

Vendors, buyers reel as Margao's wholesale fish mkt turns into swamp

Filth and stench take over the recently renovated fish market; despite public outcry, authorities delay clean up; fishers stare at losses as footfalls, business drop

Team Herald

MARGAO: The unhygienic conditions at the Margao wholesale fish market continue to worsen, despite repeated pleas from fish vendors and customers alike. With stagnant fishy water flooding the market premises and a persistent foul smell in the air, the environment has become nearly unbearable for those who frequent the area.

Fish traders have raised the alarm, warning that if the situation is not addressed soon, it could have severe implications for public health and their livelihoods.

Local trader Francis Fernandes expressed frustration over the negligence shown by the concerned authorities. "Every day we come here hoping the market will be cleaned, but nothing changes. The stink is terrible, and it's getting harder for us to even walk," he said.

It has been observed that due to poor drainage and a lack of regular maintenance, the fish market remains flooded with dirty water mixed with fish waste throughout the day. The stench has become a major deterrent not only for customers but even for the traders themselves.

Rosario D'Souza, another long-time vendor at the market, echoed similar concerns. "How are we supposed to sell fish in such conditions? Customers walk



SGPDA CHAIRMAN VISITS MARKET, PROMISES TO LEVEL GROUND, CLEAR DRAINS

Team Herald

MARGAO: Following public complaints and viral videos showing fish being sold in unhygienic conditions, SGPDA Chairman and MLA Krishna 'Daji' Salkar conducted an inspection of the SGPDA Wholesale Fish Market in Margao. He assured that the new wholesale fish market will be made operational at the earliest, with the final decision to be taken during a meeting with the Chief Minister on June 17. Salkar announced that the tender for the new market will be floated and finalised in the upcoming SGPDA meeting. He emphasised that wastewater from the market will be treated, ensuring no pollution to the River Sal or surrounding fields. As an immediate solution, land levelling will be undertaken, and the opening of clogged drains will be prioritised. He also addressed the issue of illegal vendors, assuring that action will be taken against non-

Goans engaged in retail fish sales within the wholesale complex. Refuting allegations that construction files were pending at his office, Salkar reaffirmed the authority's commitment to expediting the project. Additionally, Salkar announced that the retail fish market, which is also owned by the SGPDA, will undergo a complete renovation. He noted that drains at the retail market have already been desilted, but urged vendors and traders to share responsibility in maintaining cleanliness and hygiene in and around the premises. Cleaning and toilet maintenance services at both markets will be outsourced to ensure consistent upkeep. Salkar also clarified that SGPDA will not interfere in sopo (fee) collection outside the market, which remains the jurisdiction of Margao Municipality. Traditional fishermen will be granted time relaxations to continue selling their catch during the transition period.

in, see the mess, and turn back. Many of them have stopped coming altogether.

We are losing business because no one wants to step into this filth," he lamented.

Even loyal fish buyers are finding it difficult to navigate through the dirty, slip-

“How are we supposed to sell fish in such conditions? Customers walk in, see the mess, and turn back. Many of them have stopped coming altogether. We are losing business because no one wants to step into this filth”
—Rosario D'Souza, fish vendor

pery aisles, forcing some to shift to cleaner markets or private vendors despite higher prices.

The overall experience, both for customers and traders, has deteriorated drastically, with no visible signs of improvement.

Vendors have been consistently demanding that the market be cleaned regularly and that a proper waste disposal and drainage system be implemented. They are now urging the municipal authorities to take urgent action before the situation worsens, especially with the monsoon season just around the corner. Traders warn that the combination of wet weather and poor sanitation could pose serious health risks, including the spread of waterborne diseases.

They are calling on the South Goa Planning and Development Authority (SGPDA) to treat the matter with the seriousness it deserves and restore basic hygiene to one of the city's busiest marketplaces.

CM responds to fishers' plea for boat berthing space

Tasks South Goa Collector with assessing defunct prawn hatchery land in Benaulim

Team Herald

MARGAO: Chief Minister Pramod Sawant has instructed the South Goa District Collector to visit the now-defunct prawn hatchery site at Benaulim and assess the possibility of allocating land to dock fishing boats of traditional fishermen during the monsoon.

Representing the fishing community under the banner of Kharvi Bhavancho Ekvott, a group of fishermen recently met the Chief Minister and submitted a formal request seeking 5,000 square metres of the hatchery land.

They explained that, with the rising sea level and objections from private property owners, finding a safe place to berth their boats has become increasingly difficult.

