

Cuncolim's toxic waste sparks fear of health hazard

Locals demand legal action against industrial units responsible for dumping hazardous material; call for an urgent site inspection and clean-up operation

Team Herald

MARGAO: Alarmed over the hazardous waste found dumped into the open at the Cuncolim Industrial Estate, the residents of Cuncolim fear significant environmental and health repercussions due to alleged blatant negligence by industrial units and relevant authorities particularly with the onset of the monsoon.

Expressing grave concern, Cuncolim resident and activist Aviraj Dessai, who brought the issue to public attention, said, "Toxic waste is lying completely exposed, with rainwater washing through it. If this seeps into the groundwater or nearby farms, we are looking at irreversible damage. Authorities are turning a blind eye while the health of our people is being put at risk

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The exposed waste, reportedly generated by some units operating within the estate, has sparked fears of water contamination, soil degradation, and public health hazards. Dessai has urged immediate action by the Goa State Pollution Control Board (GSPCB) and other regulatory agencies.

“Every year, it's the same story. Waste mismanagement, zero enforcement, and the public pay the price,” said Priya Naik, a resident.

“This carelessness can poison our water, our crops, and our children,” added Joel Fernandes, another local.

Many residents have called for an urgent site inspection and a comprehensive clean-up operation.

Some have even demanded legal action against the industrial units responsible for dumping the hazardous material.

“If industries want to operate here, they must do so responsibly. No one is above the law,” said Rajan Menezes, a local businessman.

Activists, including Dessai, have warned they will take the matter to environmental watchdogs and the State government if immediate action is not taken.

As public pressure grows, all eyes are now on the authorities to act swiftly and ensure that such lapses are not repeated, especially during monsoon where there are high risks of contamination.

Tilting vessel poses threat to marine ecosystem in Mobor-Betul channel

Cavelossim P'yat seeks immediate action from South Collector & Captain of Ports to avoid any kind of disaster at sea

Team Herald

MARGAO: The Cavelossim Village Panchayat has called for immediate intervention after spotting a vessel tilting dangerously in the Mobor-Betul channel, warning that it could sink and pose a serious risk to the marine ecosystem and coastal activity.

IN TROUBLED WATERS

In a letter dated May 26, addressed to the South Goa Collector, Deputy Collector, and Captain of Ports, the panchayat stated that the vessel appears to be connected to an ONGC research-related activity and is now listing in a manner that demands urgent attention.

Sarpanch Dixon Vaz, speaking to the media, said the vessel had been seen off



“It is blocking the navigational channel. The vessel is tilted and can sink. We request your good office to kindly send the team of experts and take necessary action to avoid any kind of disaster at sea

—Cavelossim Village Panchayat in a letter to South Goa Collector & Captain of Ports

the Mobor-Betul area and appeared to sink.

“It is blocking the navigational channel,” he said, adding that the panchayat has urged authorities to send a team of experts to the site.

In its letter, the panchayat warned that the vessel's condition posed a threat not only to the marine ecosystem but also to tourism.

