

# Citizens tear into 'disconnected' Margao Masterplan 2041

Court-challenged ODP, ignored areas, and missing projects: residents call out gaps in draft Master Plan; slam flawed vision for Margao and Fatorda

Team Herald

**MARGAO:** Chaos broke out during the public presentation of the Margao Master Plan 2041 on Thursday, as concerned citizens voiced strong objections to the plan's content and preparation process.

Residents and activists were shocked by the consulting agency's lack of awareness about critical local issues, including infrastructure challenges, heritage sites, and the commercial realities of Margao and Fatorda.

One of the most alarming revelations came when officials admitted that land previously acquired by the Goa State Urban Development Agency (GSUDA) for various civic projects had been excluded from the master plan. This triggered strong reactions from attendees, many of whom demanded clarity on how such significant land parcels could be left out.

Citizens from Fatorda expressed deep disappointment over their area being almost entirely ignored in the plan, despite it falling within the Margao Municipal Council's jurisdiction.

Activist Ashish Kamat raised pointed questions: "Is this master plan only for Margao or for the entire municipal area? If it includes Fatorda, why is it barely mentioned?"

The plan, according to officials, is based on the Outline Development Plan (ODP), which residents pointed out is being challenged in court. The land-use map forming the basis of the ODP has been accused of being fabricated. This raised serious concerns about the legitimacy and accuracy of the master plan, which is supposed to guide development until 2041.

Kamat further criticized the plan's detachment from ground realities, saying it suggests improvements without allocating the necessary land for them. He also noted the MMC has yet to prepare its district



Annoyed Margao residents criticise the master plan during the presentation at the MMC building on Thursday

## GLARING GAPS

❑ **Fatorda ignored:** Residents say the plan overlooks Fatorda entirely, despite being under MMC jurisdiction

❑ **Missing GSUDA lands:** Land acquired for civic use by GSUDA shockingly excluded from the draft plan

❑ **New consultant ignorant:** Consulting agency unaware of Margao's infrastructure issues, heritage zones, and market realities

❑ **Flawed legal basis:** Plan based on ODP that is under legal challenge; land-use map accused of

fabrication

❑ **No land allocation:** Plan suggests upgrades without earmarking land for implementation

❑ **Missing legal requirement:** MMC's district development plan — a prerequisite — still not prepared

❑ **Incomplete solutions:** No mention of ring road, informal vendor integration, or realistic River Sal revival plan

❑ **Lack of public participation:** Plan seen as top-down, rushed, and disconnected from citizens' needs and feedback.

development plan, a legal requirement, and questioned the rush to approve a master plan in the absence of that foundational document.

Savio Coutinho, former MMC Chairperson, highlighted several missing components, including the ring road project and solutions for informal vendors (gaddas). He also questioned the proposal for a buffer zone around River Sal, arguing that

it does little to address the river's environmental degradation.

Residents accused the agency of presenting a plan disconnected from the actual needs and challenges of the city. Many demanded that the process be halted until a more realistic, participatory, and legally sound plan is developed—one that considers the true needs of both Margao and Fatorda.

## 'Margao masterplan a blueprint for profiteers'

Team Herald

**MARGAO:** The presentation of the draft Margao Master plan has sparked intense backlash, with civic activist Prabhav Naik slamming it as a "blueprint for profiteers" crafted to serve powerful real estate interests at the expense of ordinary citizens.

Naik, speaking on behalf of citizens' group Madganvcho Awaaz, condemned the Margao Municipal Council for conducting a "stage-managed" public consultation with just 48 hours' notice. "Most stakeholders weren't even informed. This was no real consultation — it was a formality to push a pre-decided agenda," he said.

The group raised alarm over proposed development zones that fall in ecologically sensitive or heavily populated areas, warning of displacement, environmental destruction, and worsening urban chaos. "Margao cannot be reduced to a playground for developers. Our city is already struggling with congestion, flooding, and collapsing civic infrastructure," Naik stated.

He also questioned the legitimacy of the entire planning process. "Who was actually consulted? Were the environmental and traffic studies real or reverse-engineered to justify development?"

## Patchwork policing? Busy stations run without dedicated inspectors

Curchorem, Maina-Curtorim without full-time PIs; transfer orders flouted across South Goa

Team Herald

**MARGAO:** Amid rising cases of murder, theft, and petty crimes across South Goa, several police stations are functioning without full-time inspectors, raising serious concerns about law enforcement efficiency in the district.

