

Annual cover-up of Cuncolim’s hazardous waste dump begins

The long overdue transportation of 35,000 tonnes of hazardous waste from the Industrial Estate to the Pissurlem disposal facility will have to wait another year

Team Herald

MARGAO: As authorities commenced the process of covering hazardous waste at the Cuncolim Industrial Estate, concerned citizens have raised strong objections, demanding more comprehensive action to prevent environmental contamination and protect agricultural land.

Residents from the surrounding areas have voiced concern that simply covering the hazardous waste is not a long-term solution, or even a safe short-term option for the monsoon. They emphasised that leachate from the waste continues to seep into nearby fields, contaminating underground water sources and threatening livelihoods.

“This is not just industrial waste anymore—it has effectively turned into a mining pit, leaking toxins into our fields,” said Aviraj



Dessai, a local resident.

The waste site, long criticised for being a health and environmental hazard, has grown increasingly dangerous, especially during the monsoon season when runoff from the dump carries contaminants into low-lying areas.

Citizens are now demanding that the entire field dump be removed and shifted to a secure location with proper containment measures.

“This is about the health

of our soil, our crops, and our children. Just covering the site is like sweeping the problem under the rug,” said Desai.

Locals have also pointed out that the current efforts fall short of environmental norms and do not address the root of the problem—the illegal and unregulated dumping of hazardous industrial waste.

While the initial move to cover the waste may reduce immediate surface exposure, experts warn that

“This is not just industrial waste anymore—it has effectively turned into a mining pit, leaking toxins into our fields. This is about the health of our soil, our crops, and our children. Just covering the site is like sweeping the problem under the rug” — Aviraj Dessai, Cuncolim resident activist

Cuncolim IDC scrambles to clear 35k tonnes of toxic waste before rains

NEERI study confirms waste remains hazardous; pushes for urgent disposal at Pissurlem facility; govt approaches Centre for funds as transportation alone to cost Rs 14-15 cr

Team Herald

MARGAO: With the monsoon season expected to start in June, the Goa State Pollution Control Board (GSPCB) faces a race against time to clear the hazardous waste from the Cuncolim Industrial Estate to the Pissurlem disposal facility.



The waste is hazardous.

While the Board had expected to start the transportation process last year, delays in securing funds from the State government stalled progress. If we can begin within the next few months, we will proceed. Otherwise, it will take years, the waste will have to be covered once again — Mahesh Patil, Chairman, GSPCB

estimated quantity of hazardous waste at the site is around 35,000 tonnes, though the exact amount may change over time. The quantity of the waste may vary when it is being taken up for disposal. We will have to see how much waste is left behind the monsoon with its questions have been raised about whether the GSPCB will be

unless the leachate is controlled and the waste is re-located, the threat to nearby ecosystems will persist. Citizens are calling on the Goa State Pollution Control Board (GSPCB) and the Department of Industries to step in and take stricter enforcement action.

In March this year, GSP-

CB Chairman Mahesh Patil said they had formally approached the Union Environment Ministry for financial assistance, estimating the transportation cost at Rs 14-15 crore. He noted that the Ministry has agreed in principle to part-fund the project under a 60:40 cost-sharing scheme.

Sewage gushes onto streets in Malbhat-Margao, residents demand lasting solution

Team Herald

MARGAO: For the past several days, residents of Malbhat in the Aquem area of Margao have been grappling with a serious sanitation crisis, as raw sewage continues to pour from an overflowing chamber into a nearby nullah adjacent to Cine Vishant Theater.

Local resident and civic activist Savio Coutinho expressed deep frustration over the ongoing problem. He explained that the sewage is not only flooding open gutters but also seeping into residences, creating an unbearable stench



Government workers attempt to unclog a chamber spewing raw sewage in Malbhat. Locals say the sewage flows into rain water nullahs and even enter homes

and exposing families to hazardous conditions.

“This isn’t the first time we’re facing this problem. We endured a similar situ-

ation last year, yet authorities have failed to act decisively,” Coutinho said.

The recurring nature of the crisis has raised ques-

tions about the Margao Municipal Council’s commitment to public health and infrastructure maintenance.

Coutinho highlighted that although a robotic machine was recently procured to clean sewage chambers, it remains unused.

“The equipment was purchased despite clear indications that it would not be compatible with the existing chamber design. As a result, it now lies idle, and sanitation workers are forced to revert to manual cleaning methods,” he added.

Residents have voiced their disappointment over what they describe as neg-

ligence by the municipal authorities, stressing that the absence of a long-term solution has left the community vulnerable to disease outbreaks, especially with the monsoon underway.

Calls are growing louder for the MMC to take immediate action. Locals are demanding that the council not only address the current overflow but also implement structural improvements to prevent future incidents. Community members insist that health and safety must be prioritised, and that temporary fixes are no longer acceptable.

Margao civic body under fire for failing to desilt market drains

Team Herald

MARGAO: Shopkeepers at Gandhi Market in Margao have voiced serious grievances against the Margao Municipal Council (MMC), accusing it of gross negligence in maintaining the drainage system.

The traders claim the lack of de-silting work has led to severe flooding, damaging goods, disrupting daily business, and creating unsanitary conditions.

According to Rajendra Azgaonkar, President of the Gandhi Market Traders Association, repeated appeals to the civic body have gone unanswered. “We brought this issue to the at-

tention of the MMC long ago, but no action has been taken. The stagnant water has started to stink, making it unbearable to work. Our stocks are getting damaged, and footfall has dropped drastically,” he said.

