

MMC refuses to collect mixed waste from Margao's SGPDA retail market

Standoff deepens as civic body blames PDA for unmanaged, unsegregated garbage, lack of bins and decade-long unpaid fees

Team Herald

MARGAO: The Margao Municipal Council (MMC) has declined to collect unsegregated garbage from the South Goa Planning and Development Authority (SGPDA) retail market in Fatorda, intensifying a long-running standoff between the two government bodies over solid waste management and unresolved financial dues.

Waste from the busy market was recently found dumped and scattered across the SGPDA parking lot, drawing stray cattle and sparking public anger after videos of the site went viral. Municipal engineer Deepak Desai, who inspected the premises following complaints from civic workers, said the MMC's waste collection vehicle had to be withdrawn after it became clear that the waste had not been segregated at source.

"Our staff are not required to handle mixed waste," Desai said, adding that the matter was immediately recorded and flagged to the SGPDA chairman. "Dumping garbage in the parking lot without even basic segregation reflects poorly on the planning authority. We've never refused to collect their waste, but it must be handed over properly segregated and stored in bins."



Desai said fish waste and other wet refuse were found dumped in roadside crates and scattered around the complex, indicating the absence of a structured disposal mechanism. "There aren't enough dustbins at the market. The PDA needs to first set up proper infrastructure," he added.

As a corrective measure, Desai suggested that the SGPDA deploy a dedicated team of labourers for at least a week to sort and segregate the existing waste. "Unless that is done, transporting it to Sonsoddo or Cacora becomes impossible. The traders, vendors and shopkeepers need easy access to bins inside and around the market to prevent dumping along the periphery," he said.

The SGPDA has reportedly engaged nine workers to manage collection and segregation at the market, but MMC officials say the results on the ground have been far from satisfactory. Desai stated that MMC staff often find garbage scattered indiscriminately, making it difficult to carry out their duties

efficiently. Complicating matters further is a longstanding financial row between the two authorities. The SGPDA alleges that the MMC has defaulted on rent for the five-tonne-per-day biometanation plant operating on 500 square metres of PDA land for the past five years. In contrast, the MMC claims the SGPDA owes the civic body substantial dues for waste management services—fees accumulated over nearly a decade.

While the immediate friction appears to have been triggered by a recent request from the SGPDA member secretary to resume waste collection from the retail market, officials say the deeper administrative disconnect must be addressed if services are to run smoothly.

"The onus is on the SGPDA to ensure systems are in place," Desai reiterated. "Waste collection is not the problem. It's the lack of segregation and infrastructure that's paralysing the process."

Until both agencies resolve the operational and financial disputes, the market—and its many vendors and visitors—continue to bear the brunt of the impasse, with health and sanitation conditions deteriorating as a result.

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Fish dumped on the ground at Margao wholesale market

Shoppers horrified by use of muddy ice to store fish

Team Herald

MARGAO: After O Herald's recent report on the lack of formalin checks at the Margao wholesale fish market, a fresh concern has emerged — unhygienic fish handling by traders.

During its latest visit Team Herald observed traders placing fish directly on dirty floors before selling them to local vendors. This practice poses serious health risks, as it exposes fish to contaminants that can cause food-borne illnesses.

Leena Dias, a regular fish buyer and food enthusiast, said, "It's really upsetting to see fish kept on dirty floors. How can we be sure the fish is safe to eat? We rely on these vendors for fresh food, but these practices put our health at risk."

Local chef Deepak Naik added, "Hygiene is the foundation of good cooking. If the fish is handled carelessly, it affects not just taste but safety. Authorities must take strict action to regulate these markets."

Christina Fernandes, a mother of two and frequent visitor to the market, echoed the concern. "I always try to buy fresh fish for my family, but this negligence makes me worried. It's important that fish is



stored and sold in clean conditions."

Fish traders, however, argue that overcrowding and poor infrastructure make it difficult to maintain hygiene. Some suggest setting up designated cleaning zones and enforcing regular inspections.

Health experts warn that placing fish on unclean surfaces can cause bacterial contamination, increasing the risk of food poisoning — especially for vulnerable groups such as children and the elderly.

Authorities have been urged to tighten monitoring and improve hygiene standards at the wholesale fish market to ensure consumer safety. Until

then, many Margao residents remain cautious about the fish they buy. Locals are also hoping the upcoming Wholesale Fish Market in Fatorda will feature better infrastructure to avoid such issues.

Anthony Fernandes, a social activist from Madel-Margao, raised concerns about the upkeep of the new market. "Will the authorities maintain the new structure properly? We've had many problems before with thermocol and fish water flowing into fields," he said.

He called for a strict ban on thermocol boxes in fish transportation and urged the authorities to prioritise environmental protection.

