

# RAIN FURY BRINGS GOA TO ITS KNEES

## Day 2: Floods, fallen trees and frustration in North Goa

## 48 hr-deluge leaves Margao gasping for reprieve

Rain likely to continue as IMD issues Orange Alert for two more days; govt warns against venturing into hilly areas; citizens irked by unresponsive helplines

Team Herald

**MARGAO:** Heavy pre-monsoon showers continued to batter North Goa for the second consecutive day on Wednesday, throwing normal life into disarray. Widespread flooding, disrupted traffic, and infrastructure damage were reported across the region, exposing glaring gaps in emergency response and monsoon preparedness.

The mood across the State was one of anxiety and frustration, as residents struggled with recurring civic issues that seem to surface with every heavy downpour. From blocked roads to flooded homes and unresponsive helplines, the rain laid bare the State's inability to respond effectively.

In Panjim, a mango tree collapsed outside the Collectorate, damaging over 10 two-wheelers parked in the area. In Kasarvarne, Pernem, a massive banyan tree came down, blocking a key stretch near the National Highway and crushing a four-wheeler in the process.

In Khorlim, Bardez, the residence of 80-year-old Shyam-sundar Karekar was flooded during the heavy downpour. The family had to remove the water manually, with no help

RAINFALL RECORDED (inches)	
■ Quepem	3.54
■ Mormugao	3.14
■ Dharbandora	3.03
■ Canacona	2.80
■ Sanguem	2.08
■ Valpoi	1.85
■ Panjim	1.90
■ Mapusa	1.53
■ Pernem	0.86
■ Ponda	0.78

arriving despite multiple calls to emergency services. "I called 1076 and 101 but couldn't get through. I even tried 108. No one came. We had to take the water out ourselves," Karekar said. "There's nothing left to say. Big promises are made and published in newspapers, but when help is needed, no one shows up."

Persistent waterlogging was reported outside Adil Shah Palace in Panjim, where a staff member of the Museum Department said, "This is nothing new. It happens every year. The problem is with the drain, which gets choked. Efforts have

**"I called 1076 and 101 but couldn't get through. I even tried 108. No one came. We had to take the water out (of the flooded house) ourselves — Shyamsundar Karekar, elderly Bardez resident"**

been made to clean it, but without success. Clearing it would mean digging up a busy road. Nothing permanent has been done."

Water also accumulated at Miramar Circle, where locals pointed out that the road at the junction hasn't been levelled properly, leading to recurrent flooding at the same spot. "This part of the road remains lower than the others connected to it," said Vikas Chari, a resident.

Meanwhile, Kala Academy reported leakage in its open-air theatre, raising safety concerns. Francis Coelho from Kala Rakhonn Mand said, "The entire structure is a disaster waiting to happen. A short circuit could lead to a serious mishap. Ministers should stop giving speeches and cutting ribbons and focus on fixing the infrastructure."

Despite mounting criticism, CCP Mayor Rohit Monserrate appeared dismissive. "Nothing

has happened in Panjim. The problems were in Mapusa. As for old buildings, I've spoken to the Goa College of Engineering and will soon share a list of at-risk structures. The Forest Department listed around 300 trees, and about 150 are still left to be pruned. The teams are working. Yesterday's events were like a trial. We're addressing the rest now," he said.

Forest Minister Vishwajit Rane announced that the Dudhsagar waterfall gates will remain closed to tourists due to safety concerns. In a public advisory, he urged both residents and visitors to stay away from waterfalls and trekking trails, warning of flash floods, strong currents, and dangerously slippery terrain during the ongoing spell of heavy rain.

The India Meteorological Department (IMD) has issued an Orange Alert for the next two days, followed by a Yellow Alert for the subsequent four. "Heavy to very heavy rain is expected in several areas, with extremely heavy rainfall in isolated places. Thunderstorms with wind speeds of 50-60 km/h, gusting up to 70 km/h, are likely in both North and South Goa," the IMD bulletin stated. A brief respite is expected later in the week.

Team Herald

**MARGAO:** The relentless rain-fall on Wednesday threw life out of gear in Margao and its outskirts, exposing serious gaps in urban planning and disaster preparedness.

The downpour caused widespread flooding, infrastructure failures and public distress across several localities.

In Margao town, key areas like the stretch in front of the Margao Municipal Council were submerged due to severe water-logging. A particularly distressing incident was reported near the Power House in Aquem, where children had to be rescued from a residential complex. Thankfully, no injuries were reported.

The Margao Fire Brigade responded swiftly to multiple emergencies, including the clearance of a large fallen tree that had blocked the road near Victor Hospital, thereby restoring access for vehicles and emergency responders.

