

# Outrage after pedestrian death at lawless Old Market Circle

Margao locals demand deployment of traffic police to man the busy junction and ensure that buses stop making illegal halts at the turning; say repeated complaints have been ignored

Team Herald

**MARGAO:** The death of an elderly Margao resident in a road accident has once again trained the spotlight on the long-standing traffic mismanagement and lack of pedestrian safety at the Old Market circle in Margao.

Joseph Baptista, 67, succumbed to his injuries on Wednesday after being knocked down by a private bus while attempting to cross the road at the busy junction.

The incident has triggered an outpouring of anger and frustration among local residents, who have long been demanding better traffic enforcement and pedestrian safety measures in the area.

"There is absolutely no traffic discipline at the Old Market. Buses halt wherever they like, and there's no traffic police to be seen during peak hours. How many more lives have to be lost before something is done?" questioned Cajetan Fernandes, a resident in the area.



The Old Market junction is known for its heavy traffic flow and lack of order. Private buses frequently make illegal halts to pick up or drop off passengers, causing bottlenecks and obstructing visibility for both motorists and pedestrians. Despite repeated complaints from locals and business owners, the problem persists due to lack of enforcement and proper traffic planning.

According to regular commuters, the absence of a consistent

traffic police presence at the junction has turned the area into a high-risk zone for pedestrians, especially senior citizens.

"The authorities wake up only after a tragedy. Joseph was well-known in the area, and his death could have been avoided if there was even basic traffic monitoring in place. We need permanent traffic personnel deployed here, not just temporary arrangements," said Philip D'Costa, a resident and activist from Margao.

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Citizens are now renewing their demand for immediate action from the Margao Traffic Cell. They have called for the deployment of full-time traffic personnel at the Old Market junction, strict penalties for buses violating traffic norms, and urgent infrastructure improvements such as marked pedestrian crossings and functioning traffic signals.

As Margao continues to grow, residents feel it is time for the authorities to prioritise pedestrian safety and introduce long-overdue reforms in traffic management to prevent further loss of life.

# Students urge govt to prune overhanging trees along Canacona highway

Team Herald

**MARGAO:** Growing concerns over public safety have prompted students and residents to urge authorities to trim the overgrown tree branches along National Highway 66, particularly the stretch from Margao to Canacona.

The issue has become especially critical with the arrival of the monsoon season, raising the risk of accidents and road hazards.

Maria Gracias, a student from Sao Jose de Areal, highlighted the dangers posed by the unmaintained roadside vegetation. "These trees are a serious threat to people who commute regularly. During heavy monsoon winds, large branches often fall onto the road, causing power outages, traffic jams, and even fatal accidents," she said in a letter addressed to local

The precarious tree branches not only pose the risk of injuring commuters, but also damage power lines and obstruct streetlights, they complain, slamming the government for not trimming them before the rains

authorities.

She emphasized that delays in removing fallen branches often lead to further injuries and prevent timely emergency response.

Lucrancia Gomes, a student from Seraulim, added that the dense overgrowth blocks street lighting.

"The streetlights are unable to function effectively because the trees block their light. At night, visibility is so poor that it becomes very dangerous, especially for two-wheeler riders," she stated. "The

bushes have also grown over the road's edge lines, making it hard for drivers to stay within lanes."

Adding to the chorus of concerns, Rekha Dessai, a resident of Cuncolim, said, "We've been complaining about this for months. The authorities only react when something tragic happens. It's time they act before lives are lost."

Pandhari Dessai, also from Cuncolim, echoed these concerns. "There are many blind curves and narrow patches on this highway. The overgrown trees make it even more risky, especially during rains when visibility is already low. Many commuters, especially school children and elderly, are at risk every day."

Citizens are now appealing for the prompt tree-trimming and hope the authorities treat this not just as a maintenance issue but as a matter of public safety.

# Neglect still dogs Cutbona jetty as trawlers dock for fishing ban

Team Herald

**MARGAO:** As the annual 61-day fishing ban comes into effect from June 1, fishing activity at the Cutbona fishing jetty has come to a standstill, with boat owners docking their trawlers and labourers returning to their hometowns for the off-season break.

