

# After Nuvem, Varca locals demand ban on 'multi family dwellings'

## Villagers urge P'yat to stop granting permissions for construction of residential complexes and row houses until carrying capacity of village is studied; cite strain on resources

Team Herald

**MARGAO:** At a public meeting held in Varca by concerned citizens, the locals demanded that the panchayat halt granting permissions to any multi-dwelling or other mega projects until a carrying capacity study of the village is first completed.

The meeting that was co-ordinated by youth activist Shohail Furtado, the locals shared concerns about how they, the original villagers, will soon be sidelined as the new population from the multi-dwelling units

### 'Concretisation' of Nuvem could lead to water crisis, fear villagers

Say village biodiversity is under threat from unregulated development

Team Herald

**UNSUSTAINABLE RATE OF PROGRESS:** A RTI data shows a significant increase in development between 2021 and 2024, with the issuance of 599 house numbers, 158 construction licences, 207 domestic and 34 commercial water connections, and 184 electricity connections.

They also shared concerns about how the village's already strained resources, be it power or water supply, poor garbage

management, absence of sewage network etc will be further burdened with these new projects.

The villagers further lamented that some of these mega projects are

soon going to become a reality and it is time for the villagers to act right away. It was also decided to ask the panchayat to hold a special gram sabha meeting on this issue.

One of the locals also pointed out that for these projects, there will be road widening demands but that there is not much land available for the roads to be expanded. They feared that fields of the village and other areas would be used for road widening which in turn would bring in excess population to the village as well. Furtado also alleged

that while the panchayat may say they are with the villagers in opposing such projects, the locals would need to see proof and get the panchayats to cancel licences to these projects and not grant any such licences in the future.

This past Sunday, the villagers of Nuvem at their Gram Sabha had unanimously resolved to call for a moratorium on multi-family dwellings in the village. The decision followed a detailed discussion on how rapid development is straining essential services and the local environment.

# Fatorda, Arlem farmers want permanent fix for sewage sully agricultural fields

Team Herald

**MARGAO:** Farmers from Arlem and Fatorda are calling for a permanent and long-term solution to the repeated leakage of sewage water into their agricultural fields—a problem that has been damaging crops, contaminating soil, and threatening their livelihoods for months.

While the issue has persisted for some time, local frustration recently prompted action. Local MLA Aleixo Reginaldo Lourenco, accompanied by officials from the Sewerage Department and affected farmers, conducted a site inspection to assess the situation firsthand.

Following the visit, temporary measures were implemented, and the sewage leakage was halted—for now. Despite the immediate relief, farmers are far from satisfied. "This is not just a farming issue—it's a public health crisis in the making. Despite the recent intervention, what we need is a permanent solution, not just a temporary fix," said

"This is not just a farming issue—it's a public health crisis in the making. We've been dealing with this problem for months. If there's no long-term action, it will come back again, especially during the monsoon. The pipelines need to be replaced, and there must be regular monitoring to prevent recurrence"

— Judas Quadros, farmer and Raia panch

"This is an environmental disaster waiting to happen. We cannot allow toxic waste to pollute our farmland"

— Francisco D'Souza, farmer, Fatorda

Judas Quadros, a local farmer and Panch member of the Raia Village Panchayat.

Quadros, who has been vocal about the issue, stressed that the sewage seepage stems from broken or poorly maintained underground pipelines. He emphasised that past attempts to resolve the matter have only offered short-term relief.

"The pipelines need to be replaced, and there must be regular monitoring to prevent recurrence," he added. "The leak may be stopped for now, but the fight is not over," said Quadros. "We need a permanent fix." Farmers allege that their repeated complaints to the

Sewerage and Infrastructure Development Corporation of Goa Ltd (SID-CGL) and the Public Works Department (PWD) were ignored until the MLA intervened.

Many now fear that the issue will be forgotten again. Environmental activists have also raised alarms over the potential long-term damage to soil fertility and nearby water sources due to untreated sewage. The farmers are now planning to approach the Goa State Pollution Control Board (GSPCB) and are urging the MLA to follow up with sustained oversight and pressure on the departments responsible.

# 'Thousands of port workers could lose jobs'

Team Herald

**MARGAO:** With fears mounting over job losses from the proposed privatisation of berths at Mormugao Port Authority (MPA), members of the Mormugao Stevedores Association met Goa Forward Party president Vijai Sardesai, seeking political support to halt the move.

The stevedores highlighted the worsening employment crisis, stating that over 1,200 workers have already been affected. Association president Lyndon Rodrigues warned that nearly 1,000 more could lose their jobs if privatisation goes ahead, severely impacting families and businesses dependent on port activity.

"This is not just about workers," said Rodrigues. "Privatisation threatens the entire ecosystem linked to the port."

