

Flooding paralyses Gandhi market

Traders and shoppers wade through ankle-deep water; goods spoiled; houses in many parts of Margao waterlogged, Hospicio entrance inundated

Team Herald

MARGAO: Severe flooding at Gandhi Market and many other parts of Margao, including the entrance to the South Goa District Hospital, has brought life to a standstill, triggering widespread complaints from local vendors, residents, and patients alike.

The lack of proper drainage and pre-monsoon preparedness by the Margao Municipal Council has come under sharp criticism.

With relentless rain on Wednesday, water accumulated across Gandhi Market, deterring people from accessing essential services and daily provisions. Vendors say their businesses have been hit hard as customers are avoiding the area due to the inconvenience.

"It's impossible to walk



through the market. Customers are just staying away," said one shopkeeper, adding that some shops have remained shut due to the waterlogging.

Rajendra Azgaonkar, President of the Gandhi Market Vendors' Association, blamed the Margao Municipality for neglecting necessary pre-monsoon de-silting and stormwater drainage works.

"The flooding in both the market and residential homes is proof of the civic body's failure. Every year we face this, and yet no steps are taken," he said.

Residents and traders alike criticised what they called "unplanned urban infrastructure", pointing out that blocked drains, poor waste management, and unchecked construction are

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—Rajendra Azgaonkar, President, Gandhi Market Vendors' Association

turning every spell of rain into a disaster.

Residents are equally distressed. Rashmita Shirodkar, a resident living in the Gandhi Market area, said, "We are unable to even stand inside our houses. The water level is so high that it's entered our homes." She added that the situation has become unbearable over the past two days, especially with basic facilities like public

toilets remaining closed, further compounding the problem for locals.

Adding to the crisis, the entrance of the South Goa District Hospital—just a short distance from the market—has also been severely flooded. Visitors and patients arriving at the hospital are struggling to wade through ankle-deep water. Locals pointed out that there is no proper route for rainwater to flow into the nearby nullah, resulting in stagnant water and chaos at a crucial public facility.

They have now urged authorities to act immediately to clear the flooded areas and ensure such a situation is not repeated. "This is not just about inconvenience—it's about health, safety, and basic dignity," said one resident angrily.

Navelim Sarpanch election on hold, new date not set

Team Herald

MARGAO: In a surprising turn of events, the scheduled election to appoint a new Sarpanch for the Navelim Village Panchayat, set to be held on July 3, has been abruptly postponed.

The decision, announced by the Directorate of Panchayats, has sparked shock and confusion among the local residents.

A corrigendum issued on Wednesday by Siddhi T. Halarnkar, Director, stated that the order for the election of the Sarpanch has been put on hold until further notice. No official reason has been provided for the sudden postponement.

The Navelim panchayat has been functioning without a Sarpanch for almost a month, creating a leadership vacuum that has reportedly affected the decision-making and development activities in the village.

Sources suggest that political manoeuvring or administrative reasons could be behind the postponement, although nothing has been confirmed by the authorities.

CAUGHT IN THE ACT



Locals caught a man on Wednesday morning while he was allegedly dumping rotten shells in an isolated spot near a factory at Verna-Loutulim. The man, identified by locals as Kumar from Karnataka, was reportedly unable to communicate clearly due to a language barrier. Residents said the man claimed he was trying to find an open space to dispose of the tender coconut shells, which he had bought to sell in the Margao market. They alerted the Maina-Curtorim police, who have since intervened. Residents pointed to the Chief Minister's recent statement warning of strict action—including fines and arrests—against those involved in illegal dumping.



Young tech innovators shine at WSRO 2025 regionals in Mapusa

Top-performing teams move to national contest—competing for a spot at the international finals in Dubai and Italy later this year

Team Herald

MARGAO: The future of tech in Goa looks bright, as 91 teams from 37 schools across the state showcased their talent in robotics, coding, and STEM innovation at the WSRO 2025 Regionals, held on June 29 at Saraswat Vidyalaya, Mapusa.

Organised by PRATHAM Club in collaboration with LegoGoa and Quirious Mind, the Goa edition of the World Science and Robotics Organisation (WSRO) Regionals was a vibrant display of youthful ingenuity and teamwork. The top-performing teams will now gear up for the WSRO 2025 India Nationals—competing for a spot at the prestigious international finals in Dubai and Italy later this year.