‘Let us farm in peace’: Aquem-Baixo cultivators worry over development plans

Team Herald

MARGAO: Farmers from Aquem-Baixo have urged the government to allow them to continue cultivating their fields without interference, warning that any move to convert agricultural land for commercial development would further erode Goa's self-reliance in food production. Their plea comes at a time when the recently presented Margao Master Plan has revived long-standing concerns over the future of the area's farmland.

Claudius Dias, one of the local cultivators, appealed to the authorities not to destroy the state's agricultural landscape in the name of development.

"Goa already depends heavily on vegetables and other produce from outside the state," he said, urging the government to safeguard remaining cultivation areas and calling on the youth to take up farming to preserve the state's traditional agricultural heritage.

Although the newly released Master Plan has dropped the earlier proposed South Zone—which in the previous version included development projects that would have displaced the Aquem-Baixo farming community—activists and lo-



cals remain cautious.

They point out that the Goa State Urban Development Authority (GSUDA), which had earlier acquired the land, remains the implementing agency for the plan. Over the years, farmers have opposed any commercial activity on the land, and their opposition continues regardless of whether or not the South Zone is explicitly mentioned.

They said they will be filing formal objections to any proposal that un-

dermines their right to farm, and have already raised objections to the notification of the same land as a Special Commercial Zone in the Outline Development Plan (ODP) of the South Goa Planning and Development Authority (SGPDA).

The fields in question have supported generations of local farmers, who now fear their livelihoods could be at risk if the area is opened up for real estate or other non-agricultural ventures.

Old collectorate elevator repaired

Team Herald

MARGAO: The elevator at the old collectorate building in Margao, which had been non-functional for several days, was restored to working condition on Tuesday after it was reported by O Herald.



The timely repair brought relief to numerous government employees and citizens who had been struggling to access upper floors.

The old collectorate houses important government offices, including the South Goa Zilla Panchayat, Social Welfare Department, Tribal Welfare Department, Administration of Comunidade, Women and Child Development, and the District Agriculture Office. Hundreds of people visit these offices daily to access public services, making the elevator an essential facility.

Margao citizens raise alarm over structural safety of govt bldgs

Team Herald

MARGAO: A group of concerned citizens from Margao has raised serious questions about the structural safety of several key government buildings in the city, following a Public Works Department (PWD) report from August 2023 that flagged many of them as deteriorating.

Among the structures listed were the Matanhy Saldanha Administrative Complex, Hospicio Hospital Complex, Margao Ravindra Bhavan, District Library, Fire Station at Aquem, Old Collectorate, Government Rest House, and several government primary schools.

Although the government recently issued safety directions under the Disaster Management Act, 2005, citizens are questioning whether these directives apply to all the buildings previously identified as high risk.

Civic group Madganvcho Awaaz and youth leader Prabhav Naik are leading calls for account-

ability and transparency.

FLAGGED AS 'DETERIORATING' BY PWD
Matanhy Saldanha Complex, Hospicio, Ravindra Bhavan, District Library, Aquem Fire Station, Old Collectorate, Govt Rest House, Govt College at Borda, Urban Health Centre, Legal Metrology Office, Krishi Vigyan Kendra, the PWD Office at Aquem, and the District & Sessions Court

"Have comprehensive structural audits been carried out since the August 2023 PWD assessment?" Naik asked. "If so, the government must make those reports public. Citizens have a right to know the safety status of buildings they use daily."

"If no audits have been conducted, it reflects a serious lapse in responsibility. Who will be held accountable if lives are endangered in these decaying structures?" he added, demanding that the government release details of any repair or renovation work undertaken since the 2023 assessment—including project costs and the names of the contractors involved.

"Taxpayers deserve to know how public funds are being utilised," Naik said. Social activist Savio Coutinho echoed these concerns. "The government cannot wait for a tragedy to strike before acting. Immediate structural audits and full transparency are essential," he said. "We're talking about buildings where people work, study, and access essential services. Their safety should be a top priority, not an afterthought."

The flagged list by the PWD also includes the Government College at Borda, Urban Health Centre, Legal Metrology Office, Krishi Vigyan Kendra, the PWD Office at Aquem, and the District & Sessions Court.

Crosley Lourenco elected unopposed as Varca Dy Sarpanch

Team Herald

MARGAO: Crosley Charlton Lourenco was on Tuesday elected unopposed as the new Deputy Sarpanch of Varca village panchayat (VP) during a meeting held at the panchayat ghar, which was presided over by an official from the Directorate of Panchayats.

Lourenco succeeds for-

mer Deputy Sarpanch Solon Furtado.

Notably, Furtado was among those who supported Lourenco's candidature, reaffirming that the ruling panel continues to function with unity.

This marks the second leadership change in the



panchayat, following the earlier replacement of the Sarpanch in late January 2025. However, the panel of ruling panch members has remained united through the transitions.