The ban, enforced to allow marine life to regenerate during the monsoon spawning period, will remain in force until July 31.

Speaking to reporters, Savio D'Silva, a key representative of the fishing community, said, "Boat owners have already docked their trawlers, and the majority of labourers

have gone back to their native places. Around 3,000 workers are engaged at Cutbona with nearly 300 trawlers operating from the jetty during the season."

However, D'Silva expressed concern over the lack of basic infrastructure at the jetty. "The toilet facility that the government promised is still not completed. It's been a long-pending issue, and it reflects poorly on how the fisheries sector is treated," he said.

He also highlighted operational challenges that persist at the Cutbona jetty. "There is no proper designated area for trawlers to unload their catch. Every season we face the same problems. It seems the

fisheries department is helpless in resolving these issues," he alleged.

D'Silva further urged the government to take necessary health precautions, especially considering the return of large numbers of migrant labourers once the fishing season resumes.

"The government must take precautions with regard to health issues, by screening the labourers. Prevention is better than crisis management later," he suggested.

The fisheries department, in coordination with the coast guard and local authorities, is expected to monitor violations strictly during the ban period.

# Traders brace for monsoon floods, appeal to MMC to clear drains on Old Station Rd

Team Herald

**MARGAO:** Shop owners operating along Old Station Road have once again urged the Margao Municipal Council (MMC) to take immediate and long-term action to resolve the persistent flooding problem that has plagued the area during every monsoon season.

The business community has expressed frustration over the continuous water-logging, which not only disrupts business but also causes significant damage to property and merchandise.

For several years now, the road has been prone to severe flooding during heavy rains.

The primary reason cited by the affected shopkeepers is the lack of proper drainage and the failure of the municipal authorities to regularly desilt the existing drains. Due to clogged and ineffective drainage channels, rainwater accumulates rapidly, often entering shops and leading to financial losses.

"Every monsoon, our shops get flooded. Our products are damaged, and we lose customers. We've been complaining about this issue for years, but nothing concrete has been done," said a local shop owner requesting not to disclose his name.

Others echoed similar sentiments, saying the situation has become unbearable and that temporary measures or last-minute cleanups are no longer acceptable.

Business owners have stressed the urgent need for a permanent solution that includes regular desilting of the drains before the onset of the monsoon, the construction of a proper drainage system, and consistent maintenance throughout the year. They believe that unless the MMC takes serious and proactive steps, the problem will continue to recur, severely impacting

local commerce.

The flooding not only affects businesses but also inconveniences pedestrians and commuters who use Old Station Road regularly. Slippery surfaces, stagnant water, and overflowing drains pose safety and health risks to the public, said another shop owner, who has been running his business operations for the last 20 years.

The shop owners are now considering approaching higher authorities if the MMC fails to act swiftly. They have appealed for the council to treat the issue with urgency and ensure that necessary infrastructure improvements are implemented.

PREPARED FOR THE MONSOON?

# Salt of the khazans: The last of Pernem's Mithkars hold on to a dying craft

Growing up in Arambol, Bhushana Thakur often heard about the Mithkars—traditional salt makers—who worked in the vast, shimmering pans in nearby villages like Agarwada and Korgao. Years later, as a postgraduate student in History at Goa University, she returned to those stories with renewed purpose. Research for her Goa Water Series project gave her the opportunity to dive deep into the history and contemporary realities of the Mithkars. Through this work, she hoped to shed light on a trade that once sustained families and entire villages, but is now fighting for survival.

Bhushana's research took her to salt pans that stretch out like cracked mirrors beneath the sky, silent witnesses to changing times. In Korgao, she met a salt pan owner who recalled a time when locals queued up to buy freshly extracted salt. "The salt is over? I needed some... will more be available soon?" was a common refrain. Today, that same salt lies unsold for nearly a year. Buyers are few, and many hesitate to purchase non-iodized salt. The shift in consumption habits, along with a lack of storage facilities, poor road access, and minimal government support, has left salt pan owners disheartened. Most of the physical labour falls on the owners themselves, as the number of skilled workers continues to dwindle. Without a new generation to carry the work forward, the trade teeters on the edge of disappearance.

