

# Rainwater enters Margao Municipal bldg, soaks files in taxation dept

MMC Chairperson assures that the documents are being dried; admits that renovation of heritage building long overdue, says it will soon be done on govt dime

Team Herald

MARGAO: The first showers of the monsoon season caused minor damage at the Margao Municipal Council (MMC) taxation Section, soaking several files. However, Chairperson Damodar Shirodkar assured that there was no cause for concern.

Speaking about the incident, Shirodkar admitted that around seven files were affected by the rain but clarified that these documents were being dried and would not cause any long-term issues.

The Chairperson further explained that the municipal building, which houses the tax section, has long been in need of renovation. "This is why we have proposed a renovation of the building. The government will bear the entire cost of the work," Shirodkar said. He emphasised that all necessary precautions would be taken to ensure the

## BUSY DAY FOR FIREFIGHTERS AS TREES COME CRASHING DOWN ON HOMES, STREETS

Team Herald

MARGAO: Heavy pre-monsoon rain and strong winds lashed South Goa on Tuesday, causing tree falls, and keeping firemen on their toes. The Margao and Canacona fire stations responded to eight emergency calls.

Margao Station Fire Officer Gil Souza said a dry tree fell on a house in Sernabatim-Colva, and firefighter R.S. Khutkar and his team cleared the area in 90 minutes, and then moved on to cut and remove a jackfruit tree that fell near Maria Hall, Benaulim. In Telaulim-Navelim, a bhendi tree fell near the Western Bypass. An oil spill near Easy Buy Mall in Colmorod-Navelim was addressed by Sub Officer A K Velip's team, preventing road accidents. In Canacona, water entered Ravindra Bhavan twice; both incidents were handled by firefighter Molu Velip. Trees also fell on a cowshed in Devbagh, at Karmal Ghat, and on power lines in Cotigao, blocking roads.

safety of important records moving forward.

Shirodkar also addressed the ongoing monsoon preparedness efforts, stating that nearly all mon-

soon-related works had been completed. He assured residents that the MMC was continuing to work diligently to implement additional measures to prevent flooding and

Nearly all our pre-monsoon works are complete. Goa is in a much better position compared to other States when it comes to managing monsoon flooding

— Damodar Shirodkar, MMC Chairperson

waterlogging during heavy rains. "Goa is in a much better position compared to other States when it comes to managing monsoon flooding," he claimed, adding that the MMC was committed to ensuring the safety and efficiency of the infrastructure throughout the season.

In response to concerns about the impact of the rains, Shirodkar confirmed that the municipal team was on high alert and ready to tackle any challenges the monsoon might present. He urged the public to stay informed and cooperative as the local authorities continue their efforts to safeguard the region.

## Vice president Jagdeep Dhankhar in Goa for 3 days

Team Herald

MARGAO: Vice-President of India, Jagdeep Dhankhar, has arrived in Goa for a three-day official visit from May 20 to 22, during which he will participate in a series of engagements focused on infrastructure, scientific research, and cultural heritage.

Governor P S Sreedharan Pillai, Chief Minister Pramod Sawant, Union Minister of State for Power Shripad Naik, Protocol Minister Mauvin Godinho, Speaker Ramesh Tawadkar, Leader of the Opposition Yuri Alemão, MPs Sadanand Shet Tanavade and Capt Viriato Fernandes, Chief Secretary Dr V Candavelou and other dignitaries welcomed the Vice President and his wife Dr Sudesh Dhankhar at INS Hansa, Dabolim.

On Wednesday, May 21, the Vice-President will visit Mormugao Port, where he will dedicate new projects of the Port to the nation and interact with the senior officers and staff of the Mormugao Port Authority (MPA).

Dhankhar will also interact with senior officers of the Indian Coast Guard on board a Coast Guard vessel at the Mormugao Port.

On May 22, the Vice President will visit ICAR-Central Coastal Agricultural Research Institute (CCARI), where he will interact with faculty members and scientists.

The Vice President is also scheduled to visit Raj Bhavan, Dona Paula, where he will commission statues of Charaka and Sushruta at the Raj Bhavan premises, commemorating their distinguished contributions to Ayurveda and Surgery, respectively.