Sources confirmed that both Maina Curtorim and Curchorem police stations currently lack independent police inspectors with full charge. Instead, the inspectors of neighbouring stations have been handed additional charge, stretching already burdened personnel. Curchorem is now being overseen by the Sanguem PI, while Maina Curtorim falls under the charge of the Margao PI—despite all three stations being among the busiest in South Goa.

At Maina Curtorim, the inspector has reportedly gone on medical leave, but no replacement has been posted. The ad hoc arrangement is causing administra-

tive delays and undermining police responsiveness, sources said.

Meanwhile, concerns have also been raised about the irregular implementation of police transfer orders across the district. Several sub-inspectors, assistant sub-inspectors, head constables, and constables who were transferred recently are either yet to be relieved or have returned to their original postings within months—some reportedly due to influence and favouritism.

One case involves an ASI from Margao, transferred to Quepem, who returned within two months. Though his latest posting was to Vasco, he has again been reassigned to Margao, raising questions about the credibility of the transfer process.

A senior officer, speaking on condition of anonymity, admitted that the frequent reversal of transfers—especially of those with political or internal backing—has affected morale and opera-

tional discipline.

In Margao, one head constable assigned to LIB duty has been posted at the same station for several years, despite an official posting to Panjim.

A similar case exists in Verna, where another constable has remained in the same post for years without rotation. This pattern repeats across Maina Curtorim and Curchorem as well.

In a recent meeting, senior police officials instructed all station in-charges to immediately relieve personnel who have been transferred and warned against accommodating staff who have managed to return to preferred postings through unofficial channels.

A local resident summed up the public sentiment: "Regular transfers are essential to prevent undue influence and ensure accountability. Posting the same staff back to the same station defeats the purpose entirely."

## TOURISM DEPT FLAGS SAND EXTRACTION, DUNE DAMAGE ALONG VARCA BEACH

**PANJIM:** The Department of Tourism has taken cognisance of illegal sand extraction along the Varca beach stretch.

A video clipping dated June 18, 2025, submitted to the department, revealed an earthmover engaged in unauthorised sand extraction and alteration of natural dune features, actions that are strictly prohibited under the Coastal Regulation Zone (CRZ) Notification. The illegal activity constituted a clear violation of environmental norms and has prompted the Department of Tourism to forward the

matter to the Goa Coastal Zone Management Authority (GCZMA) and the Colva Police Station. Commenting on the matter, Director of Tourism Kedar Naik stated that any activity detrimental to the environment, especially in sensitive coastal zones, will not be tolerated. Strict action will be pursued in accordance with the law, he said.

The Department of Tourism has urged the concerned authorities to initiate appropriate legal and regulatory steps against the violators.

## Poultry traders step up to manage waste, urge govt to do its part

Team Herald

**MARGAO:** The All Goa Poultry Shopkeepers Association has called on municipal and panchayat authorities to take strict action against chicken and mutton vendors who irresponsibly dump waste on roadsides.

Association president Crisco Sequeira emphasized that this growing problem could be curbed only through enforcement and proper coordination with local bodies.

Speaking at a press conference in Margao, Sequeira, along with association treasurer Leo Barretto, highlighted that their organization—established in December 2023—currently has around 330 registered vendors across Goa. However, the state has more than 1,000 poultry vendors, including many unregistered or illegal ones who often do not follow proper waste disposal practices.

Sequeira said that while local governing bodies lack adequate infrastructure for disposing of poultry waste, the association has taken the initiative to manage it. The state government previously recommended sending waste to a biotech firm, but the



Chicken carcasses dumped alongside Arlem bypass (file pic)

**Currently, the association, which has 330 members, collects waste from vendors using seven trucks and transports it to a facility at the Pissurlem Industrial Estate. However, the state has more than 1,000 poultry vendors, including many unregistered ones who often do not follow proper waste disposal practices**

cost—Rs 23 per kg—was found to be unaffordable for most vendors. Instead, the association coordinated with a facility at Pissurlem Industrial Estate for processing.

Currently, the association collects waste from vendors across South Goa and from three locations in North Goa, using sev-

en trucks. Additionally, waste from 22 of 37 shops in the Mapusa municipal area is being collected. Vendors who participate in the programme receive monthly receipts, which can be submitted to local authorities as proof of proper disposal.

Sequeira stressed the need for greater cooper-

ation from municipalities and panchayats, which have so far failed to respond adequately.

