

# SC's 'concrete jungle' remark on Goa triggers public anger against govt

Team Herald

**MARGAO:** A recent remark by the Supreme Court, "Please don't turn Goa into a concrete jungle," has sparked a strong reaction from citizens, who see it as a clear rebuke to the Goa government.

The remark came after a division bench of the Supreme Court, consisting of Justice B V Nagarathna and Justice Satish Chandra Sharma, dismissed a fresh Special Leave Petition (SLP) filed by the Goa government against the Bombay High Court's order issued on January 23, 2025.

The High Court had directed a halt on construc-

tion activities in the Outline Development Plan (ODP) areas of Calangute, Candolim, Arpora, Nagoa, and Parra.

Justice Sharma, addressing the Goa government's counsel, remarked, "Please don't turn Goa into a concrete jungle." Peter Fernandes, a resident of Fatorda, expressed that the Supreme Court's statement is a direct message to the government to halt environmental degradation.

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**"In recent years, we've witnessed large housing projects that are destroying the environment. Hills are being cut down, and trees uprooted without any regard for the environment. It's high time the government and authorities stop granting permits for such projects"**

— Peter Fernandes

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— Gajanand Shirodkar

**"Numerous social and environmental activists are fighting to protect Goa's environment, but the government seems indifferent. In fact, permissions for large-scale constructions continue to be granted without consideration for the damage they are causing to our surroundings"**

— Rosario Dias

gard for the environment," he said.

Fernandes added that it's high time the government and authorities stop granting permits for such

projects and take strict measures to protect Goa's natural beauty.

Gajanand Shirodkar, another concerned resident, emphasized the signifi-

cance of Goa's natural environment.

"Goa is known worldwide as a place where people can relax and enjoy life due to its natural beauty. But this

beauty is slowly fading, and the government is partly to blame," he said. Shirodkar also acknowledged the Supreme Court's concern about the ongoing environmental destruction in the state.

Rosario Dias, an environmental activist, voiced his disappointment with the government's response.

"Numerous social and environmental activists are fighting to protect Goa's environment, but the government seems indifferent. In fact, permissions for large-scale constructions continue to be granted without consideration for the damage they are causing to our surroundings," Dias said.

## Goa Excavator Owners Assn points out to illegal mud transportation at Verna IDC

Team Herald

**VASCO:** The All Goa Excavator Owners Association on Saturday demanded immediate action against illegal transportation of mud from the Verna industrial estate.

The Association members stated that some persons from neighbouring States had entered into excavation business which had impacted the livelihood of local excavator operators. They said that many locals had invested in buying new machines and were now struggling to pay their bank instalments due to sudden decline in work opportunities.

The Association members alleged that the op-

erators from other States were indulging in illegal practices including excavation, transportation and sale of mud without paying royalties to the State government or to the Goa Industrial Development Corporation (GIDC). They are doing business even after stern warning by the Chief Minister, they said.

The Association has now appealed to the companies and industries to support local operators, and to consider operators only if locals fail to meet their standards and has appealed to the Chief Minister and GIDC officials to intervene and protect the local businesses by stopping illegal operators.

## Porvorim police crack down on public drinking

Team Herald

**PORVORIM:** The Porvorim Police have launched a special drive against public drinking and nuisance behaviour, leading to the arrest of one individual.

According to Police Inspector (PI) Rahul Parab of Porvorim Police Station, authorities have registered 16 cases so far, collecting fines totalling Rs 34,000 from those found causing disturbances in public places.

"One person was arrested for causing a nuisance in a public place under the influence of alcohol under the Tourism Act. The drive will continue," Parab stated.

The initiative aims to curb public disturbances and maintain order in the area. Police have urged the public to refrain from drinking in open spaces and to adhere to the law to avoid penalties.

## SEASIDE SOJOURN

ATISH NAIK



Domestic tourists enjoy a boat ride to spot dolphins in the Aguada bay

## Traffic congestion at Navelim leaves residents fuming

Team Herald

**MARGAO:** Residents of Navelim, along with commuters, have expressed frustration over the persistent traffic congestion at the Navelim junction and are have urged authorities to implement a permanent solution to the vexatious issue such as diverting traffic during peak morning and evening hours.

Locals have raised concerns that despite the traffic police presence during school hours, the situation remains challenging and emphasised the need for better traffic management at the junction.

Residents have further

**"The situation here during peak hours is unacceptable. The traffic flow in Navelim is a mess due to the absence of proper traffic management. There is an urgent need for a permanent traffic police presence to restore order."**

— Francis Menezes, Local resident

complained that heavy vehicles continue to clog the area during peak hours, exacerbating the already dire situation, despite numerous complaints being lodged.

A recent observation near Navelim Church revealed a severe traffic pile-up, with vehicles at a standstill. Pedestrians, including school children, had to navigate through the congestion on foot, struggling to

cross the road.

Many locals have also pointed out that the traffic police are often absent when needed most. Additionally, the lack of traffic signboards has contributed to the chaos, with motorists and tourists frequently stopping to ask for directions.

Francis Menezes, a concerned resident, said, "The situation here during peak hours is unacceptable. The

traffic flow in Navelim is a mess due to the absence of proper traffic management. There is an urgent need for a permanent traffic police presence to restore order."

Advocate Pratima Coutinho, also a local resident demanded a permanent solution to the traffic issues at the Navelim junction. She noted that even ambulances are often stuck in traffic with no way to get through.

"As a temporary solution, traffic could be diverted through the Western Bypass during peak hours," Coutinho suggested, adding that local authorities have not taken the issue seriously enough.