## 'Virtual' blood bank to connect patients in need with donors

Team Herald

MARGAO: In a step toward strengthening healthcare support in the constituency, Benaulim MLA Venzy Viegas on Monday launched a Virtual Blood Bank and a Blood Donation Camp in collaboration with Goa Medical College.

The initiative is part of a broader health module being implemented in Benaulim, aimed at improving access to healthcare services for residents.

The Virtual Blood Bank is designed to help individuals in urgent need of blood by connecting them with registered local donors.

Speaking at the launch event, MLA Viegas said the project is focused on ensuring timely help to constituents during medical emergencies.

"This initiative is built on community support. In case a listed donor is unavailable at a given time, donor cards will serve as a commitment that the person will step in to assist fellow constituents whenever possible," he explained.

A blood donation camp was also organised at Benaulim in collaboration with Goa Medical College

The blood donation camp saw active participation from local residents, volunteers, and healthcare workers, reflecting a strong community response. Viegas expressed gratitude to all donors and praised their willingness to step up for a noble cause.

"This is not just about donating blood today," he said. "It's about building a culture of compassion and readiness to help. The positive response we've received from the people encourages us to expand this health initiative further." The broader health module launched in Benaulim includes regular health check-ups, awareness programmes, and partnerships with local medical institutions. According to Viegas, these efforts are part of a long-term plan to build a healthier and more resilient constituency.

## Leaky sewer finally fixed, bringing relief to Pajifond locals

Team Herald

MARGAO: After more than 20 days of enduring unsanitary and hazardous conditions, the residents of Pajifond in Margao have finally found relief as the leaking sewage pipeline in the area has been repaired by the concerned authorities.

The issue had caused significant inconvenience to locals, especially the residents of the Junta Quarters, who were most affected by the spill.

The damaged pipeline led to continuous leakage of sewage water, which spilled over onto public roads and filled roadside gutters. This not only resulted in a foul stench across the neighbourhood but also raised serious public health concerns. The stagnant water had turned into a breeding ground for mosquitoes, increasing the risk of vector-borne diseases such as dengue and malaria.

Residents and local leaders had expressed strong dissatisfaction with the delayed response from the authorities. Many demanded immediate



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— Sobha Desai, local

intervention from the health department and municipal officials, warning that the situation was rapidly deteriorating.

Sobha Desai, a resident and vocal community member, spoke to O Herald, empha-

sising the need for ongoing vigilance.

"We are relieved that the repair has been done, but this should not be a one-time fix. The authorities must regularly monitor such civic issues and act promptly before they affect public health," she said.

Local political representatives including local Councillor Raju Naik also criticized the delay and stressed the importance of timely maintenance and infrastructure oversight. They have called for better coordination between government departments to prevent similar incidents in the future.

## Fisherfolk renew demand for space to park boats, repair nets in Benaulim

Call for govt to allot 5000 sq mtrs at the defunct hatchery; threaten agitation if govt fails to address their issues

Team Herald

MARGAO: With the monsoon season commencing, traditional fishermen from Benaulim are renewing their appeal for a portion of land at the now-defunct prawn hatchery to berth their country-made fishing vessels and store nets.

They are demanding that the government allocate 5,000 square metres from the 52,000 square metre properties currently under the Fisheries Department. The fishermen claim the rising sea levels make it unsafe to park their vessels along the shoreline, and private property owners have objected to boats being placed on their land.

"Some of our boats were removed after complaints. With our homes located over a kilometre from the beach, we have no safe and accessible place to keep our boats during the rains," said local fisherman Pele Fernandes.

According to Fernandes, Benaulim has around 81

Some of our boats were removed after complaints. With our homes located over a kilometre from the beach, we have no safe and accessible place to keep our boats during the rains. It's disheartening to see the government prioritising private investment over the welfare of local fishermen. This land has been linked to our community for generations

— Pele Fernandes, local fisherman

traditional fishing vessels, but the limited space near the shore falls far short of what is needed. He and others have been calling on the government to reserve a portion of the prawn hatchery land to support their livelihood.