“The vessel is tilted and can sink. We request

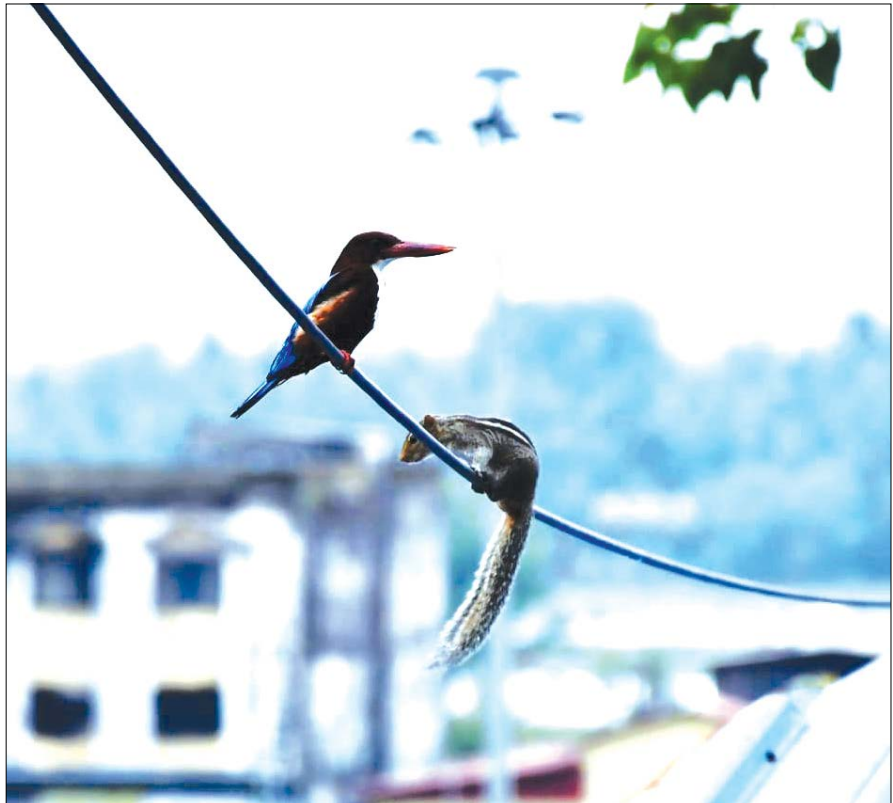
your good office to kindly send the team of experts and take necessary action to avoid any kind of disaster at sea,” the panchayat stated in the letter.

The fear of a maritime incident has grown stronger in light of worsening weather conditions. “In Kochi, a boat has already capsized due to bad weather,” Vaz noted, expressing concern that heavy rains in Goa could lead to a similar situation if the listing vessel is not dealt with in time.

The situation is especially critical given that this is the final week of the fishing season, which officially ends on May 31. Many boats are still venturing out or returning to shore, making the Mobor-Betul channel a key passage. The presence of the stranded vessel in this stretch raises serious safety concerns.

STRANGE CABLE FELLOWS

VINCENT BRAGANZA



A squirrel attempts to hop over a cable to the other side even as it does a balancing act with a kingfisher on a cloudy day at Mapusa

South Goa District Hospital preps up to enforce Covid precautionary measures

Team Herald

MARGAO: In light of the recent surge in COVID-19 cases in neighbouring States and the recent case reported in Goa, the South Goa District Hospital (SGDH), Margao is preparing to implement precautionary measures to curb any potential spread of the virus.

Although the hospital has not yet received official guidelines from the government, preparations are underway to ensure patient safety and readiness for any eventuality.

Speaking to O Herald, Dr Rajendra Borkar, SGDH's Medical Superintendent confirmed that while there has been no communication from the Directorate of Health Services as of now, the hospital will be proactive.

NOT TAKING ANY CHANCES

- Sources informed that the hospital is considering the reintroduction of patient screening and monitoring protocols, especially for individuals presenting with flu-like symptoms
- Staff members have been alerted to be vigilant, and internal preparations being reviewed, including stock checks of PPE kits, sanitisation supplies, and oxygen support systems
- Hospital authorities coordinating with local health officials to stay updated on the evolving situation

“At the moment, we haven't received any directives from the head office. However, we are committed to taking all necessary steps with regard to Covid precautions,” he added.

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with flu-like symptoms. Staff members have been alerted to remain vigilant, and internal preparations are being reviewed, including stock checks of PPE kits, sanitisation supplies, and oxygen support systems.

Hospital authorities are also coordinating with local health officials to stay updated on the evolving situation.