Jose Fernandes, President of the association, expressed gratitude for

Fisherfolk renew demand for space to park boats, repair nets in Benaulim

Call for govt to allot 5000 sq mtrs at the defunct hatchery; threaten agitation if govt fails to address their issues

Team Herald

MARGAO: With the monsoon season just around the corner, some of our boats were removed after complaints. With our homes located over a kilometre from the

the Chief Minister's immediate action and also acknowledged Fatorada MLA Vijai Sardesai for arranging the meeting. "We've had a tough time securing space to park our boats during this monsoon. The hatchery land is our only viable option," Fernandes said.

Another fisherman, Pele Fernandes, shared that Fisheries officials had previously served them with notices to remove their boats from the shoreline. He welcomed the Chief Minister's intervention, especially after their request had earlier been turned

down by the Fisheries Department.

"The CM clarified that he wasn't aware of the department's rejection and promised to look into it," he added.

The delegation pointed out that the Fisheries Department currently holds around 55,000 sqm of land near Benaulim beach, which was acquired over three decades ago for a prawn hatchery. The fishermen have requested that at least 5,000 sqm of this land be allocated for their use to ensure safe berthing and support their fishing livelihood.

Headless, Raia awaits Sarpanch

Team Herald

MARGAO: A month has passed since Raia village Sarpanch Mario D'Souza resigned, yet the Directorate of Panchayats has not initiated the process to elect a new head. The prolonged delay in holding the election is raising concerns among local representatives and residents.

According to sources, the Directorate appears to be carefully observing the

panchayat's operations, in light of past controversies surrounding tender procedures and the utilisation of 14th Finance Commission funds. These issues had earlier drawn administrative attention, and recently, an official also issued a letter to the panchayat, urging adherence to legal processes.

Former Sarpanch Mario D'Souza confirmed there has been a delay in the election of a new leader.

"We are elected to work for the people, and the absence of a Sarpanch can affect the smooth functioning of the panchayat. Developmental works may slow down or come to a halt," he stated.

Xavier Fernandes, a serving panch member, also expressed concern over the continued vacancy. He emphasized that it is the responsibility of the Directorate to initiate the election process.

S Goa gets its first blood component centre

Team Herald

MARGAO: Victor Hospital and Medical Services Pvt. Ltd. has launched South Goa's first-ever Blood Component Centre, marking a major step forward in the region's healthcare services.

This FDA- and CDSCO-licensed facility enhances emergency and specialised care by offering key blood components, including whole blood, packed red blood cells (PRBC), leukoreduced PRBC, platelet concentrate, and fresh

frozen plasma (FFP). It aims to bridge a critical gap in timely access to transfusions for trauma, surgeries, cancer treatment, anaemia, and infections like dengue.

Inaugurated on World Blood Donor Day, the centre was unveiled in the presence of MLA Digambar Kamat, MMC Chairperson Damodar Shirodkar, Social Worker Yogiraj Kamat, and Victor Hospital leaders including Directors Varun Albuquerque and Romana Costa, COO Dr. Ajay Gangoli, and

Senior Pathologist Dr. Eugene D'Souza. Dr. Gangoli said the centre ensures safer, faster access to essential blood components, while Dr. D'Souza highlighted the advanced filtration process used in leukoreduced PRBCs.

Victor Hospital also hosted a blood donation camp, honouring ten dedicated donors—among them Sudesh Narvekar, who has donated over 100 times. Ms. Costa stressed the importance of awareness campaigns and community participation.

Losing ground: Young researcher traces the erosion of farmland in Goa's northern river belt

Team Herald

Spread along the banks of River Chapora, the villages of Ibrampur and Sal have long relied on the land and water to sustain generations of farming. But as monsoons grow more erratic and development eats away at agricultural resilience, villagers are watching their fields—and futures—slip away with the soil.

Nisha Namdev Chari, a 23-year-old from Nadora in Bardez, is among a new generation of researchers exploring the human, ecological, and spiritual relationships that shape Goa's riverside communities. Through the Goa Water Stories project, her work examines the deepening impact of soil erosion on farming and local ecology.

"During my post-graduation in En-



vironmental Science, I realised that living in harmony with nature isn't just a theory—it's a necessity," says Chari. "My dissertation focused on ecological change and soil erosion in villages along the Chapora. But the fellowship gave me a chance to explore the spiritual connection between people, land, and water—something I hadn't considered before."

Heavy rains during the monsoon, combined with the swelling of the Chapora River, regularly flood fields, washing away the fertile topsoil that once fed bountiful harvests. "The topsoil is not just mud, it holds nutrients and organic matter that crops need to grow," she explains. "Once it's gone, the land is weaker, and the yields drop."