Sardesai assured the delegation he would raise the issue in the upcoming Assembly session. He criticised the state government's silence, urging it to intervene with the Centre. "The central government is the main engine behind this move. I urge the state to engage with them and ensure justice for Goans—our own goemkar," he said.

He added that he had already discussed the matter with South Goa's MP and urged him to take it up with the Union Shipping Minister. "We need a united political front to safeguard Goan livelihoods," Sardesai said.

# WAVE OF HEALING

ANISHA FRANCIS



Goan families, accompanied by their elders, take part in an annual summer ritual at Betalbatim—soaking their limbs in warm seawater, believed to ease joint pain and reduce arthritis-related inflammation. This age-old tradition, typically observed in May, is said to help keep aches at bay during the monsoon

# Electricity dept vows to remove illegal gaddas on footpaths

Team Herald

**MARGAO:** The Electricity Department's executive engineer Kashinath Shetye has taken a tough stand against illegal foodcarts (gaddas) encroaching on footpaths near the Power House at Aquem-Margao.

Despite 'political and

administrative pressure', Shetye said he has issued 15-day notices to violators and warned of a contempt petition in the High Court if they fail to vacate.

Citing Supreme Court orders that ban commercial use of public pathways, he declared, "I will not bow to any pressure. This is a per-

sonal fight for a genuine cause." Shetye alleged many gaddas are run by non-Goans with political backing but vowed not to let that influence his action.

Known for similar crackdowns in Panjim, Shetye revealed plans to act against other illegal encroachments in Fatorda and Margao.

# Assistencia Goa clarifies position over Missionaries of Charity departure

Team Herald

**MARGAO:** Reacting to various allegations made against them, Assistencia Goa has clarified that they did not force out the Missionaries of Charity (MoC) from its St Inez premises, as has been claimed.

Assistencia also made it clear that the statements given by MoC regarding their departure were made by MoC directly and not by Assistencia. Assistencia denied the accusation that they were preventing repairs over the last decade and pointed to a proposal worth approximately Rs 15 lakh for major repairs discussed with MoC years ago. Following these discussions, it was decided to continue with the original plan of reconstruction instead, given the poor condition of the premises.

This, Assistencia stressed, was never an attempt to evict MoC, as has been alleged. Assistencia added that the plan was for MoC to continue using the premises post-reconstruction and that there is no plan to either sell the place or convert it into a commercial project, as has been alleged.

They pointed out that the property falls under the Institutional Zone of the Outline Development Plan (ODP) of Panjim, with Assistencia continuing to retain a smaller portion of the land.

Assistencia clarified that they are not part of the Archdiocese of Goa but an independent registered charitable society founded in 1910 by General Dr Jose Maria Da Costa Alvares, Adv Jose Maria Pereira, and other philanthropists. "Missionaries of Charity were invited in 1976 to assist with running the asylum for the destitute and needy," said the managing committee.

Assistencia also reacted to what they have described as "misinformation" about them and recent developments.

They opined that it was inappropriate to single out individuals for criticism when

**No eviction intent:** Assistencia Goa denies allegations of forcing the Missionaries of Charity (MoC) out of the St Inez premises; says the plan was for MoC to continue using the premises post-reconstruction

**Property zoning:** Land Land falls under the Institutional Zone of Panjim's Outline Development Plan (ODP). Charitable activities are allowed here, and this will continue

**Next steps:** Efforts are underway to try and bring MoC back. Other NGOs have also inquired about using the space

**Dispelling false perception:** Assistencia is an independent registered charitable society and is not part of the Archdiocese of Goa. Decisions are taken by the Managing Committee only after obtaining consent from its General Body

Assistencia is run by its managing committee, which can take decisions only with the consent of its general body.

For instance, they pointed out that Neville Monteiro became the president only in April 2024, and not much earlier as has been claimed.

"Given the poor condition of the building and premises, it was proposed that we jointly reconstruct the same, for which an agreement was signed between Assistencia Goa and Missionaries of Charity and approved in 2014. The plans were submitted and duly approved by the PDA," the managing committee added.

The 2014 agreement stipulated sharing the building structure with 78% for MoC and 22% for Assistencia, an arrangement both parties agreed to in writing after negotiations

that began in 2013. "However, the same did not materialise to date. Despite efforts to revive it, the stalemate continued," the managing committee added.

"Subsequently, in January 2024, a fresh proposal was drawn up in which it was agreed to lease out part of the land on a long-term basis for the activities of MoC. As the talks were nearing finalization, Assistencia Goa was shocked to receive a letter from the Missionaries of Charity sisters dated March 22, 2025, stating that they had decided to return to the home and the entire premises back to Assistencia Goa," the managing committee added further.

It was further pointed out that earlier, on April 30, 2024, there was a joint meeting with representatives of MoC from Kolkata, Mumbai, and Goa and the managing committee about this new proposal, and the discussions were cordial.

It was clarified that this new plan was made after discussions with the Assistencia general body and managing committee, not in any individual capacity.