“Public safety is our top

“At the moment, we haven't received any directives from the head office. However, we are committed to taking all necessary steps with regard to Covid precautions. Public safety is our top priority. We are watching the developments closely and will act as soon as instructions are received from the government

—Dr Rajendra Borkar, SGDH's Medical Supdt

priority. We are watching the developments closely and will act as soon as instructions are received from the government,” Dr Borkar added.

The public has been advised to remain cautious, follow hygiene protocols, and stay informed through official health bulletins. While the current situation in Goa remains under control, the health department and hospitals like South Goa District Hospital are taking no chances and remain on alert to respond swiftly if

the need arises.

It is pertinent to note that the hospital has a proven track record in managing the COVID-19 pandemic during earlier waves. The hospital played a crucial role in treating hundreds of patients, setting up isolation wards, and implementing strict precautionary protocols. It served as a key healthcare centre in the State's Covid response, providing both critical care and support services at a time when the healthcare system was under immense pressure.

Sewage water discharge at Navelim triggers fresh concerns

Team Herald

MARGAO: The onset of the monsoon has once again highlighted the issue of sewage water being discharged into roadside gutters at Mandopa, Navelim, triggering renewed concerns over pollution of the Sal tributary.

During a site visit, Navelim resident and High Court Public Interest Litigation (PIL) petitioner Professor Antonio Alvares pointed to a concealed pipe releasing dark water into an uncovered gutter. “This was exposed only because the gutter was left open. Otherwise, this method of releasing sewage into road-

side drains appears to be widely used,” he said.

Mocking the setup as a form of advanced engineering, Alvares remarked, “The ancient technology used here is clearly superior to the Japanese JICA model. This pipe discharges sewage into drains that ultimately pollute the Sal. This so-called infrastructure is being replicated elsewhere.”

He claimed the practice is widespread, including in Margao where most drains are covered. “Unless the Margao Municipal Council physically inspects every outlet from each home and commercial establishment, this will continue,” he warned.

Margao council directs 12 applicants to follow up with sewerage corp

Team Herald

MARGAO: Residents of 12 households near the Old Model High School expressed frustration after being told by the Margao Municipal Council (MMC) to follow up with the sewerage corporation regarding their sewage connection applications, instead of a solution.

A hearing was held before MMC Chief Officer Melvyn Vas, where residents were served notices for allegedly failing to connect their homes to the sewage system and discharging wastewater into drains. However, the residents complain they are being unfairly targeted, as

no sewage pipeline exists in their locality to facilitate such connections.

The civic body's notices accuse homeowners of releasing wastewater into storm water drains, which pollutes nearby fields and Salpalm Lake in Navelim. The residents, however, have described these accusations as unjustified and irrational.

Speaking to reporters after the hearing, local resident Anthony Pereira said the MMC asked them to follow up with the Sewerage Department regarding their pending connection applications.

“We have been served notices by the MMC, but instead of addressing our

concerns, the civic body is directing us to the sewerage corporation,” he said.

Pereira added that their applications have been pending for over a month, with officials informing them orally that no sewage pipeline exists in the area to provide connections.

“If that's the case, why are we being targeted? The authorities should first install the sewage pipeline. We are ready to connect, but until then, issuing notices without a solution is unfair,” he urged.

The residents are calling on the MMC and sewerage corporation to coordinate and resolve the infrastructure gap before taking punitive action.

NH 66 expansion: Chinchinim locals await meeting with Gadkari

MARGAO: Residents of Chinchinim, especially those from the Danddevad-oda area, continue to await an appointment with Union Minister for Road Transport and Highways, Nitin Gadkari, to voice their long-pending concerns regarding the proposed expansion of NH 66.

The proposed expansion spans a 6.5 km stretch between Cuncolim and Navelim. Locals fear that hundreds of trees lining both sides of the road will be felled to make way for the widened highway, severely impacting the environment and disrupting their daily lives.