The issue came to a head after heavy rainfall last week flooded at least 20 shops in the market, leaving traders frustrated and helpless.

Anil Kalekar, one of the affected shopkeepers, said, “We’ve been dealing with this problem for over a week now. Despite several complaints, the authorities have failed to act. Every passing day is hurting our business and putting public health at risk.”

Former minister Babu Azgaonkar

also lashed out at the MMC, holding the Chairperson directly responsible for the inaction.

He warned of agitation if desilting work is not initiated immediately. “If the council fails to take this matter seriously, we will stop paying taxes to the MMC and shut down the market. We demand action within eight days. If nothing is done, we won’t allow the Chairperson to even sit in his office,” he declared.

Traders have emphasised the urgency of the situation, especially with the monsoon season looming. They warned that further delays could lead to more extensive damage, posing both economic and health hazards.

South Goa Collector orders demolition of 2 unsafe buildings

Team Herald

MARGAO: As the South Goa District Collector issued instructions for the demolition of two unsafe buildings in Margao, former minister Babu Azgaonkar strongly criticised the Margao Municipal Council (MMC) for failing to ensure public safety, citing negligence and lack of initiative.

Speaking to reporters, Azgaonkar expressed outrage over the MMC’s justification that lack of funds was preventing it from demolishing dangerous structures.

“Claiming no funds is not an excuse. It is the civic body’s responsibility to request financial support from the government if needed. Public safety cannot be compromised” — Babu Azgaonkar, former minister

“Claiming no funds is not an excuse. It is the civic body’s responsibility to request financial support from the government if needed. Public safety cannot be compromised,” he stated.

The MMC has submitted a list of 21 unsafe buildings in the city to the District Collector, but action has been limited. Azgaonkar argued that the cost of demolition should be recovered from the owners of the buildings and that continued inaction is endangering lives.

“The Chairperson is more focused on increasing fees than delivering safety and essential services. The Margao MLA must also take this matter seriously,” he added.



Concrete slabs from two dilapidated buildings collapsed in Margao this past week

LIST OF OTHER UNSAFE BUILDINGS IN MARGAO

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|--|--|
| ■ Lotlikar Building – Near Margao Flyover Bridge | ■ Parishram Raikar & Ladu Raikar Building – Near Chinchal Railway Gate |
| ■ Sukdo Building – Opposite Cine Lata | ■ Churi Building – Behind Grace Church |
| ■ Marchon Building – Opposite Lohia Maidan | ■ Guru Ashish Building – Gandhi Market |
| ■ Sabina Hotel – Near Margao Bus Stand | ■ Regent Chamber Building – Gandhi Market |
| ■ Tilve Building – Ereasmo Carvalho Street | ■ Studs Accessories Ltd Building (Cabeça de Calçada) – Near Raymond Showroom |
| ■ The Golden Photo Studio Building – Margao | ■ Cruz Mansion Building – Martirez Dias Road |
| ■ Gracias Furtado Building – Khareband | ■ Dias Building – Gandhi Market |
| ■ Predio Cardozo Building – Khareband | ■ Pedrinho Building – Near Madgaon Café |
| ■ Villa Coutinho Building – Khareband | ■ Daud Building – Khareband |
| ■ Pedro Avelino Luis Building – Malbhat | ■ Casa Menezes Building – Gandhi Market |
| ■ New Era School Building – Malbhat | |

Administration. With monsoon season approaching, residents and

civic leaders alike are urging swift action to avert any potential tragedy.

P’yat raises alarm over unauthorised boats, labourers on Rachol riverfront

Team Herald

MARGAO: The Rachol Village Panchayat has strongly objected to the alleged illegal parking of fishing vessels and unauthorised stay of labourers at Ilha de Rachol, claiming violations of the Coastal Regulation Zone (CRZ) norms.

Panchayat members, led by Sarpanch Joseph Vas, have submitted a formal complaint to the CRZ authorities demanding immediate corrective action.

According to the panchayat, several trawlers and fishing boats are being parked illegally along the riverbank in front of the chapel and football ground at Ilha de Rachol.

The Sarpanch stated that this activity is damaging the retaining and protective wall built by the panchayat, and is obstructing local fishermen who rely on these waters for their livelihood.

“This unauthorised parking is not only causing damage to public infrastructure but is also affecting the day-to-day fishing operations of local residents,” said Sarpanch Vas. “It’s creating a major inconvenience for local fishermen, as their boats can no



longer be docked or moved freely.”

In addition, the panchayat has raised serious concerns regarding the labourers associated with these vessels. The Sarpanch pointed out that these labourers are staying in the area without proper facilities, and are engaging in open defecation on the bundh, posing significant health and environmental risks.

“There is a high chance of disease outbreaks, including dengue fever and cholera due to the lack of sanitation,” he warned. “The presence of these labourers, without proper health screening, poses a risk to the well-being of the local community.”

The Rachol Panchayat has urged the authorities to immediately relocate the vessels to designated parking zones and to provide proper accommodation and sanitation facilities for the workers. They have also requested regular health check-ups for the migrant labourers to prevent any potential spread of diseases.

Furthermore, the panchayat stressed the need for strict enforcement of CRZ regulations and preventive measures to maintain hygiene, protect local infrastructure, and safeguard the health of the village population.