

PANJIM RESIDENTS DOUBT COMPLETION OF SMART CITY WORKS BY MARCH 31 DEADLINE

Traffic jams, parking shortages, and delays continue to plague the city; raise concerns about roadwork quality



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PANJIM: The capital city of Panjim is currently engulfed in chaos, with almost every road dug up for ongoing Smart City construction work. Traffic snarls have become a daily occurrence, particularly during working hours, as commuters attempt to exit the city. Some vehicles are even seen violating no-entry zones, further exacerbating the congestion. Despite many roads being designated as pay-parking areas, there is simply no space for parking, leaving motorists frustrated.

This chaos has prompted the Goa High Court to step in, asking the State's Advocate General to file a detailed affidavit regarding the progress and timelines for the roadworks being carried out by the Imagine Panaji Smart City Development Limited (IPSCDL). The Court's intervention comes after multiple missed deadlines and widespread public frustration over the slow pace of progress.

Sanjit Rodrigues, Managing Director and CEO of IPSCDL, remains optimistic about meeting the March 31, 2025 deadline for the project's completion. "Work is ongoing at full speed. There are some impediments due to city roads, but we are continuing with the work," Rodrigues said.

He explained that certain phases of the roadwork, such as laying sewage lines, must be completed before connecting new and old manholes. "We have patched the roads temporarily, but this doesn't mean the work is finished," he added.

Despite this assurance, doubts persist, particularly from former Panjim Mayor and current city councillor Uday Madkaikar, who questioned the feasibility

of meeting the deadline. Madkaikar recalled that IPSCDL had initially assured the High Court that the work would be completed by May 31, 2024, but it later claimed that 90 per cent of the work was finished, leaving just 10 per cent to go. "Now, 30 per cent of the work remains unfinished. I don't think they will meet the March 31 deadline," Madkaikar said. He suggested that the work should be completed in phases, with one stretch of road finished before moving on to the next. "Why dig all the roads at once?" he asked.



FILE PICS

“Work is ongoing at full speed. There are some impediments due to city roads, but we are continuing with the work. We have patched the roads temporarily, but this doesn't mean the work is finished.”
— Sanjit Rodrigues, MD and CEO of Smart City

“There's no clear plan. They've already missed one deadline, and I doubt the work will be completed before the assembly elections in 2027.”
— Nicholao Fern, Panjim resident

“Now, 30 per cent of the work remains unfinished. I don't think they will meet the March 31 deadline.”
— Uday Madkaikar, ex-Mayor CCP

“Some pavements have already broken. There's no monitoring of the work. The CEO of IPSCDL should have been replaced by now.”
— Wilson D'Souza, Ribandar resident



Panjim residents are equally sceptical. Nicholao Fern, a senior citizen, expressed frustration over the lack of planning. "They are hot-mixing roads today and digging them up again tomorrow. There's no clear plan. They've already missed one deadline, and I doubt the work will be completed before the assembly elections in 2027," Fern said.

Tara Kerkar, a social activist, pointed to the inconsistency of the explanations for the delays. "Sometimes they say they are laying sewage lines, sometimes they are

working on gutters. Meanwhile, there's no parking for two-wheelers, and fines are still being imposed. People visiting government offices have nowhere to park," she said.

Deepak Mayekar, a resident of St Inez, also expressed doubt that the work would be completed on time. "Looking at past delays, it's hard to believe that the March 31 deadline will be met," he said.

Wilson D'Souza, a Ribandar resident, echoed these concerns, claiming that the quality of the work was sub-standard. "Some

pavements have already broken. There's no monitoring of the work. The CEO of IPSCDL should have been replaced by now," he stated.

The ongoing roadworks are part of the Smart City Mission, which aims to improve urban infrastructure. Last year, the Union Ministry of Housing & Urban Affairs stated that 90% of the project had been completed, with only 10 per cent remaining. Due to various on-ground conditions, the Ministry extended the pro-

ject's deadline to March 31, 2025, to complete the remaining work.

"These projects are in an advanced stage, but delays have occurred. It is in the interest of the people that these projects are completed, contributing to the ease of living in urban areas," the Ministry said in a statement. However, with increasing public dissatisfaction and continued delays, it remains to be seen whether the roadworks will meet their new deadline.



Goa's indigenous Shweta Kapila cattle breed gets official recognition



Team Herald

PANJIM: Dr Udhwar Sanjaykumar Vithalrao, SMS (Animal Science) at ICAR-KVK, North Goa, ICAR-CCARI, Goa, was awarded the Animal Breed Registration Certificate for Goa's indigenous cattle breed, Shweta Kapila, in a ceremony held on January 17 in New Delhi. This marks a significant milestone in the preservation and recognition of indigenous livestock breeds in India.