Chinchinim, Sirlim, Sarzora locals hit by frequent power cuts Demand urgent measures to resolve the issue



Team Herald

MARGAO: Raising serious concerns over the frequent power outages, the residents of Chinchinim-Deussua, Dramapur-Sirlim and Sarzora village panchayats have complained that these persistent disruptions have significantly impacted their daily lives and essential services.

Representatives from the three village panchayats recently met with the Executive Engineer at Aquem-Margao, demanding urgent and effective measures to resolve the issue.

Chinchinim-Deussua sarpanch Frank Viegas said that constant power failures have become a major problem for the residents. “These outages are not only affecting homes and businesses, but also hampering essential services. The situation becomes worse during monsoon, when electrical faults are frequent,” he said.

Emphasising the need for additional manpower, especially at night, Viegas called for a dedicated vehicle and ladder for emergency repairs, and stressed the importance of regular tree trimming to prevent

damage to power lines. He pointed out that the electricity department section at Chinchinim, which caters to a large area, including Chinchinim-Deussua, Dramapur, Sirlim, and Sarzora, puts an immense burden on limited staff and resources.

Dramapur-Sirlim deputy sarpanch Avita Vaz highlighted the difficulties faced by villagers during power cuts, particularly at night. “The outages are a major inconvenience, especially when there are no staffers available during the night to respond to complaints. This leads to long delays in restoring power supply, which affects the livelihood of residents,” she said.

Vaz urged the electricity department to strengthen its night shift team and assign a dedicated service vehicle to Dramapur. “Improving response time and reducing the pressure on the current team is essential,” she added. Both panchayats are united in their demand for better infrastructure and faster response mechanisms. Villagers hope that the department will act swiftly to prevent the situation from worsening, particularly during monsoon.

Abrupt end to housie at Raia football final leaves enthusiasts enraged

Spectators allege discriminatory enforcement by authorities; claim housie is a vital fundraising tool for clubs as it helps them cover basic costs and organise tournaments

Team Herald

MARGAO: A housie organised during the inter-village football final at Raia Ground was abruptly stopped on Sunday after a police team, along with the Joint Mamlatdar, arrived at the venue and enforced a ban, leaving players, organisers, and spectators dismayed.

The incident sparked outrage among football enthusiasts and local club members, who alleged discriminatory enforcement by authorities. They pointed

ed out that similar housie games had recently taken place at other football events in Salcete without any interference.

“Why was our housie stopped when it was allowed in other parts of Salcete just a few days ago? Housie is a vital fundraising tool for clubs. It helps us cover basic costs and organize tournaments,” said Jeron Colaco, a football supporter, while speaking to reporters.

Emphasising that many village football clubs in Goa operate without any finan-

“Why was our housie stopped when it was allowed in other parts of Salcete just a few days ago? Housie is a vital fundraising tool for clubs. It helps us cover basic costs and organise tournaments. Many village football clubs in Goa operate without any financial support from the government. The clubs receive no grants. It's only through such local initiatives that we manage to provide opportunities to young footballers. Stopping housie is like cutting off a lifeline

— Jeron Colaco, football supporter

cial support from the government, Colaco said, “The clubs receive no grants. It's only through such local initiatives

that we manage to provide opportunities to young footballers. Stopping housie is like cutting off a lifeline.”

Accusing the authorities of targeting grassroots football efforts unfairly, he said, “This is not an isolated issue. There seems to be a pattern of discrimination and unnecessary restrictions imposed on local sports events.” Colaco alleged that such actions are damaging the morale of organisers and dampening the spirit of the game.

Colaco appealed to Chief Minister Pramod Sawant to step in and direct officials to allow clubs to conduct housie during football tour-

naments, especially when they play a crucial role in sustaining local sports infrastructure.

“The government must recognise the importance of community-driven events. If clubs aren't supported or allowed to raise their own funds, football at the village level will suffer,” Colaco concluded.

The incident has once again reignited the debate over how local sporting bodies are treated and the need for consistent policies to support grassroots sports in Goa.