

# Toxic waste flows into Agassaim fields

In Shristhal, locals fear tilted molasses tank could cause environmental disaster

Team Herald

**MARGAO:** Agricultural communities in Agassaim are facing a new environmental crisis as toxic waste has been flowing into paddy fields and streams since May 23, following heavy rainfall.

The contamination has affected the wards of Moita, Padrihat, and Malwara, turning fields and water bodies black and raising fears about crop safety.

Health department officials and GSPCB representatives have collected samples for analysis, with locals demanding swift identification of the pollution source and nature. The affected area is particularly significant as Agassaim practices

organic farming and its local brinjal variety has received Geographic Indication (GI) tag recognition.

Former sarpanch Xavier Gracias emphasised the urgency of investigation, while local panch Julieta Ribeiro sought assurances for farmers about crop viability.

Activist Ramrao Wagh called for oxygen level studies in affected fields. St Andre MLA Viresh Borkar has petitioned authorities for comprehensive inspection of the contamination source.

Meanwhile, a massive molasses storage tank at the Canacona Industrial Estate at Shristhal has tilted dangerously, creating panic about potential environ-

## FEARS OF CROP SAFETY

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mental disaster. The tank, belonging to a defunct alcohol factory that ceased operations two decades ago, has been spreading strong molasses odours throughout the locality.

Speaker and Canacona

MLA Ramesh Tawadkar has ordered immediate drone filming and structural stability testing of the tank, along with safe removal of remaining contents. Fire and emergency teams remain on standby as officials

work to prevent the tank's complete collapse.

The Industrial Development Corporation and GSPCB had previously instructed former lease owners Sidhi Multi-Trade Pvt Ltd to remove approximately 700 tonnes of molasses already extracted from the tank. New lease owners NTS Pvt Ltd have committed to safely removing the remaining quarter-tank of molasses to prevent environmental catastrophe.

Local residents fear that tank rupture could send molasses flowing into nearby houses and the seasonal rivulet that connects to the Talpona/Kushavati river system, ultimately reaching the sea at Talpona coast.

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## Rains disrupt traffic across Goa

Team Herald

**PANJIM/MARGAO/PONDA:** Goa experienced continuous heavy rainfall on Sunday, leading to traffic disruptions in various parts of the State.

Several incidents of trees falling were reported. In Bho-ma, a mango tree blocked the Ponda-Panjim Road, but fire and emergency personnel cleared the tree. In Gaunem, a roadside concrete retaining wall, approximately 100 metres long and six metres high, collapsed on the Madkai-Ponda road following heavy downpour.

Fortunately, no vehicles were passing by when the incident occurred.

A pedestrian who had just passed the wall witnessed the incident which affected traffic flow on the Madkai-Ponda road due to the debris. Locals started clearing the road.

Salcete taluka too was impacted by heavy rains and strong winds, resulting in trees falling at multiple locations and causing losses estimated in lakhs



A tree that fell following heavy downpour in Margao

of rupees as four cars were damaged, and trees also fell on houses in different areas.

According to Gil Souza, Station Fire Officer (FSO) in Margao, the fire station received 18 emergency calls on Sunday related to trees falling on houses, vehicles, and roads.

Two cars parked in Aquem were damaged, with one car each damaged in Gogol and near Maruti Mandir. Souza stated that they received calls from Margao, Navelim, Colva, Fatorda, Comba, and other areas.

Heavy rain disrupted normal life in Salcete, causing waterlogging in several low-lying areas, with water entering some homes.

The persistent rainfall

over the past few days has shifted the State's average seasonal rainfall from a deficit to a surplus in the last 15 days. According to the IMD, between June 1 and 15, Goa received an average total seasonal rainfall of 15.9 inches, exceeding the normal rainfall of 14.23 inches by 6.7 percent.

This is a significant change from the situation as of June 10th, 2025, when the State had received only 3.77 inches of rainfall against a normal of 7 inches, marking a deficit of 46.9 percent.

It has forecast heavy rainfall at isolated places from June 16 to 21 accompanied by winds reaching speeds of 40-50 kmph, gusting up to 60 kmph.

## Cop feared drowned in Tivim quarry

Team Herald

**PANJIM:** A police constable from Porvorim, Akash Naik, was feared to have got drowned in a quarry at Tivim on Sunday.

The incident triggered a search operation by local authorities. Rescue teams, including fire and emergency services, were pressed into service to locate him.

According to a Fire and Emergency Services (FES) official, Akash had reportedly entered water following a mishap involving group of youth who had visited the quarry.

"We received a call stating that one person has fallen in a quarry near Sirsaim," the Fire and Emergency Services (FES) official said.

"We used two anchors. We brought him out and the body was handed over to Colvale Police. He had gone with his friends," the official said.

