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MMC to act tough on unlicensed handcarts

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MARGAO: The Margao Municipal Council (MMC) has decided to take stern action against illegal handcarts hawking a variety of food stuff across the city.

With a view to identifying the number of illegal handcart hawkers plying their trade in the city, the MMC will shortly conduct a survey for the purpose, sources in the civic body informed.

The MMC has been flooded with complaints from the public about how the handcart hawkers were causing obstruction to the flow of traffic in the city.

Sources in the MMC disclosed that there are as many as 65 licensed mobile eateries in Margao, apart from an approximately equal number of other handcart operators selling fruits and other stuff. Though the civic authorities claim that they have not issued any new licenses for such mobile carts for the last four years, the mushrooming of new mobile kiosks at various places only indicates that illegal and unlicensed vendors far outnumber the legal ones.

It is learnt that the unlicensed vendors manage to carry out their

trade by hoodwinking the market inspectors. The method used by them is simple. A licensed mobile hawker allows two or more persons to set up illegal handcarts. As and when any illegal cart is seized by the civic authorities, the license holder approaches the authorities claiming to be the owner of the 'legal cart' seized by them and thus manages to fool the authorities.

The mobile eateries in the city are also found to be violating all norms of hygiene and sanitation. Though the health authorities have some 16 guidelines drawn up to regulate the operation of such mobile eateries, most of them are found to be grossly violated.

Providing packaged drinking water to the consumers, using disposable plates and spoons, and storing potable water meant for cleaning utensils in stainless steel vessels fitted with taps, are just some of the guidelines that are violated with impunity.