In Sao Jose de Areal, frustrated residents blamed the local panchayat for not clearing stormwater drains, leading to flooding of homes. Meanwhile, the Disaster Management Authority reported the collapse of a retaining wall at Damodar Housing Complex in Margao and three separate sewage-related incidents, one notably at Hospicio Hospital.

In Fatorda, gutter-clean-



Muddy streams of rainwater flow down the Margao-Colva road near the fish market, where sewerage work has been abandoned halfway

ing work was ceremonially launched near the old market signal with a coconut-breaking ritual. However, locals were angered when the removed sludge was dumped on a key commuter route leading to Raia and Ponda — and left there for days despite ongoing rain.

Benaulim MLA Venzy Viegas criticised the recurring inefficiencies, remarking, "Goa's future hangs in the balance. Year after year, efficiency seems elusive." He demanded accountability from the PWD sewerage contractor for the delayed manhole work near Colva Tinto, despite multiple follow-ups.

Fatorda MLA Vijai Sardesai called for unity, emphasising collaboration between government bodies and citizens. "We've

started work on improving the nullah behind the Electricity Sub Station," he said, while also criticising the civic body for failing to complete desilting of key drains before the rains began.

In Navelim, underground cable-laying near a transformer in Dalgona further worsened flooding. The heavy rain loosened the foundation, eventually causing a collapse of the structure's fencing.

As rain intensifies, residents and public representatives are demanding immediate, long-term action. The situation once again highlights Goa's ongoing struggle with inadequate drainage infrastructure and poor monsoon preparedness — turning the rains into a recurring urban crisis each year.

## Rawanfond railway bridge shut after retaining wall collapses

Team Herald

**MARGAO:** The Rawanfond railway over bridge in Margao was closed to vehicular traffic after the collapse of a retaining wall raised concerns of a potential landslide. Authorities acted swiftly to close the bridge and redirect traffic, citing safety concerns.

The collapse is reportedly linked to ongoing excavation work at the site, where a new over bridge is under construction. The excavation is believed to have weakened the retaining wall, making it vulnerable to collapse under the continuous downpour.

In response, local authorities, including the traffic police, rushed to the scene to cordon off the area and enforce road closures.

Commuters have been advised to use alternative routes until restoration and safety assessments are completed. However, no specific timeline for reopening



People walk along the bridge after it was closed for traffic; workers inspect the mucky area below



the bridge has been announced.

The incident has sparked public concern,

with several citizens questioning the transparency and coordination between government departments in handling the situation.

Prabhav Naik, a local activist, demanded clarity on whether the South Goa District Collector and the Disaster Management Authority (DMA) were consulted prior to the bridge's closure.

"While I fully support actions taken to protect public safety, such deci-

sions must be transparent and involve proper inter-departmental coordination," Naik stated.

He emphasised that since the threat of a landslide falls under the jurisdiction of the DMA, it is essential that the District Administration, PWD, and local disaster response teams be actively involved in the assessment and decision-making process.

Naik also questioned whether a technical inspection had been conducted before ordering the closure. He urged the District Collector to issue a formal status report, convene a joint site inspection with experts and stakeholders, and clarify the roles and decisions undertaken so far.

The closure of this vital bridge has significantly affected daily commuters, emergency services, and local businesses, making the need for accountability and clear communication all the more urgent.

## 'South Goa's Disaster Mgmt Authority prepared to tackle rain emergencies'

Team Herald

**MARGAO:** As heavy rains continued to batter South Goa for the second consecutive day, the District Disaster Management Authority (DDMA) said it is fully mobilised and on high alert.

Sub-Divisional Magistrate (SDM) of Salcete, Ganesh Barve said that all necessary manpower and equipment have been deployed to handle any rain-related emergencies.

"We are receiving calls reporting various disaster incidents and are attending to them on priority. All concerned departments, including the Margao Municipal Council, have been alerted and asked to remain on standby," Barve told **O Herald** on Wednesday.

Reports of water-logging in low-lying areas, including near the Margao Municipal Council building, have drawn sharp criticism from residents, especially over poor pre-monsoon preparedness by civic authorities.

Emergency services, including the fire brigade, have been responding to multiple incidents, such as clearing fallen trees and assisting in rescue operations.

The Disaster Management Cell has also co-ordinated with local panchayats and urban bodies to ensure rainwater drains remain clear and accessible. Despite efforts, many residents in areas like Sao Jose de Areal, Fatorda, Margao, Navelim, Colva and Benaulim continued to face water-logging and road access issues due to blocked drains and incomplete infrastructure work.

## Cuncolim road cave-in disrupts key routes

Digging for underground cabling, water from inundated fields caused embankment collapse

Team Herald

**MARGAO:** A section of the road at Bhiunsa, Cuncolim, caved in on Wednesday morning following heavy rainfall, disrupting traffic on the Cuncolim-Asolna and Cuncolim-Anbelim routes.