The event was inaugurated by Deputy Speaker and Mapusa MLA Joshua D'Souza, who served as Chief Guest. Transport support for students from Shiroda was arranged by MLA Subhash Shirodkar.

Training for the competition took place across key centres in Mapusa, Vasco, Panjim, Madgaon, Panchwadi, Sankhli, and Curcholem. Students received both online and in-person mentorship in preparation. Volunteers from Saraswat Vidyalaya's NCC unit and mentors from Quirious Mind man-



aged event logistics and judging duties.

Winners across categories impressed with their innovative solutions, technical skill, and problem-solving. The Young Scientist Energy – Senior category was topped by Dr. K. B. Hegdegar Vidyamandir, while Saraswat Vidyalaya's Vedang Anay Kamat emerged as a standout winner, clinching multiple top prizes in Autonomous Robot Challenges and Lego Line Following.

In the STEM Balloon Car Challenge, Ian Rodrigues D'Costa of St. Andrews' ICSC School took first place, with runners-up from Chubby Cheeks Spring Valley and Shri Shantadurga High School.

Other notable winners include Airway Public School's Hyder Khan in the All STEM Open category and Ian Calisto Nunes from St. Bartholomew's High School in Energy – Algorithms.

Mahila & Nutan English High School dominated the Junior Robo Race category, while Pradnya High School excelled in the Junior Line Following (Non-Lego) challenge.

Standout performers will represent Goa at the Indian Nationals with hopes of advancing to WSRO's international finals in Dubai and Italy later this year.

Goa's strong record, which includes three awards at last year's nationals, adds to the momentum.

Margao market garbage glut: Vijai issues 6-hour 'ultimatum' to MMC to clear waste

Team Herald

MARGAO: The crisis at the South Goa Planning and Development Authority (SGPDA) market has worsened, with mounting piles of uncollected garbage posing a serious health and hygiene hazard. In response, Fatorda MLA Vijai Sardesai has issued a six-hour ultimatum to the Margao Municipal Council (MMC) to clear the waste or face civic resistance.

Residents and vendors in Gandhi Market and the surrounding areas are already struggling with waterlog-

ging due to poor drainage. The growing garbage pile at the SGPDA market has only compounded their difficulties, with a foul stench making the area unbearable for shoppers and stall owners.

Sardesai strongly condemned the MMC's failure to clear the waste, blaming it on administrative negligence and infighting.

"There is a major clash going on between the SGPDA and MMC, and the people are suffering because of it," he said. "Despite both the state and central governments being run by the

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



BJP, there is no coordination or accountability. Citizens are paying the price." Warning of direct public action if immediate steps are not taken, Sardesai said,

"We are giving the Municipality six hours to act. If they fail, we will clear the garbage ourselves and ask people to stop paying taxes to the civic body."

He also urged Chief

Minister Pramod Sawant to personally intervene, pointing out that the market is not just used by residents of Margao and Fatorda but by people across Salcete taluka.

Sardesai further raised concerns about deteriorating conditions at the wholesale fish market, which he said has become increasingly unhygienic.

"Even outside the wholesale market, several illegal businesses are operating freely, and yet the Municipality is taking no action," he said.

Farmers demand justice on decades' old Khazan tenancy disputes

Team Herald

MARGAO: Farmers from Loutolim have sought urgent government intervention to resolve long-pending tenancy disputes involving khazan lands. In a memorandum submitted to Fatorda MLA Vijai Sardesai, the Carbot, Cantor, Mascasana & Bebdos Tenants Association accused the Loutolim Comunidade of obstructing the grant of tenancy rights to legitimate cultivators and their heirs—many of whom have tilled the land for generations.

Speaking to reporters, Sardesai called the situation a grave injustice and criticised the bureaucratic delays in enforcing the Goa, Daman and Diu Agricultural Tenancy Act, 1964. "This Act was brought in by Bhausaheb Bandodkar to

give farmers their rights. The Comunidade, once the landlord, is no longer the owner. Under the law, the tenant is the deemed owner of khazan land," he said.

