

# Goa battles rains, ruin and rising public anger

## Margao's newly-laid sewer system effectively a dud as manholes spew filth

Locals, commuters wading through contaminated rainwater highlight health hazard

Team Herald

**MARGAO:** The onset of the monsoon has once again exposed the chronic failure of Margao's sewage infrastructure, completed less than a year ago, as sewage chambers in key areas such as Arlem, Fatorda, Aquem-Margao, and Colva have begun to overflow, mixing with stormwater and creating dangerous and unhygienic conditions for residents.

With sewage spilling onto roads and walkways, citizens are sounding the alarm over serious health risks, including potential outbreaks of waterborne diseases - like cholera, typhoid, hepatitis and amoebic dysentery.

The foul odour, contaminated water, and unsanitary conditions have disrupted daily life, sparking anger



A barrel marks a gushing manhole on a flooded Margao street

among locals, who accuse the authorities of neglect.

"This isn't just an inconvenience anymore—it's a public

health threat," said a Fatorda resident. "Our children have to walk through sewage water to get to school. It's dis-

graceful that this keeps happening every year."

In Arlem and Aquem-Margao, several streets have become waterlogged with sewage, affecting residents, commuters, and businesses alike. In Colva, a key tourist area, shopkeepers reported a significant drop in foot traffic due to the stench and filth.

"Every year during the rains, we face this nightmare. The authorities never prepare in advance," said a shop owner in Arlem. "Why should the public suffer for their negligence?"

Residents are now demanding immediate intervention from the Margao Municipal Council (MMC) and the Sewerage Department. Their demands include urgent desilting of choked sewage lines, regular main-

tenance of sewage chambers, and the implementation of a comprehensive, long-term sewage management plan for the town.

Peter Viegas, a local resident, warned—along with others—that if the issue is not addressed swiftly, it could lead to outbreaks of serious infections, particularly affecting vulnerable groups such as children and the elderly.

"This is a failure of governance and planning. We need urgent solutions, not excuses," said Krishna Shirodkar, another concerned citizen.

Despite years of complaints, the problem remains unresolved. With the monsoon only just beginning, citizens are calling for accountability and immediate corrective action from civic authorities.

## Cavelossim-Mobor reels as Sal spits dead fish, hyacinth onto beach

Team Herald

**MARGAO:** The scenic Cavelossim-Mobor beach belt is facing a fresh environmental crisis after heavy rains triggered a flow of dead fish and water hyacinth from the Sal River, washing them ashore and alarming both locals and tourists.

The decaying fish and tangled aquatic plants have not only created a foul stench but also raised serious concerns about pollution and ecological damage. Locals are now demanding that the situation be declared an environmental emergency, warning that failure to act swiftly could cause long-term harm.

"This is not just a matter of inconvenience; it's an environmental emergency," said Cavelossim Sarpanch Dixon Vaz. "We need urgent intervention to prevent further degradation of our beaches and waterways. The Sal River is being choked, and now the pollution is reaching our shores."

Vaz has appealed to the state government and relevant environmental agencies to undertake an immediate clean-up operation. He warned that the issue, if ignored, could escalate—posing threats to the region's delicate ecosystem and its tourism-driven economy.

Residents believe the incident is a direct result of poor waste management and the lack of regular maintenance of the Sal River. Over time, pollutants and invasive aquatic plants like water hyacinth have built up, clogging the waterway. The recent heavy rainfall is believed to have flushed this material into the sea, from where it was pushed back onto the beach by the tides.

The Cavelossim-Mobor coast, known for its pristine sands and

Locals urge government to declare 'environmental emergency' as stench, pollution mount



luxury resorts, now faces the dual challenge of cleaning up the mess and managing public perception, especially with the tourism season around the corner.

Environmental groups and concerned citizens have called for long-term action—such as systematic river desilting, regular environmental monitoring, and improved waste disposal measures—to ensure such incidents don't recur.