The fishermen have also expressed concern over the Fisheries Department's plan to revive the shrimp farm through a Public-Private Partnership (PPP). They argue that any development should not come at the cost of the traditional fishing community's needs. The group has warned that they will launch a sustained agitation if the government proceeds with the PPP model without addressing their

concerns. "It's disheartening to see the government prioritising private investment over the welfare of local fishermen. This land has been linked to our community for generations," said Fernandes. They insist their request for just 5,000 square metres—less than 10% of the total area—is reasonable and essential for their survival.

Officials from the Fisheries Department have reportedly assured the fishermen that a joint inspection of the site will be conducted soon. The fishing community remains hopeful that the government will respond positively and take steps to protect their rights and livelihood.

## Black smoke engulfs Margao's retail fish market as garbage set ablaze yet again

Team Herald

MARGAO: In a disturbing environmental incident, a pile of mixed waste—comprising plastic bags, thermocol, and fish remains—was reportedly set ablaze early Monday morning at the SGPDA Retail Fish Market in Margao.

The fire sent thick, toxic smoke and a strong foul odour wafting across the area, causing alarm among vendors, commuters, and residents in the locality.

The fire is believed to have started in the early hours, before the market opened, and burned for several hours before subsiding. Eyewitnesses reported seeing heavy black smoke engulfing sections of the market and drifting into nearby residential and commercial areas.

This incident follows closely on the heels of a similar episode just days ago at the adjacent SGPDA parking area, where garbage was also set on fire. That blaze had to be brought under control by fire-fighters, sparking fresh concern over the handling of waste in one of South Goa's busiest marketplaces.

Condemning the repeat-

## Workers set fire to mound of garbage at SGPDA market

Team Herald

MARGAO: In yet another incident highlighting poor waste management practices in the town, activists have alleged that workers either from the Margao Municipal Council (MMC) or the South Goa Planning and Development Authority (SGPDA) were seen setting fire to a garbage dump next to the SGPDA market in the morning.

While speaking to re-



ports appeared to be part of the government's agenda to create the impression that

8:40am regarding the fire, firefighters were immediately dispatched to the site to bring the blaze under

ed incidents, social activist Mahesh Naik said, "This is an outright violation of environmental norms and public health safeguards. Setting waste on fire, especially plastic and organic waste like fish scraps, releases highly toxic fumes. The SGPDA cannot allow such reckless and hazardous practices to continue under its watch."

Naik further demanded strict action against those responsible and called on authorities to implement proper waste management systems. "We need clear accountability and a zero-tolerance approach to illegal garbage burning," he added.

Local vendors, too, expressed concern over the

worsening sanitation and pollution issues at the market. Many reported headaches and breathing discomfort due to the smoke.

Environmentalists have warned that such fires pose a long-term threat to both health and the environment, especially with monsoon season approaching, when water contamination and air quality issues are expected to intensify.

Citizens have now called upon the South Goa Planning and Development Authority (SGPDA) to ensure timely waste collection, enforce penalties for illegal dumping and burning, and adopt eco-friendly waste disposal practices.

## Velsao residents alarmed over blocked pathways, drains filled with mud

Team Herald

MARGAO: Fearing the loss of a long-standing route vital to daily life, Velsao residents gathered on Tuesday morning to appeal to Railway authorities against the complete barricading of a traditional pathway that runs across the railway tracks.

The issue came to light when concerned locals reached out to social worker Roquezeinho D'Souza, highlighting the potential impact of the barricades. D'Souza immediately escalated the matter to Cortalim MLA Anton Vas, who visited the site on Tuesday to assess the situation. Vas then directed D'Souza to take up the issue with Railway officials.

"The Railways had begun erecting barricades on both sides of the tracks, which would have cut off a route villagers have used for decades," said D'Souza after the meeting. "This path is essential—it links homes on the far side of the tracks to the village panchayat, market, and church."

Following discussions, Railway officials reportedly agreed

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—Roquezeinho D'Souza, social worker

to leave a section of the barricade open to maintain pedestrian access.

D'Souza also flagged another pressing concern: heaps of mud dumped nearby by the Railways, which could clog drains and trigger flooding now that the monsoon has begun. "The area needs to be cleared immediately to prevent water and mud from entering homes and creating slippery, unsafe conditions for residents—especially the elderly," he said.

The Railways have reportedly assured villagers that both the access issue and the drainage problem will be resolved at the earliest.