Assistencia also emphasised that there was never any question of selling the premises or changing the use of the institution. The managing committee pointed out that there are parameters as to what they can do, wherein only charitable work could continue.

They added that regulations also allowed staff residences and for Assistencia to have units secondary to the main use of the area—amenities that would help support reconstruction costs and other charitable endeavours.

Assistencia pointed out that from November 2024, monthly reminders were sent to MoC for taking forward this proposal. As reported by O Herald on Monday, attempts are underway to bring back MoC, whereas some NGOs have also inquired with Assistencia about using the space.

# Manora-Raia residents angered by unannounced power cut

Team Herald

**MARGAO:** Residents and business owners in Manora-Raia have voiced their anger following an unexpected power shutdown that left the area without electricity in the sweltering May heat.

The outage, which occurred without prior notice, has caused significant inconvenience to households and commercial establishments alike.

Upon inquiry, it was revealed that the power cut was necessitated by ongoing works related to the installation of a new power line in the area. However, the lack of communication from the electricity department has exacerbated the situation.

Anthony Fernandes, a local resident, expressed his dissatisfaction, stating, "We understand that infrastructure

**Residents have called on the electricity department to improve communication and provide advance notice of scheduled maintenance to prevent such disruptions**

improvements are necessary, but the absence of prior notice leaves us unprepared and vulnerable, especially during the summer heat."

Cedric Dias, a business owner in the area, highlighted the economic impact of the outage, saying, "Our operations rely heavily on a consistent power supply. Unscheduled outages disrupt our services and result in financial losses."

Residents have called on the electricity department to improve communication and provide advance notice of scheduled maintenance to pre-

vent such disruptions in the future. They argue that timely information would allow them to make necessary arrangements and mitigate the impact of power outages.

As the community continues to grapple with the effects of the power shutdown, the need for better communication and planning remains a pressing concern.

Local leaders have indicated that they will be raising the issue with the relevant authorities to ensure that residents and business owners are not left in the dark in future.

# South Goa police screen tenants, workers and foreigners in security op

Team Herald

**MARGAO:** In a nine-day operation to bolster public safety, South Goa police verified 9,209 tenants and 422 domestic workers across the district.

According to the district police headquarters, 125 strangers were verified, 48 persons arrested, and 1,353 individuals rounded up and questioned. Police also checked 315 foreigners and filled 76 C-Forms. Additionally, 123 Kashmiris were verified, and 423 hotels and guesthouses were inspected.

Special nakabandis were set up at key locations, where suspicious vehicles were stopped, individuals interrogated, and preventive arrests made. Stranger rolls were updated, and combing operations were conducted in Zuarinagar, Mormugao, Sanguem, Fatorda, Canacona, Birla, and other sensitive areas. Police teams were also deployed at Margao, Canacona, and Curchorem railway stations, as well as bus stands in Margao and Ponda, to screen passengers arriving by train and interstate buses.

C-Form verification for foreigners in hotels, guesthouses, and homestays was also carried out as part of the exercise.

# STREET VOICES WHERE GOANS ARE HEARD HOW COULD THE FIRE IN THE TALEIGAO FIELDS BE PREVENTED?

Taleigao witnessed a massive blaze in the fields on Monday. Clouds of smoke and heat were generated by the fire. Thirty people were evacuated from the nearby residential complexes. The fire burned for nearly 8 hours, and several reptiles were charred to death

"These fires are being lit in many areas of Goa. In particular, Taleigao has seen massive ecological destruction due to a major fire. Concretization is taking place in Taleigao, and the move to set the fire appears to be aimed at clearing land to create a concrete jungle. Then, a statement comes from the ministry saying that plants should be grown in cities and that cities should become the lungs of the urban landscape. But here, the natural lungs are being destroyed. They are promoting concrete structures and trying to grow a Singapore-style model on top of them. Should we destroy our natural lungs only to create artificial ones?"

— Mariano Ferrao, social activist

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"The fire that occurred on Monday was the worst. All the residents of the Vision Park complex had to be shifted out. There was so much smoke, and the wind was blowing strongly towards the complex. Complaints have been made numerous times to the village panchayat. There needs to be an investigation into who is causing these fires. Now that this fire has been put out, there won't be any follow-up. In a few days, they won't investigate how the fire started, who was behind it, etc. There will be no inquiry. There needs to be a system in place to cut these weeds so that fires don't have to be lit in the first place"

— Cecille Rodrigues, activist and local resident

"They told me they would run a tractor through the fields so that the grass doesn't grow. That was a good idea. I've informed Agnelo, our Panchayat member. We come under Taleigao Panchayat. He said they would discuss it—I hope they actually do. If there's no grass, there's no fire. That's for sure. But who will tell the farmers not to light fires? And who will listen? If they set the fire, they should also be responsible for putting it out"

— Juliet Fernandes, resident, Camrabhat