealing with irregular supply," said Leocadio Monteiro, a local resident. "We informed the authorities early in the morning, but no one showed up for hours. This is sheer negligence."

Monteiro also emphasized the need for better

planning and monitoring by the department, stating, "Water is a precious resource. Such lapses are unacceptable. The PWD must conduct a thorough audit of pipeline conditions and take preventive action before such incidents occur."

Other residents echoed similar sentiments, noting that the same section of pipeline had shown signs of leakage in the past. "If the PWD had acted earlier, this could have been avoided," said another resident, frustrated by the recurring issue.

Residents have now called for the PWD to adopt a long-term strategy for managing aging water infrastructure, including regular inspections and more careful execution of repair works.

When contacted, PWD officials confirmed that a repair team was dispatched and the leakage had been contained. They assured the public that water supply to nearby areas would remain unaffected and stated that steps would be taken to prevent similar occurrences in the future.

MAX. TEMP 35 °C
MIN. TEMP 27 °C



Our enhanced security measures, post terror attack!



The mega land scam has long been forgotten. After filing of police cases and arrest and bail of the accused, nothing is heard about the scammers and the scam. Herald Media asked people, "After State government buried the mega land scam, is the Enforcement Directorate now doing the work of nailing the culprits?"

"First of all the ED has to investigate government officers involved in the scam, not only the land grabbers. This has been done in connivance with the officials in the government departments where the land registration takes place. The entire government machinery is involved to support these land grabbers. Without their help it is not possible. How can they grab land. That means there is no safeguard, anybody's land can be grabbed by anybody – Avertino Miranda, Green Goa Brigade

AFTER THE GOA GOVT ALLEGEDLY BURIED THE LAND SCAM, IS ED NAILING THE CULPRITS?

"There was a huge uproar from all sections of society including the politicians and the chief minister. However, after some time these issues get buried. Primarily it is the duty of the government to go to the root cause. But we have found many a times the government just buries these things. And the Opposition does the honeymoon with the government. Because now the opposition is not heard anywhere. The ED is now grappling with the mega land issue. If ED takes over it will be something better than nothing. The ED is coming under the double engine government. I don't have great hope in the land scam since if there is somebody from the BJP involved, in such a scenario a three judge bench of retired judges is commissioned to investigate the case – Anthony D'Silva, social activist

YouTube



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"Some months back the issue that was hyped was the land scam, benami properties, mega projects and some culprits even escaped. Government was on the back foot. There were lots of attempts to divert from the land scam. But what is the status of these cases? I think setting has been done and a lid has been put on those cases. These cases are buried. But now elections are nearing, there is a need for funding. From where funding will come, there will be a need of catching new scapegoats. Hence the raids have started –Mariano Ferrao, social activist