## GFP to field candidates in Margao, Curtorim in 2027 Assembly elections

Team Herald

**MARGAO:** Goa Forward Party (GFP) president Vijai Sardesai has announced that his party will field candidates in both Margao and Curtorim constituencies in the 2027 Assembly elections, while also declaring his intention to contest the 2026 Margao civic polls to "save the town from crumbling."

Speaking at a public meeting organised on his 55th birthday at Fatorda, he signalled a larger political mobilisation with a State-wide agenda aimed at challenging the BJP's dominance, both in governance and opposition.

Declaring that Margao was being "ruined by neglect," Sardesai said GFP Goa would contest the next municipal elections to take control of the Margao Municipal Council (MMC) and offer relief to the people. He recalled the 2015 municipal polls where GFP had secured all 11 wards in Fatorda but could not form the council as Margao was left uncontested. "This time, we are going into Margao to take charge. The people's mandate must be respected, and they deserve better civic administration," he said.

He emphasised the need for inclu-



Goa Forward Party president Vijai Sardesai at a public meeting organised on his 55th birthday at Fatorda

sive representation.

Sardesai accused the BJP of attempting to control both the ruling and opposition benches. He said that democracy suffers when dissent is subdued. He reminded the audience of the success of Congress South Goa MP Capt Viriato Fernandes electoral campaign, attributing his victory to popular support rather than party machinery.

NCP president Jose Philip D'Souza, lawyer Radharao Gracias, and ex-MLA Naresh Sawal urged him to take up a leadership role in the 2027 elections. "You are a born leader. Now is the time to unite all forces," said Gracias.

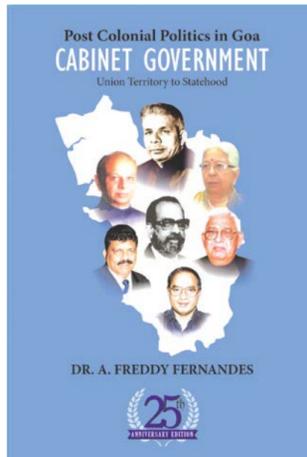
The Fatorda MLA also reignited his demand for a caste-based census for

the Bhandari Samaj, a proposal he raised in the Assembly. "I stood up for the rights of the ST and Bhandari communities, but no MLA from the Bhandari Samaj supported the call for a caste census. I will not rest until justice is done," he said.

Reinforcing his vision of 'development by consent,' Sardesai cited ongoing infrastructure works in his constituency, particularly road expansion projects executed with the involvement of locals. He said this model must be replicated across Goa to ensure sustainable and community-driven development.

Sardesai called on Goans to identify leaders who fear God and serve people, not power.

## Book on Goa's paradoxical political history releasing in Panjim today



Team Herald

**PANJIM:** While Goans are well educated and politically conscious and active as citizens, it cannot be therefore concluded that Goa has the best polity. However, among the small States Goa has the best per capita income, the best development, best literacy, lowest birth rate, longevity of life and perhaps the best in terms of happiness index. So how does a polity plagued with regular party hopping of MLAs, skewed development and constant environmental and other agitations make Goa one of the best performing among the small states?

On Monday (June 16), former two-time Chief Minister and former Rajya Sabha MP Luizinho Faleiro will release the first of its kind book titled "Post Colonial Politics in Goa - Cabinet Government, from Liberation to Statehood," authored by Dr A Freddy Fernandes, at Menezes Braganza Hall, Panjim, at 4.30pm. Adv Carlos Alvares Ferreira and Satadru Ojha, Executive Editor of O Herald, will be the guests of honour, while author and former Editor of O Herald Alexandre Moniz Barbosa will deliver the keynote address. Senior Journalist Jovito Lopes will be the Master of Ceremony.

This book, which is in its third edition, and which is celebrating its Silver Jubilee of publication, documents each ministry from the first Chief Minister Dayanand Bhandodkar's Ministry, Shashikala Kakodkar Ministry, the Prataps-

ingh Rane Decade, the PDF Ministry with Churchill Alemao and Dr Luis Proto Barbosa as chief minister and finally the battle between Ravi Naik and Dr Wilfred de Souza for the chief minister's chair.

It covers the period upto the first assembly term (1989-1994) after Goa became a State, simultaneously documenting the Merger-Marathi issue, the Opinion Poll, the language agitation, the Konkan Railway tangle. It analyses the trends in Goan politics since Liberation, carries elaborate Appendix on chief ministers, opposition leaders,

governors and speakers from Union Territory to 2022, including elections results.

The book is packed with elaborate and copious data suitable for scholars, students, activists and also the common active Goan citizens. The book is already being used in colleges as a recommended reference in History and Political Science. It is also available in the Library of Congress, USA, and other American universities in the form of a digital copy and is widely used as a reference on Goan politics.

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