

Centre acquires Loliem land for four-laning of NH 66

Acquisition of over 78,000 sqm clears way for toll plaza and curve improvements in Canacona; highway to go upto Karnataka border

Team Herald

MARGAO: The Central government has completed the land acquisition process for the final stretch of the four-laning project of National Highway 66 in Canacona taluka, with a fresh notification confirming that 78,541 square metres of land in Loliem now vests with the Centre. The land, spread across 88 parcels, has been acquired for improvement of road curves and establishment of a toll plaza from the Manohar Parrikar Canacona Bypass end near Maxem (Km 602.900) up to the Goa-Karnataka border at Polem (Km 610.900).



- Land spans 88 parcels; acquired after no objections were received under NH Act
- Acquired area includes orchards, paddy fields, khazan land, and settlement zones within Loliem village limits.
- New section includes toll plaza from Maxem to Goa-Karnataka border at Polem
- This 8-km segment completes NH66 four-laning through Canacona taluka

received within the stipulated period, the Centre issued the final notification vesting ownership of the land with the government. The area covers a range of zones, including orchard land, settlement areas, no-development slopes, paddy fields, and khazan land, and falls within the jurisdiction of Loliem village. The 8-km Maxem-Polem stretch is the last leg

of NH66 to be taken up for four-laning in Canacona taluka. This section also includes the proposed toll plaza at the end of the Manohar Parrikar Canacona Bypass, and is part of the Annual Plan for 2023-24. The completion of this segment will mark the final phase of NH66's expansion through the taluka, which borders Karnataka. Earlier, the Centre had al-

ready acquired land for the four-laning of NH66 from Char-Rasta to Bendurdam via Karmalghat and completed 7.7 km of the Canacona Bypass, which includes three bridges—two major ones over the Talpona and Galgibaga rivers. The latest land acquisition at Loliem will ensure full highway connectivity from the Goa border to southern Karnataka.

Coastal mgmt agency eyes fixed fee for beach weddings, seaside projects

Proposal includes 3-year approvals for 40 weddings, on a one-time fee

Team Herald

MARGAO: A new proposal put forth by the Goa Coastal Zone Management Authority (GCZMA) aims to introduce a fixed-fee structure for beach weddings and coastal construction activities for the first time. The draft regulation, which was tabled and discussed during the GCZMA's recent meeting, outlines a shift from single-event permissions to an extended approval system and standardised charges for various coastal projects. A final decision on the proposal has been deferred to the next session.

The proposal was tabled and discussed during the GCZMA's recent meeting, though a final decision has been deferred to the next session.

If approved, the move will allow event organisers to host up to 40 beach weddings over a period of three years by paying a one-time fee of Rs 7 lakh. These permissions will be specific to a particular stretch of beach chosen by the applicant — a feature not available under the current per-event approval model.

The plan also sets out a tiered fee structure for one-off beach events, depending on how early the application is filed. Applications submitted at least seven days in advance will be charged Rs 50,000 for five-day permission, while those submitted between three to seven days prior will attract a fee of Rs 60,000, and so on. An additional charge of Rs 10,000 per day will apply if the event runs beyond the initial 5-day window.

Applicants seeking changes to their submitted plans would have to pay a scrutiny fee of Rs 70,000. However, exemptions have been proposed for government departments, corporations, autonomous bodies, educational institutions, registered charitable trusts and sporting events.

BEACH WEDDINGS & EVENTS

Bulk Approval (3 years, up to 40 weddings on one beach stretch):
Rs 7,00,000 (one-time)

Single Event Fees (based on application timing):

- ≥ 7 days in advance: Rs 50,000
- 3-7 days in advance: Rs 60,000
- ≤ 3 days before event: Rs 75,000

Extra days (beyond 5-day window): Rs 10,000 per day

Scrutiny Fee for Event Plan Modifications: Rs 70,000

Exemptions: Govt departments, corporations, autonomous bodies, educational institutions, registered charitable trusts, sporting events

COASTAL CONSTRUCTION PROJECTS

- CRZ Clearance for Bridge Construction: Rs 5,00,000
- Bridge Plan Revision Scrutiny Fee: Rs 50,000

- Culverts, Flood Protection Walls & Similar Works: Flat Rs 50,000
- Temporary Structures (e.g., decks, cabins, watchtowers): Rs 350 per sqm
- Casino Vessels (New Construction): Rs 200 per sqm
- Hotel Projects:
 - Rate reduction from Rs 1,250 to Rs 500 per sqm
 - Petroleum Infrastructure (e.g., storage/sale of fuel): Rs 500 per sqm

The new proposal doesn't stop at events. For the first time, the GCZMA is also proposing fees for a wide range of coastal construction and infrastructure projects. A charge of Rs 5 lakh is being recommended for CRZ clearance to construct bridges, with a plan revision scrutiny fee of Rs 50,000. Permissions for culverts, flood protection walls and similar works would attract a flat Rs 50,000 charge.