To keep farming, villagers are



“I want to raise awareness about the harmful effects of soil erosion and the disruption of river flow. It's important to promote better planning and practices to protect our land, rivers, and communities. Many farmers have stopped farming because of soil erosion, but agriculture is vital for the survival of local communities”
—Nisha Namdev Chari

forced to spend more on fertilisers to replace lost nutrients. But even this doesn't fully restore soil productivity. As farming becomes more expensive, with rising costs for hybrid seeds and industrial inputs, many small-scale farmers are being pushed to the edge.

"Before, we used to work with nature. Now, we're constantly trying to fix what's broken," Chari says.

Local man Mase Vishnu Gawas



Scan the QR code to experience Nisha's project, 'Impact of Soil Erosion on Ibrampur and Sal'



tells her how infrastructure projects changed village life without benefiting those most affected. "We did not benefit when the bhandara was built, and we did not benefit when the new bridge came up because of the airport," he says. "But we bear the brunt

of these changes."

The soil erosion caused by unchecked development has worsened over the years, impacting low-lying farmland and destabilising riverbanks. Once-productive lands now sit fallow or yield less each year, driving some farmers away from cultivation entirely.

Adding to this, unpredictable flash floods and off-season rains are becoming more frequent. "Even if the soil is healthy, the crops might still fail. The rains come too early or too late. It's hard to plan anymore," Chari says.

Her research highlights how soil and water are interconnected—not just scientifically, but culturally. Working with artist Shivranjana Rathod, and collaborators Elisha D'Souza and Natasha James, Chari began reimagining the story of erosion not as just a physical process, but a spiritual one, too—a rupture in the delicate balance between people and place.

"My dream for Goa is one where we don't sacrifice long-term health of our environment for short-term development," she says. "We need stronger planning, more awareness, and a return to practices that protect the land."

"Planting trees, respecting water, and listening to our farmers—these small actions can help us rebuild what we've lost. The future of Goa depends on it."

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.

Frog poaching, habitat loss worry environmentalists in Goa

Team Herald

PANJIM: The possible effects of El Niño in Goa—marked by high temperatures followed by intense rainfall—have triggered flooding and disrupted natural cycles across the state. This erratic weather pattern has led to the death of tadpoles in fields. As frogs play a key role in controlling mosquito populations, such losses have raised ecological concerns. The uneven weather has also resulted in inconsistent water distribution,

causing flooding in some areas and dryness in others. In May, the State Forest Department launched a campaign titled "Save the Frog" to raise awareness and protect frog habitats during the monsoon. The department also plans targeted plantation drives, prioritising native species while minimising disruption to existing ecosystems.

While the campaign has sparked public interest, environmentalists remain concerned about the threats frogs continue to face in Goa. Amrut Singh, a well-known animal rescuer, highlighted that frog conservation remains a major issue—particularly the Indian bullfrog. "During the monsoon, they're easy to catch since it's their mating season and they appear in large numbers," he said.

According to Singh, most anti-poaching efforts are led by volunteers who patrol the area around 8 or 9 am.



But hunters have adapted, venturing out as early as 3 or 4 am. "There's high demand for frogs, especially from big restaurants along the east and west coastal belts," he noted, warning that a decline in frog populations could lead to an increase in insects, upsetting the ecological balance.

Last year, six people involved in the illegal wildlife trade—including frog poaching—were apprehended with help from volunteers. Some were also found in possession of softshell turtles. Singh expressed hope for similar outcomes this year.

Charan Desai from SAVE, an NGO focused on animal protection, said the ground situation is alarming. He echoed Singh's concerns, noting that the bullfrog's size and taste make it a common target. "The practice of eating frogs continues quietly in many villages," he said, adding that no NGO or government agency has yet conducted a formal

assessment of frog hunting practices.

"There are some positive steps, and the Save the Frog campaign is one of them," Desai said. However, he pointed out that forest department patrols are often ineffective without local cooperation. "Action against poachers tends to be corrective rather than preventive. More needs to be done to eliminate the practice," he added.

Desai also stressed the need for awareness drives in schools and colleges. "People must understand how vital frogs are to the ecosystem," he said. Habitat loss, he warned, remains one of the biggest threats to frog populations—exacerbated by water pollution, chemical fertilisers, detergents, wetland destruction, and hill cutting.

Naveen Kumar, Conservator of Wildlife at the Forest Department, said the Save the Frog campaign—particularly focused on the bullfrog—is a significant step forward. The department is using digital tools to monitor progress and plans to spread the message to every household through SMS alerts and school outreach.

"Frogs are essential to the ecosystem and especially beneficial for farmers. Tadpoles feed on mosquito pupae, helping maintain ecological balance," Kumar said. However, he added that no survey has been conducted to assess frog mortality or estimate their population in the state.

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