## Shop owners, vendors return back to the footpaths at Margao Pedestrians forced to walk on congested road with no place to move around

Team Herald

**MARGAO:** Despite civic directives to keep pavements free from encroachments, several shop owners and vendors from Margao continue to violate rules and is evident from their increasing numbers occupying footpaths leaving the public hardly any place to move around and make purchases.

They have been displaying their goods brazenly on the footpath, leaving the customers to stand on the remaining path thus forcing the pedestrians to walk on the congested road by risking their lives.

Growing frustration over encroachments on footpaths has prompted several Margao residents to demand strict action from the Margao Municipal Council (MMC) against shop owners responsible for blocking public access.

The question now arises as to when the civic body would crack the whip against these violators who constantly keep violating the law.

On Saturday, residents alerted O Herald about the ongoing encroachments, which are obstructing pedestrian pathways and causing inconvenience to the public.

An official from the MMC assured that action would be taken against vendors and shop owners involved in the illegal en-



croachments.

"It has become a common issue in Margao, especially in commercial areas. Footpaths are often completely blocked, leaving no space for pedestrians," said Rohan Borkar, a concerned resident.

Borkar emphasised that the encroachment problem has escalated into a serious concern and the civic body has failed to carry out regular drives to address the issue.

"There needs to be a sustained effort to remove encroachments. Stiff penalties should be imposed on shop owners to deter them from such illegal activities in the future," said residents.

Many locals feel that while a dedicated section exists to handle encroachments, action is typically taken only after complaints are raised.

Additionally, it has been observed that encroachments by vendors not only block pedestrian paths but also contribute to traffic congestion, as footpaths are essentially being taken over.

Menino Dias, another resident, alleged that many non-Goans are conducting business activities on the roadside and footpaths, but little to no action has been taken by the municipality.

In response, MMC officials reassured O Herald that strict action would be taken against vendors and shop owners responsible for the illegal encroachments.

"We regularly conduct drives against encroachments," said an MMC official.

However, it has been noted that illegal business activities are especially prevalent on weekends.

Citizens, including shop owners, have called for the civic body to deploy a monitoring team over the weekends to keep vigil on these activities.

## Delay in shifting gas lines brings underpass work at Ponda to a grinding halt

Traffic chaos at KTC-Nageshi Bandora junction a regular feature; locals want underpass to be completed before monsoon

Team Herald

**PONDA:** The delay in shifting the gas lines has brought the underpass work along the four-lane national highway near the main KTC bus stand at Ponda to a grinding halt, resulting in traffic snarls.

Traffic chaos at KTC-Nageshi Bandora junction with a massive queue of vehicles lined up along the main road of the highway has been a regular feature.

Only 50 per cent work on much-needed underpass here stands complete and to add to the commuters' woes, gas pipelines located on the old road are yet to be cleared by the authority concerned (Goa Natural Gas Pvt Limited).

The locals have demanded that underpass work be completed before monsoon to prevent hardship and chaos.



Vinod Naik, a local, said that the underpass work should be completed before monsoon or else it could pose danger to commuters.

PWD NH AE Chanda Parwar said, "Fifty per cent of underpass work and its connecting roads have been completed while the remaining work has come to a grinding halt as the Goa Natural Gas Pvt Limited

failed in its promise to shift their gas lines coming under alignment of NH-748 near KTC bus stand Ponda immediately."

In this connection after PWD, NH wrote a letter to Goa Natural Gas Pvt.Ltd, a joint inspection was conducted on December 18, last year by both the authorities and it was noticed that the gas line

was coming under alignment of construction of the underpass at KTC bus stand which required immediate shifting.

Following this inspection, a reminder was also sent to gas authorities on January 2, 2025, but till date, the gas line has not shifted, thereby bringing the underpass construction work to a grinding halt.

## Man jailed for knife attack at Ponda

Team Herald

**PANJIM:** The Verna police arrested Balaji Waghmare, from Maharashtra on the charge attacking a man from Ponda with a knife.

The incident occurred on Friday near a company situated in the Verna industrial estate. When both, the accused and the victim Sunil Pujari, residing at of Budhwar Peth, Ponda entered into an argument over damage to the latter's vehicle. The arguments escalated, and in a fit of anger Waghmare allegedly attacked Pujari with a knife, causing injuries.

Following the complaint, the Verna police arrested the accused and he has been remanded in two days police custody. The police have registered a case against Waghmare under Section 118 (1) of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS) Act 2023.

PSI Nikhil Naik Dessai is conducting further investigations.

## Youth Congress protest against anti-youth budget

Team Herald

**PANJIM:** The Goa Pradesh Youth Congress Committee on Saturday staged a protest at the Azad Maidan, against the anti-youth union budget.

The Youth Congress condemned the cash-for-government job which rocked the State last year and alleged the unemployment was increasing in the State when every year, 8,000 to 10,000 students graduated in the State.

"Educated youth do not get jobs and are forced to go abroad, there is no regulation for jobs in the government and private sector, top positions are given through internal recruitments or given to outsiders," said the protesters and demanded that jobs in the private sectors should be given on merit.

Another Youth Congress member said that he was a graduate, has experience but was unable to get a job and added that the government was more busy in event managements.



Dipesh Simepurushkar said that he was also a graduate but was disappointed for not getting a job. The youth claimed that the un-

ion budget presented by Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman, was anti-youth and there no proposals to generate em-

ployment, reduce inflation and charged that the government was also trying to misguide and fool the people, they said.

MAX. TEMP 34.5 °C  
MIN. TEMP 21.5 °C

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