Temporary installations — such as decks, security cabins and watchtowers — are set to be charged at Rs 350 per square metre, a category

that previously faced no such fees. Construction of new casino vessels would be subject to a rate of Rs 200 per square metre.

Interestingly, the new proposal also includes a fee reduction for hotel projects, suggesting a decrease in the current rate from Rs 1,250 per square metre of built-up area to Rs 500. Additionally, applications related to petroleum infrastructure — such as storage or sale of fuel along the coast — would now fall under the fee structure, with a charge of Rs 500 per square metre being proposed for the first time.

Citizens slam MMC over 48-hr notice for Draft Master Plan meet

Team Herald

MARGAO: As the Margao Municipal Council (MMC) moves ahead with finalizing the Margao Draft Master Plan 2041, a group of concerned citizens has slammed the civic body for issuing just 48 hours' notice for a key stakeholder meeting scheduled for June 19.

On Tuesday, the MMC issued a public notice inviting stakeholders to attend a presentation on the draft plan. However, residents and civic activists have denounced the short notice as a deliberate attempt to bypass meaningful public consultation.

"Just 48 hours' notice for a presentation on the Margao Draft Master Plan 2041 is an insult to public involvement in city planning," said local activist Prabhav Naik. "Who is this 'master'? A politician, a crony builder, or a bureaucrat in a hurry?" he questioned. "Margao is not a private estate to be carved up behind closed doors."

Expressing satisfaction over the victory to compel the government and MMC to give a public presentation of the Draft Master Plan 2041 for Margao city, Convener of Margao Block Congress and Shadow Council for Margao Savio Coutinho

The Margao Master Plan 2041 is a key planning document expected to influence land use, infrastructure, and environmental policies in South Goa's commercial capital for the next two decades

appealed to all stakeholders to attend this public presentation and understand what all is good and bad for Margao.

Coutinho alleged that "the defector BJP MLA tried desperately to bulldoze through with the plan."

"On January 28, 2024, a presentation was given only to MMC councillors, of which hardly 25% of the councillors attended. After we questioned why a public presentation was not provided, a handpicked group of people, most of whom were real estate developers, were called for a presentation at a hotel. Public spirited Citizens of Margao went to the venue of the presentation, but were denied entry", Coutinho informed.

After several complaint letters to the GSUDA and RTI applications, the decision for a public presentation has emerg-

ed, which is indeed a welcome, he added.

He also made a strong demand that the Draft Master Plan 2041 be uploaded on the Municipal website that was recently inaugurated with much fanfare. "Time for filing objections and suggestions also need to be notified Mr Coutinho said. Environmental activist Pooja Borkar echoed similar concerns, saying, "This is not just about urban development, it's about preserving Margao's cultural and ecological character. Rushing the process erodes trust. People need to understand what's being proposed and how it will affect their lives."

The group of citizens is calling for the postponement of the meeting and has listed the following demands: A minimum 15-day advance notice for any such consultations, a larger, accessible venue for meaningful public participation, a public awareness campaign to inform citizens about the plan and ward-level consultations to ensure localised feedback.

The Margao Master Plan 2041 is a key planning document expected to influence land use, infrastructure, and environmental policies in South Goa's commercial capital for the next two decades.

Decision on bail for rape-accused doc on Friday

Team Herald

MARGAO: South Goa Sessions Court on Tuesday heard arguments on the bail plea of Dr Samuel Arawattigi, arrested by Cuncoim police for allegedly sexually assaulting a nurse employed at his clinic. The court will decide on the bail application on Friday, June 20.

The incident occurred on April 22, when Arawattigi, under the pretext of a house visit, allegedly raped the victim at his Benaalim residence. A complaint was filed by the victim's mother on April 25, and an offence was registered under the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita.

The nurse had worked at the Salcete clinic for several years. A forensic team collected evidence, and statements from clinic staff have been recorded. The victim underwent medical examination at GMC, and the report is awaited. The accused is currently in judicial custody at Colvale jail.

Margao locals allege bias in abandoned vehicle crackdown

Team Herald

MARGAO: A group of vigilant citizens from Margao is up in arms against the selective approach allegedly adopted by the authorities in identifying and listing abandoned vehicles in the town.

They allege that several two-wheelers and cars, which have been left unattended on public roads and by-lanes for months, continue to obstruct the free flow of traffic, yet are conspicuously absent from the official list prepared for removal or further action.

According to these citizens, while the authorities have compiled a list of abandoned and unclaimed vehicles, it fails to reflect the ground reality. Many ve-



hicles that are clearly abandoned remain untouched, raising doubts about the process and intent behind the compilation of the list.