The collapse occurred near the residence of Ragoba Desai, where the road embankment was washed away due to water accumulation in adjacent fields. Officials suspect that recent excavation work for underground electrical cable-laying, combined with intense rain, contributed to the collapse.

Upon receiving reports, officials from the South Goa District Disaster Management Authority, including the Deputy Collector, Mamlatdar, and PWD engineers, inspected the site.

The Deputy Collector directed the local and traffic police to divert heavy vehicles via alternate routes and instructed the PWD to



Part of street in Bhiunsa developed a deep crater, while the crumbling edge got washed away

begin urgent repairs.

Meanwhile, two days of continuous rain caused waterlogging in several parts of the Cuncolim municipal area, adding to public inconvenience.

In Akamol, two heavy vehicles became stuck in trenches excavated for cable-laying work, further highlighting the poor condition of local infrastructure under monsoon stress.

## Rain halts roofing work at Ravindra Bhavan; hall to stay closed until Sun

Team Herald

**MARGAO:** The Pai Tiatrist Auditorium at Ravindra Bhavan, Margao, will remain closed until Sunday, May 25, following delays in ongoing roofing work caused by unseasonal rains.

The roofing project, which began on May 18, was originally scheduled for completion by May 30. However, untimely rains that started on May 19 forced a temporary halt in the work for safety reasons. According to officials, the curved roof structure posed a significant risk to workers during wet conditions.

In light of the situation, all shows scheduled at the auditorium until May 25 have been cancelled. Ravindra Bhavan authorities have assured that affected producers will be allotted new dates, either in the first week of September or later, depending on availability and

prior bookings.

Rajendra Talak, Chairman of Ravindra Bhavan, appealed to artists, producers, and the public for their cooperation. "This decision has been taken in the interest of safety for both workers and visitors. Ravindra Bhavan has always prioritised providing the best possible facilities to the artistic community and the public," Talak said.

The closure has come as a disappointment for many in the local theatre scene, with several tiatr performances and other cultural events affected. However, many have expressed understanding, recognising the need for proper infrastructure and safety standards.

Ravindra Bhavan officials emphasised that the auditorium will reopen once the roofing work is safe to resume and completed to required standards. The rest of the Ravindra Bhavan complex remains operational.

## Fear of landslides & displacement stalks Morjim, Mandrem

FROM PG 1

Over Tuesday and Wednesday, most roads in the two villages were submerged, with shopkeepers trying to stop water from entering and households attempting to prevent it from seeping in.

"Never in my 32 years have I seen the rain create such havoc, and this is because of the illegalities that are going on—hills disappearing and constructions sprouting anywhere and everywhere," said Esperanca Fernandes, as she cleaned her compound.

Inside the villages, water seeped into many homes as residents brought out brooms, mops, and cloths to literally stem the tide. Sarpanch Fernandes blamed the waterlogging on a lack of planning.

"I have not left my house since it started raining, as I have heard the situation is bad in the village," admitted Otolina Pereira, who lives at the bottom of the hill. "With the panchayat giving permission to outsiders to build apartments and villas on our hill, I do not know what future is in store for my grandchildren. First, we get water every alternate day, and now, with the trees in the hills being cut, I do not know when rocks will



Local residents say PWD has left roads in the area unfinished, adding to the drainage problems in the area

start tumbling down," said a worried Pereira.

However, most members of the Mandrem panchayat believe they carry no guilt for the permissions granted to build apartments and villas on their hills.

"There are many instances where projects opposed by the people and rejected by us have come up despite no permission from us. Once they get the technical clearance, they operate through the Department of Panchayats

(DoP) to avail of all other permissions. The DoP has taken all powers of the panchayat and left us toothless," lamented former Mandrem sarpanch Prashant Naik.

The Public Works Department (PWD) thinks it is unfair to place the onus solely on them, believing "it takes two hands to clap." "There are so many illegal structures in Mandrem and Morjim abutting the road that, in many cases, even the sewage is released into the drains meant for wa-

**"There are many instances wherein projects opposed by the people and rejected by us have come up despite no permission from us. Once they get the technical clearance, they operate through the Directorate of Panchayats (DoP) to avail all other permissions. The DoP has taken all powers of the Panchayat and left us toothless — Prashant Naik, former Mandrem Sarpanch"**

ter to flow. With drains blocked, how can one expect water not to overflow onto the roads?" questioned a PWD engineer, requesting anonymity.

Retired Captain Gerald J Fernandes from Morjim believes that the ground's absorption capacity has been affected by new constructions, and that is why the village has become inhospitable during the rains.

"We are surrounded by hills, and previously the water from the hills used to flow down into the river and the sea. With so much construction and concretisation happening now, the authorities have blocked the waterways," rued Fernandes.