The Shweta Kapila breed was officially registered by the Breed Registration Committee of ICAR under the accession number: India Cattle_3500_Shweta Kapila_03048. This recog-

niton sees Goa's Shweta Kapila breed formally documented in the National Animal Genetic Resources database, further emphasising its importance in India's agricultural landscape.

The Breed Registration Certificate Distribution Ceremony was organised by the ICAR-National Bureau of Animal Genetic Resources (NBAGR) in Karnal and took place at the National Agricultural Science Complex in New Delhi. The event was inaugurated by Dr Himanshu Pathak, Secretary (DARE) and Director General (ICAR), alongside other dignitaries, including Dr Abhijit Mitra, Commissioner of Animal Husband-

ry; Dr Raghavendra Bhatta, Deputy Director General (Animal Science), ICAR; Dr Triveni Dutt, Director of ICAR-Indian Veterinary Research Institute, Bareilly; and Dr AK Mishra, Director of ICAR-NBAGR, Karnal.

The achievement highlights not only the recognition of Goa's indigenous cattle but also the ongoing efforts to protect and promote traditional livestock breeds that play a vital role in the region's agricultural heritage. The Shweta Kapila breed's official registration brings it into the fold of nationally recognised animal genetic resources, contributing to the broader efforts of conserving India's diverse livestock species.

Electricity Department suspends action against Internet cables on poles

Says initiative to continue if the outstanding dues of two-three months not paid

Team Herald

PANJIM: The Electricity Department has temporarily halted its campaign to cut internet cables from electricity poles but has insisted on collecting all outstanding fees and fines from Internet Service Providers (ISPs) for the use of these poles over the past three years.

Executive Engineer Kashinath Shetye explained that the Chief Electrical Engineer (CEE) of the Electricity Department raised concerns about the safety and well-being of the linesmen, which led to the decision to stop the wire-cutting operations for the time being. The initial campaign aimed to remove wires that were strung haphazardly and without proper disci-

“I have asked them (ISPs) to provide a list of those using the poles. We are going to fine them for the two or three years they have been using the poles. However, they have not furnished anything to us. Neither have they submitted an affidavit of responsibility nor a list. We have stopped cutting the wires until February 1. The CEE is concerned about the safety of the linesmen.”
— Kashinath Shetye, executive engineer

pline, posing potential safety risks.

However, Shetye clarified that while ISPs have sought relief through legal channels, the Electricity Department would continue to calculate and pursue the collection of unpaid fines and poles usage fees from the ISPs. "I have asked them (ISPs) to provide a list of those using the poles. We are going to fine them for the two or three years they have been using the

poles. However, they have not furnished anything to us. Neither have they submitted an affidavit of responsibility nor a list," Shetye said.

"We have stopped cutting the wires until February 1. The CEE is concerned about the safety of the linesmen. However, no one has approached us with lists of the providers, nor asked for the stability reports of our poles. The Electricity Act is completely different from the IT Act," he added.

Shetye made it clear that if the court grants a stay on the Department's actions, they will not proceed with cutting the cables. However, the Chief Engineer will determine the next steps regarding the continued fines and recovery of the unpaid fees.

It should be noted that the Electricity Department's campaign to remove the illegally

strung wires on electricity poles had been launched due to concerns over the safety and stability of the poles. The action caused significant disruption, with several subscribers losing connectivity, which led ISPs to file an application in the High Court seeking to halt the operation. The Court is expected to hear the matter soon.

Two including Bengaluru native killed in road mishap at Sancoale

Team Herald

VASCO: Two persons were killed and two others were injured in a head-on collision between two cars at Sancoale on Monday morning.

The deceased have been identified as Suresh Jaggal (45), a resident of Shantinagar, Vasco, and Nissar Ahmed (54), from Bengaluru. Jaggal died on the spot, while Ahmed

succumbed to his injuries in hospital. The accident occurred near Sheela Bar and Restaurant, Terepal, Sancoale, when Jaggal drove his vehicle recklessly while proceeding from Cortalim to Vasco, colliding with an oncoming vehicle driven by Yallapa Muniswami (30) of Calangute.

Muniswami and Ahmed were grievously injured and were rushed to Goa Medical College and Hos-

pital (GMC), Bambolim. Jaggal and Ahmed were travelling in the same car. The Verna police conducted the panchanama and have registered a case under sections 125(b), 281, and 106(1) of the BNS. PSI Rajdatt Arsekar is conducting further investigations under the guidance of Verna PI Melson Colaco and the overall supervision of Mormugao DySP Gurudas Kadam.

power shutdown

TALEIGAO: On January 22, from 9 am to 2 pm near Alto Nagali Chowgule, Models Splendor Bldg and surrounding areas.

CUNCOLIM: On January 23, from 9 am to 2 pm at Khaddem & Kajuwada of VP Balli and total wards coming under the jurisdiction of VP Padi - Barcem at Cuncolim.

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