Sardesai highlighted that despite repeated promises from the state government, Loutolim farmers continue to face legal hurdles and "delay tactics" by the Comunidade's legal team. "The Chief Minister speaks of reviving khazan lands, but it is these very farmers who are keeping them alive. If the government is serious, it must protect them—not harass them," he said.

"It looks like the Comunidade wants to replace Niz Goemkar farmers with others. We have a 95-year-old farmer still cultivating his plot. What message are we sending if we deny him

justice?" Sardesai asked.

He announced that he would raise the issue in the upcoming Assembly session and demanded all pending tenancy cases in Loutolim be resolved within three months. "We cannot allow land peacefully cultivated for decades to be grabbed. The Mamlatdar must act without further delay," he said.

The farmers' memorandum outlined multiple cases where tenants and their heirs, despite submitting affidavits, tenancy forms, and supporting documents, were denied tenancy status by the current Comunidade managing committee. Some of these cases have been pending for over 20 years, with hearings repeatedly delayed through appeals and procedural objections.

Activists push for Assembly resolution to recognise Romi as official script

GRLA also urges govt to set up Goa State Minorities Commission

Team Herald

MARGAO: The Global Romi Lipi Abhiyan (GRLA) has called on all Goan legislators—across party lines—to pass two key resolutions during the upcoming monsoon Assembly session starting July 21. The first demands the introduction of Romi Konkani in Goa's school curriculum, and the second urges the long-overdue formation of the Goa State Minorities Commission.

At a press briefing in Margao on Wednesday, GRLA addressed its appeal to MLAs from the BJP, Congress, Goa Forward Party, Aam Aadmi Party, and Revolutionary Goans Party, stating that both resolutions are critical to upholding constitutional rights and promoting inclusivity.

GRLA president Kennedy Afonso said that introducing Romi Konkani in schools is a constitutional demand that aims to pro-

The government must recognise the cultural and historical value of the Roman script and introduce Romi Konkani as an option in schools. This move will preserve linguistic diversity, promote cultural identity, and give students more educational choices
— Kennedy Afonso, president, Global Romi Lipi Abhiyan

tect the Roman script from extinction.

"The Roman script has been in use in Goa for over 450 years and helped Konkani survive colonial rule," he said. "It remains the primary script for the community, especially for religious, cultural, and everyday use." He pushed for the government to develop textbooks, train teachers, and allocate resources to teach Romi

script in schools.

He cited Articles 29(1) and 30 of the Constitution, which guarantee linguistic minorities the right to preserve their language, script, and culture, and to manage educational institutions.

Afonso also pointed to the New Education Policy 2020, which promotes multilingualism, student choice, and flexibility—principles that support the inclusion of Romi Konkani in the classroom.

GRLA leader Michael Gracias echoed the sentiment, calling the continued exclusion of Romi Konkani from classrooms "a disservice to Goa's heritage."

The second resolution GRLA wants passed is the establishment of the Goa State Minorities Commission—a promise made but never fulfilled. Afonso noted that while the National Minorities Commission was set up in 1992, Goa has yet to constitute its state-level counterpart.

Telaulikars push back against housing project, say will upend rural way of life

Team Herald

MARGAO: Amid growing concerns across Salcete about the carrying capacity of villages, residents of Telaulim in the Navelim constituency have submitted a petition opposing a proposed housing project in their area.

The villagers contend that the development—if approved—would disrupt their traditional livelihoods and upset the ecological balance of the village.

In a formal petition to the Telaulim village panchayat, signed by 118 residents, lo-

cals have urged authorities to reject the project unless key components such as flats and a swimming pool are removed. They argue that such large-scale construction is incompatible with the rural character of the village and the occupations of its indigenous population.

Zacarias Goes, a local resident and signatory, voiced strong objections to the plan.

"It has come to our notice that a housing project comprising flats and bungalows is coming up in our village. For centuries—even before the

Portuguese era—people in Telaulim have depended on animal farming, agriculture, and salt production," he said.

Goes stressed that these traditional livelihoods are more than economic activities—they are integral to the village's identity and ecological fabric, especially given its location along the River Sal.

He cautioned that new settlers may not understand or appreciate these practices, particularly animal farming, and may find them inconvenient—potentially leading to future conflict.

MAX. TEMP	28 °C
MIN. TEMP	25.2 °C

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