## Entrance to Hospicio submerged under floodwater

Team Herald

**MARGAO:** The entrance of the South Goa District Hospital (Hospicio) has turned into a flooded disaster zone, drawing sharp criticism from local citizens who say the situation is a direct result of poor planning, substandard engineering, and government neglect.

With brown, filthy water stagnating at the main entryway, patients, doctors, and emergency services are being forced to wade through

water to access the hospital—conditions that pose a serious public health risk and severely hamper medical operations.

"This is not just an inconvenience—it's a civic disgrace," said activist Prabhav Naik, speaking on behalf of Madganvcho Awaaz, a local citizen group. "How can we speak of Viksit Goa when our hospitals turn into swamps every monsoon?"

Naik slammed the authorities for their inaction, stating that repeated complaints

**"This is not just an inconvenience—it's a civic disgrace. How can we speak of Viksit Goa when our hospitals turn into swamps every monsoon?"**  
— Prabhav Naik, activist, Margao

about drainage issues have gone unanswered. "This is what happens when road works are carried out without vision or accountability. It's endangering lives," he added.

The flooding has created chaos for ambulance drivers, hospital staff, and patients, especially the elderly and children, who face increased risks trying to navigate the waterlogged entrance.

"This is a hospital, not a pond. Where is the basic civic responsibility?" asked a hospital visitor.

Naik along with other citizens have now called upon Union Minister for Road Transport & Highways, Nitin Gadkari, who is currently visiting Goa, to inspect the

site and direct immediate remedial measures. "Gadkari must step in. Those responsible for this failure must be held accountable," Naik urged.

The group is also demanding a comprehensive flood management plan to prevent recurrence, and punitive action against those responsible for the shoddy infrastructure and negligence.

"The people of Margao deserve better. Health and dignity must not be drowned in negligence," Naik concluded.

## 5 Goa Collector puts a rush on pre-monsoon works

Team Herald

**MARGAO:** In response to the recent heavy rains and flooding across Salcete taluka, South Goa Collector Eгна Cleetus, IAS, has directed all departments and local bodies to immediately expedite pre-monsoon works.

The orders were issued during a review meeting held at the Collectorate on Friday, where officials assessed disaster preparedness across the region.

"We have broadly discussed the status of pre-monsoon preparedness and noticed that many panchayats and municipalities are still lagging behind. We cannot afford further delays," said Collector Cleetus, highlighting concerns related to desilting, landslide-prone areas, flooding hotspots, and tree trimming.

Flooding has already been reported in several parts of Salcete. The Collector instructed Block Development Officers and municipal Chief Officers to speed up desilting and drain-clearing to avert further incidents. "We have given clear directions to all local authorities to complete the remaining works at the earliest to prevent any disaster," she said.

The Power Department has confirmed that tree trimming is in progress. Cleetus also warned that ongoing road digging must be completed and roads restored without delay. "Digging during the monsoon is hazardous and can worsen flooding," she noted.

## Across Salcete, 9 houses, numerous trees lost to storm



Team Herald

**MARGAO:** Incessant pre-monsoon showers for the third consecutive day triggered widespread waterlogging, tree falls, and property damage across Salcete. As many as nine houses were damaged in Margao and Cuncoim after trees were uprooted, with several vehicles and compound walls also bearing the brunt.

Heavy rains and gusty winds lashed the region on Thursday night and Friday. Fire and emergency services responded to multiple tree fall incidents, with reported losses running into lakhs of rupees.

Margao Station Fire Officer (SFO) Gil Souza said his teams handled 17 emergency calls in 24 hours. "Four houses in Margao and nearby areas were damaged by falling trees," he said. "Three vehicles and three compound walls were also affected." No injuries were reported.

Cuncoim SFO Truptesh Naik reported 11 emergency calls, with five houses damaged by tree collapses.

His team also cleared fallen trees from roads in Morpir-la, Panzorconi, Chinchim, and Cuncoim, restoring traffic movement. Damage assessments are underway.

In Cavelossim, a large tree caused structural damage to a house, while in Talvaddo and other parts of Cuncoim, three more homes were similarly affected.