Kishore Naik, a local resident, expressed his frustration, saying, "There are still multiple abandoned vehicles lying along main roads and internal lanes, obstructing traffic. But for reasons best known to the authori-

ties, they have not been included in the list. It appears the list is incomplete and selectively prepared."

Supporting this claim, Andrew Souza, another resident, said, "It seems some vehicles are being deliberately left out, possibly due to political pressure or personal interests. We suspect that some individuals with influence are ensuring their

vehicles are not touched, even though they qualify as abandoned under the law."

Citizens have further alleged that a person having close political affiliations, may have influenced the preparation of the list. They claim this individual, known for his proximity to a local politician, played a role in exempting certain vehicles from scrutiny. The concerned residents are now demanding transparency and accountability in the entire process. They have urged the Margao Traffic Police and the municipal authorities to revisit the list, conduct on-ground inspections, and take unbiased action against all genuinely abandoned vehicles to ensure smoother traffic flow and uphold public interest.

Pollution board to map River Sal using GIS tech to track contamination sources

Team Herald

MARGAO: In a renewed attempt to tackle worsening pollution levels in River Sal, the Goa State Pollution Control Board (GSPCB) has initiated

plans to carry out Geographic Information System (GIS)-based mapping of the river. The aim is to pinpoint specific locations contributing to the contamination, which has been attributed to various human activities and unchecked sewage discharge.

The decision comes against the backdrop of persistent concerns and research findings highlighting the deteriorating health of Goa's third-longest river. A recent scientific investigation revealed that water quality has sharply declined, causing ecological imbalance and affecting the natural vegetation along the riverbanks.

According to officials at GSPCB, the proposal to undertake GIS mapping gained momentum following a petition in the Goa bench of the Bombay High Court. The Court had directed the GSPCB Board to determine the precise origins of pollution and initiate suitable interventions. The Board is expected to appoint a private agency through a tendering process to execute the technical mapping exercise.



The mapping initiative is viewed as a prerequisite to any meaningful mitigation efforts. Without a clear understanding of the pollutant sources, officials noted, it would be impossible to take effective remedial action or to restore the river's health.

Findings from a collaborative study by students of Goa University and Uganda's Kyambogo University point to the river being under immense anthropogenic stress. The researchers identified sewage disposal, rampant construction, expanding urban settlements, and aquaculture as key contributors to the rising levels of pollutants in the river system.

The joint study further observed a direct correlation between the type of human activity and the nature of vegetation in the surrounding areas. In more urbanized stretches of the Sal, significant reductions in green cover were recorded. This decline was linked not only to pollution from surface runoff but also to the combined impact of altered water flow and changes in soil composition. These factors, according to the researchers, have accelerated the loss of biodiversity in riparian zones.

It may be recalled that a separate study conducted by Goa University, the presence of microplastics in River Sal was flagged as a growing concern.

No sewage lines, yet show-cause notices: Margao locals caught in civic deadlock

Team Herald

MARGAO: In a troubling civic impasse, several residents near the old Model High School in Margao are being forced to attend repeated municipal hearings over sewage connection issues, despite the fact that no sewage infrastructure exists in their locality.

The confusion stems from a disagreement between the Margao Municipal Council (MMC) and the Sewage Department, leaving nearly a dozen households caught in bureaucratic crossfire.

Recently, the MMC issued show-cause notices to around 12 residents, accusing them of discharging wastewater into storm water drains, which ultimately pollutes nearby fields and Salpem Lake in Navelim. The residents, however, have strongly objected to the notices, calling them "unjustified and irrational."

"We are willing to connect to the sewerage sys-

"We are willing to connect to the sewerage system, but the pipeline has never been laid in our area. This is not our fault. We are suffering for no reason"

— Anthony Pereira, Margao

tem, but the pipeline has never been laid in our area," said Anthony Pereira, a local resident. "This is not our fault. We are suffering for no reason."

The Sewage Department, after conducting a site inspection, reportedly insisted that an NOC (No Objection Certificate) be obtained from a private landowner—a builder who owns a small parcel of land in the area—before laying the pipeline. However, the builder has refused to provide the required NOC.

In contrast, the Margao Municipal Council has informed residents that an NOC is not necessary for laying public sewerage lines, leading to further confusion.

"If the municipality says an NOC isn't required, then they should coordinate with the Sewage Depart-

ment to get the work done. Why are residents being dragged into this administrative mess?" questioned Pereira.

Frustrated residents are now demanding a resolution between the two government bodies, urging them to prioritize public welfare over procedural delays.

Legal experts suggest that if the NOC is not a statutory requirement, the government can proceed with laying public infrastructure under the Right of Way or even use acquisition laws, if necessary, to serve the larger public interest.

Meanwhile, the lack of coordination continues to cause daily hardship for residents, who fear further punitive action from civic authorities for an issue beyond their control

MAX. TEMP 32.2 °C
MIN. TEMP 26 °C



Luckily, the warning saved us —not them.