For Bhushana, this isn't just about salt—it's about heritage. Salt is embedded in the region's



life—one where humans understood their place in the natural order. Through his art, he attempts to draw attention to what's being lost in the name of progress.

The two were introduced through the Goa Water Stories

fellowship, coordinated by Wency Mendes, where researchers and artists came together to explore water-related themes through multimedia. Bhushana was mentored by Sneha Ghadi and supported by Dr. Sulochana Pednekar of the Women's Studies Programme, who encouraged her to apply for the fellowship. Workshops led by photographers and artists helped the duo document their findings using visuals, sound, and texture, adding richness to their storytelling. Photographers Elisha D'Souza and Nitya Navelkar collaborated on the salt pans project.

Both Bhushana and Satyam say the project transformed how they view water. Salt production, they learned, relies on precise water management. Too much or too little water can disrupt the delicate balance of salt crystallisation. Their dream for Goa is simple yet profound: a future where salt pans are not just relics of the past, but living, working systems—valued, supported, and understood.

Goa Water Stories is a collaboration with the Living Waters Museum, the Centre for Public Policy and Governance at the Goa Institute of Management, the Goa University and the Sunaparanta Goa Centre for the Arts.

Salt is not just an ingredient; it carries the memories, culture, and methods of our ancestors — Bhushana Thakur

Her collaborator on the project, artist Satyam Malhar, brought a different lens to the work. A graduate of Sir JJ School of Art in Mumbai, Satyam has long been drawn to environmental themes. The salt pans piqued his curiosity thanks to a childhood memory—watching his grandmother use large crystals of local salt for pickling. "I loved playing with those crystals," he recalls. That memory eventually led him to this project, where he used illustration and visual art to explore the salt-making process and the ecological shifts around it.

Satyam's work is less about nostalgia and more about confrontation. "If you are cutting trees and mountains in the name of development, then we don't want that kind of development," he says. For him, the salt pans symbolise a quieter, more sustainable way of



Scan the QR code to experience Bhushana and Satyam's project, 'The salt pans of Pernem'

# Eatery in Colva gutted in early morning blaze

Team Herald

**MARGAO:** A massive fire broke out at a momo restaurant in Colva on Wednesday morning, causing extensive damage to goods and property. The shop, located on the ground floor, was closed at the time of the blaze.

The fire department responded swiftly, with Margao Station Fire Officer (SFO) Gil Souza and his team of firefighters working tirelessly to contain the blaze. The loss is estimated to run into several lakhs, according to SFO Souza, who supervised the operation.

They received the call at 6:30 am. One fire tender was pressed into service, and the fire was brought under control. The fire team returned to the station by 8:30 am.

According to SFO Souza, items damaged in the fire



include an air conditioning unit, three deep freezers, chairs, tables, wooden wall cupboards, decorative ceiling fixtures, exterior signage boards, electrical appliances, and two steel shutters. He added that the estimated cost of the loss has not yet been finalised.

Importantly, firefighters

were able to prevent the fire from spreading to an adjacent shop located on the first floor.

The cause of the fire remains unknown, and the Margao Fire Station will write to the electricity department to assist in determining the cause. An investigation is currently underway.

# Govt plans modern 'Ro-Ro' ferries to boost river transport

Team Herald

**MARGAO:** The Goa government is set to introduce a fleet of modern Ro-Ro (Roll-on/Roll-off) ferries on its rivers to improve river transportation across the state, said Minister for River Navigation Subhash Phal Desai.

He said the ferries are being built by local entrepreneurs, which is expected to generate employment and support local industries. The vessels will be capable of carrying both vehicles and passengers, reducing travel time and easing road congestion.

Phal Desai also said the ferries could support water tourism, offering an alternative means for tourists to explore Goa's rivers and scenic routes. The state's river network, he added, presents opportunities for both daily transport and tourism. With the state's rich network of rivers and scenic beauty, these vessels could become a major attraction for tourists, creating additional revenue streams, he said.

MAX. TEMP 33 °C  
MIN. TEMP 28 °C

idharudhar



Uncle, do you have a special counter for minors?