"I thank my panel for supporting

me and electing me unopposed as the Deputy Sarpanch of VP Varca. I assure my assistance to the Sarpanch and my panel for the betterment and development of our village, Varca. I also thank my supporters and the people of my ward, Reprovaddo/Calvaddo, for electing me as a ward panch," said Lourenco after his election.

Child-centred learning takes shape in Velim with infra upgrades for primary school

Freshly painted classrooms, computer room, and children's park revamped with MLA funds

Team Herald

MARGAO: Investing in early education is a vital step toward building stronger, more inclusive communities. In line with this vision, MLA of Velim Constituency, Cruz Silva, recently inaugurated a series of infrastructure upgrades at a local primary school aimed at enhancing the learning experience for young students.

The newly unveiled facilities include a well-equipped Computer Room; refurbished Pre-Primary Classrooms with a fresh coat of paint, and renovated Children's Park—designed to foster digital literacy, creativity, and safe play for children in their formative



years.

The developmental works were carried out under the MLA Local Area Development (MLA-LAD) Fund, reaffirming the commitment to invest in child-friendly, future-ready educational spaces across the constituency.

The inauguration ceremony was attended by School Manager Fr. Romeu Godinho, the Headmistress, Parent-Teacher Association (PTA) members, staff, and enthusiastic students. All attendees warmly welcomed the improvements,

recognizing them as a much-needed boost for early education.

Speaking at the event, MLA Cruz Silva emphasised the long-term value of such investments.

"Our children deserve spaces that spark curiosity, creativity, and confidence," said Silva. "Through these improvements, we are not just upgrading infrastructure—we are investing in the dreams and potential of every young mind in our constituency."

The upgraded facilities are expected to greatly benefit both teaching and learning outcomes, helping students build foundational skills in a nurturing and stimulating environment.

Police, colleges step up as gaps in elder care emerge in South Goa

SHYAM ZAMBAULIKAR

MARGAO: Despite several government schemes aimed at safeguarding their welfare, senior citizens in South Goa continue to grapple with financial insecurity, inadequate healthcare, social isolation, and even elder abuse.

Laximan Naik, a senior citizen, said these issues persist due to a lack of awareness, bureaucratic hurdles, and poor infrastructure. "There's hardly any support for conditions like dementia. We need more targeted interventions and regular check-ins," he said, urging authorities to bridge the gaps in elderly care.

Another elderly resident, M.A. Raiker, noted that although South Goa's villages are peaceful and often ideal for retirement, the lived reality for many seniors is far from secure. "The financial, social, and emotional challenges we face are real. These directly impact our quality of life and need immediate attention," he said.

As of 24 June 2025, 1,577 senior citizens have been registered across police stations in South Goa. Police are also updating databases covering tenants and migrant labourers as part of broader community safety efforts.

PI Ditendra Naik of Sanguem po-

SENIOR CITIZEN HELPLINE: 1090
SENIOR CITIZENS REGISTERED WITH SOUTH GOA POLICE (AS OF JUNE 2025): 1,577
HIGHEST: Maina Curtorim (249)
OTHERS: Margao (168), Fatorda (157), Colva (143), Canacona (130), Verna (118), Curcholem (99), Cuncolim (96), Vasco (92), Sanguem (86), Quepem (70), Ponda (64), Collem (47), Mardol (35), Mormugao (23)

lice said officers assigned as beat staff routinely visit registered senior citizens. "We ensure prompt responses to complaints and make sure every elderly resident has access to emergency numbers and contact details for the control room and police station," he said.

Naik added that seniors are advised to verify domestic help, use lockers for valuables, and install basic security devices. "We also conduct awareness campaigns on their rights and personal safety," he said, noting that police are expected to assist elderly victims of crime and ensure their protection in public spaces.

Dr Maria Goretti Simoes e Morais,

officiating principal of G.R. Kare College of Law, highlighted the work of the Legal Counselling and Facilitation Centre for Senior Citizens, set up in 2019.

"The centre offers free legal aid and helps the elderly navigate redressal forums," she said. The college also works with the All Goa Senior Citizens Forum and HelpAge India to conduct rights awareness programmes and observe World Elder Abuse Awareness Day.

President of the South Goa Advocates' Association, Adv Prasad Naik, explained that the Maintenance and Welfare of Parents and Senior Citizens Act, 2007, provides a legal framework for the maintenance and welfare of elderly persons. Goa also has specific implementation rules—the Goa Rules, 2009. He said the Act mandates that children and relatives are legally bound to maintain senior citizens who are unable to support themselves, ensuring that they can live with dignity.

Advocate Naik also noted that the High Court of Bombay at Goa, in a recent judgment, held that in all cases pending before the Senior Citizens' Maintenance Tribunals, advocates representing any of the parties have the right to appear and plead before the tribunal.