In Aquem-Margao, a tree fell on House No. 48 near Taye Bandh, causing damage worth Rs 20,000. Fire personnel, led by Leading Fire Fighter S.R. Naik, managed to save property worth Rs 50,000.

Other incidents included a tree collapse near a fabrication garage in Navelim and another near the Velankanni statue at Khodpakode, Ascona-Benaullim, resulting in estimated damage of Rs 5,000. In Benaullim, trees fell on compound walls near Vicky Garage at Pulvaddo and on the approach road to Vishant Theatre, causing combined damage of Rs 10,000. Fire personnel also saved property worth Rs 2 lakh when a tree struck a wall near Vicky Garage.

## Govt bans entry into waterbodies, quarries

Team Herald

**MARGAO:** South Goa District Collector Eгна Cleetus issued prohibitory orders against swimming, bathing, or entering any waterfalls, abandoned quarries, rivers, lakes, or similar natural water bodies across the district. The order, issued on Friday, remains in effect until further notice.

The directive comes in response to the grave and recurring issue of drowning incidents that typically spike during the monsoon, particularly in scenic yet hazardous areas frequented by locals and tourists alike.

"Despite the district police's ongoing efforts to install warning signage and caution the public, individuals continue to access these sites unsafely," the order stated. The hazards cited include

unpredictable water depths, slippery and unstable terrain, and sudden undercurrents—all contributing to the elevated risk during heavy rainfall.

Last year, multiple fatal incidents were reported in regions such as Sanguem, Mormugao, and Dharbandora, highlighting the persistent danger these locations pose.

To ensure compliance, police inspectors and Mamlatdars have been directed to maintain strict vigilance and enforce the order rigorously within their jurisdictions. The District Magistrate has also warned that violations will attract legal action.

Residents and tourists are urged to cooperate with authorities and prioritise safety by avoiding entry into natural water bodies during the monsoon.

## Congress questions build quality of Rawanfond railway bridge

Plans to file police plaint against consultant, contractors

Team Herald

**MARGAO:** The Margao Congress Block has condemned the contractors and consultants responsible for the Rawanfond railway over bridge, following structural damage caused by the rain.

During a site visit on Thursday, Savio Coutinho, Margao Block Convenor and former Chairperson, MMC, accused the bridge contractor and consultant of "criminal negligence" after a section of the approach road embankment collapsed, forcing diversion of traffic via



Calcondem and the fly-over.

"It takes common sense to provide adequate protection to the approach road," Coutinho said, alleging that the retaining wall was removed without any provision for alternative support.

He added that such shoddy work would have failed even under minor water pressure. "Even a 1000-litre water tank emptied here could have caused this erosion," he remarked. Coutinho further stated that a police complaint will be filed

against those responsible for the work.

He also raised concerns about the skyrocketing costs of the project. "The cost rose from Rs 21.30 crore in 2021 to Rs 54.13 crore after the defection of Margao MLA Digamber Kamat to the BJP. Shockingly, six months later, the Chief Minister himself stated the cost had escalated to Rs 74 crore," he said. He alleged that the bridge project has become a "golden egg-laying hen" for unidentified beneficiaries and warned the cost could surpass Rs 100 crore without justification.

## Massive tree collapse causes Rs 3 L damage to Durbhat-Ponda home



Team Herald

**PONDA:** A large, decades-old tree came crashing down on the house of Anup and Atul Naik Poi in the early hours of Saturday, causing structural damage and cracks to the building. The estimated loss is pegged at around Rs 3 lakh.

The incident occurred around 5.30am in Ward No. 5 of Durbhat, under the Adpoi-Agapur Panchayat juris-

dition. Fortunately, no injuries were reported. Local panchayat member Shipra Adpoikar, who visited the site, said the tree was massive and caused major damage to the house.

Fire and emergency services were quick to respond, but given the sheer size of the tree, a crane had to be hired to assist with the removal. "It took over four hours of continuous effort to safely clear the debris," Adpoikar said.