He noted that while vendors are not obligated to dispose of waste through the association, some form of responsible waste management is essential. If shop details are shared with local bodies, action can be taken against those not complying.

The association maintains that with enforcement and coordination, roadside poultry waste can be eliminated. Sequeira concluded that ensuring public hygiene requires serious attention and support from all stakeholders, especially local government bodies.

## Despite fines and patrols, open garbage dumping won't go away

Team Herald

**MARGAO:** Open garbage dumping remains a persistent problem across parts of Salcete, despite repeated efforts by authorities to tackle the issue. Residents of Zoriwaddo, Ramnagri, Gogal, and neighbouring areas continue to raise concerns about garbage strewn along roadsides and public spaces, especially after dusk.

Locals say that while municipal staff regularly collect garbage, the dumps keep reappearing. "Garbage is cleared, but by nightfall, the roadside is littered again. It's as if no cleanup ever happened," said a resident of Ramnagri. Chronic hotspots near Zoriwaddo are especially notorious, with waste often spilling onto roads. The illegal disposal of waste—usually under the cover of darkness or in the early hours—has led to unhygienic conditions and contributed to stray dog and cattle overpopulation, raising the risk of road accidents and disease. Citizens have appealed to fellow residents to act responsibly and refrain from dumping waste in open areas.

Even though the Goa Non-Biodegradable Garbage (Control) Act, 1996 prohibits such dumping and allows for fines against violators, the problem remains widespread. As of April 13, 2025, the South Goa Police have booked 2,111 cases under the Act. However, enforcement hasn't proved sufficient to change behaviour in many areas.

Police officials said they have also conducted awareness campaigns across jurisdictions like Margao, Colva, Maina-Curtorim, and Fatorda to educate citizens on proper waste management. However, residents note that



A portion of the road near Zoriwaddo - Davorlim is taken over by garbage

## CUNCOLIM'S PANZORCONI DROWNS IN TRASH, RESIDENTS BLAME CIVIC APATHY

Team Herald

**MARGAO:** Residents of Panzorconi, a ward in Cuncolim, have raised the alarm over unchecked garbage dumping in their area, saying the situation is spiralling into a public health crisis.

Several parts of the ward are now dotted with heaps of uncollected waste, emitting foul odours and attracting flies and mosquitoes. With the monsoon underway, fears of vector- and water-borne diseases such as dengue, malaria, and cholera are growing.

"This is no longer just a cleanliness issue—it's a health emergency," said local resident Paresh Desai. "Children and the elderly are

particularly vulnerable. Authorities need to wake up before it's too late."

Residents allege that the Cuncolim Municipal Council has failed to act, despite repeated complaints. The absence of regular waste collection and a sustainable disposal system has allowed the problem to worsen over time.

Citizens are demanding stricter enforcement against illegal dumping, regular collection drives, awareness campaigns on proper disposal, and the installation of dustbins at key locations.

The issue has gained traction on local forums and social media, with increasing calls for immediate government intervention.

## Chicalim's 'Waste-to-Wealth' plant sets model for grassroots garbage reform

Team Herald

**MARGAO:** In a step toward promoting sustainable waste management at the grassroots level, Velim MLA Cruz Silva led a delegation of local panchayat representatives to the Waste Out of Waste (WOOW) facility in Chicalim on Tuesday.

The delegation included sarpanchas, panchayat members, secretaries from Velim constituency, the Deputy Director of Panchayats, and

the Block Development Officer. The visit was aimed at understanding Chicalim's successful decentralised waste treatment model and exploring its replication across other Goan villages.

Project CEO Gaurav Pogle gave a detailed presentation on the plant's scientific approach to waste segregation, treatment, and reuse. He highlighted how treated water from the facility is being used to maintain the nearby Joggers Park—an example of circular

resource use and water conservation. During a discussion at the Chicalim Panchayat Hall, the delegation discussed the practicalities of implementing similar facilities elsewhere, including challenges related to infrastructure, funding, and community participation.

Silva lauded the Chicalim model as a benchmark in eco-friendly, localised waste management and urged other panchayats to adopt similar solutions.

## CASES BOOKED UNDER THE GOA GARBAGE (CONTROL) ACT

According to police data as of April 13, 2025

❑ Canacona registered the most cases: 479  
❑ Curchorem: 286 ❑ Cuncolim: 248 ❑ Fatorda: 185  
❑ Quepem: 191 ❑ Ponda: 173 ❑ Maina-Curtorim (which includes Zoriwaddo and Davorlim): 152  
❑ Mardol: 76