

SURPLUS MONSOON, SCARCE SUPPLY:
WILL GOA SOLVE ITS WATER WOES BY 2025? SIGNS SAY NO.

Water scarcity in Goa has remained an ongoing issue, much like governance itself. As the new year begins, several parts of the State continue to face water shortages—some lasting a few days, while others extend for weeks, even up to half a month. The year 2024 was no different, with residents struggling with erratic water supply despite a surplus monsoon. **PRATIK PARAB** takes a closer look at how water scarcity is affecting the lives of Goans and whether there is a solution in sight



INDIA FACES 256 BILLION CU MTRS
FRESHWATER SHORTAGE BY 2050

India is projected to face a shortage of approximately 256 billion cubic meters (BCM) of freshwater by 2050, prompting the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs (MoHUA) to issue a manual on water supply and treatment systems under the 'Drink from Tap' initiative. The ministry has directed all State governments, urban local bodies, parastatal agencies, and other stakeholders to ensure the effective planning, implementation, and management of water supply systems to provide potable tap water. India, home to 17% of the world's population but possessing only 4% of its freshwater resources, receives around 4,080 BCM of fresh water annually, according to the housing ministry's report

NITI Aayog and various agencies have warned that India will face an acute drinking water crisis by 2030, worsening further by 2050. While India has only 4% of the world's freshwater resources, it supports 17% of the global population. The warning signs of this crisis are already visible in Goa. In 2024 and early 2025, at least 10 to 12 major instances of village-wide and taluka-wide water shortages have been recorded.

Water Resources Minister Subhash Shirodkar has assured that Goa will no longer face water shortages after December 2025, but man-made disruptions continue to add to the woes of an already water-stressed population. Shirodkar's 2025 deadline is, in itself, an acknowledgment of the existing crisis. Even after achieving 100% saturation under the 'Har Ghar Jal' scheme, many parts of the state continue to suffer.

For instance, residents of Porvorim were grappling with severe water shortages even as this report was being written on Saturday.

As Goa witnesses exponential growth in residential construction and an ever-expanding tourism sector, fears are mounting that local residents may soon struggle to access their fair share of potable water.

WHAT PEOPLE SAY...

Arvin Mesquita from Colva said that water shortage is a real problem for Colva, and it's only going to get worse with so many approvals given for constructions, swimming pools, etc., without any infrastructure or carrying capacity checks by a totally unconcerned Colva Panchayat and the Town and Country Planning Department.

"If we can't manage the current state of development, how is Colva going to manage even further mega development?" said Mesquita while speaking about the proposal to change Colva to CRZ-2 status.

Resident of Nanoda, Sada Gawalkar, said that after their protests, water from a well was pumped out and is being sup-

MAN-MADE WATER SCARCITY
INFRASTRUCTURE DAMAGE LEADS TO SEVERE WATER LOSS

1 Bhatlem, Panjim: A major water pipeline ruptured during road digging work, disrupting supply in the area.

2 Opa-Ponda Road: A water pipeline burst due to ongoing underground cabling work, leading to significant water wastage.

3 Porvorim Flyover Construction: A pipeline was damaged by workers during the ongoing flyover project, resulting in a major burst.

4 Sangolda: A major water pipeline burst during construction work for the Porvorim flyover, wasting thousands of litres of water. Residents raised concerns that this pipeline has been repeatedly damaged due to ongoing construction activities.

5 Copperwada-Curti, Ponda: A sudden pipeline burst occurred during underground electricity cabling work, leading to the wastage of thousands of litres of drinking water.

6 Khandepar: A 250 mm diameter pipeline burst due to negligence by a road contractor while leveling the mud with an excavator.

plied to houses. However, the water they are receiving for hardly two hours a day is not potable.

Sanjeev Naik, while highlighting the water scarcity issue and the government's move to start the academic year, said that summer temperatures are very high, and water shortage is a major problem during April and May.

Sanjay Pereira from Cacra village, which recently protested regarding a decades-old water shortage problem, said that after several protests, the PWD water supply has started work on a new pipeline. "We have been facing a water shortage for decades, but now it is supposed to be resolved," he said.

Porvorim resident Sigmund D'Souza said that despite waiting for over a month, there was not a drop of water in his locality near Copperleaf restaurant. "This government has forgotten the residents of Porvorim. I hear that our very dynamic and powerful MLA supplies sponsored water tankers daily to all the slums which are illegally built on our Serula Comunidade land, while we law-abiding, tax-paying residents, Gaunkars, and sons of the soil are kept high and dry for over a month now," he said.

During a visit to the Water Resource Department (WRD), Sigmund was informed that the department did not start work on the water pipeline as the flyover construction was still underway. He has been regularly paying ₹1,000 for a tanker of 7,000 litres of water. He says there were times when he had to beg the water tanker operator from a neighbouring village.

It may be recalled that WRD Minister Subhash Shirodkar, in mid-December, had said that Goa wouldn't face a water shortage by December 2025. "We can provide 400 MLD of potable water to the people of Goa by December 2025. One hundred bandharas will be an additional source of water," he said.

On the second day of the two-day Assembly session, while speaking on a calling attention motion tabled by Bicholim MLA Dr. Chandrakant Shetye, several MLAs complained of water shortages in various rural areas. Dr. Shetye informed that Nanoda, Vadaval, Sal, Lamgao, Bor-

dem, and Sharada Colony have been facing water shortages.

Mayem MLA Premendra Shet said that Narve and Chodan have been facing water scarcity regularly.

MLA Delilah Lobo informed that a water treatment plant has been proposed, but the work has not yet begun. She also requested additional staff for the Water Supply Department, as many employees have retired and their vacancies have not been filled. The issue of a shortage of water supply in the St. Andre constituency was also mentioned in the Assembly.

Opposition Leader Yuri Alemao, while speaking on the water shortage, said that this is a water crisis, a water famine. "We cannot give water to people after making an announcement of Har Ghar Jal and claiming we are Swayampurna. There have been a lot of flip-flops on the government's part in providing water to Goans," he said.

MLA Michael Lobo said that ever since he became an MLA, he has been witnessing this problem. "Work on the water supply that had to be done 25 years ago is being taken up today. There are houses that do not get water at all," he said.

MLAs have demanded a fresh study on the water requirements in each constituency.

Two months after the statement by WRD Minister Shirodkar, Chief Minister Pramod Sawant, while speaking on a calling attention motion, said that the government will attempt to fulfil a minimum of four hours of water supply to all households. The Chief Minister agreed that it is not possible to supply water 24x7, but his government will ensure at least four hours of daily water supply.

The Composite Water Management Index (CWMI) report, released some years ago by NITI Aayog, placed Goa at the lowest level in managing water resources, irrigation, potable drinking water, and groundwater. With the exponential growth in Goa's tourism and second homes, fears are being expressed about whether Goa will become part of India's

QUOTEROOM

“The water crisis is bad in Colva; it will worsen due to unchecked construction and swimming pool approvals without proper infrastructure planning
– Arvin Mesquita, Colva

“The authorities are supplying well water, but it is non-potable and available for only two hours a day
– Sada Gawalkar, Nanoda

“After decades of struggle, the PWD has finally begun work on a new water pipeline
– Sanjay Pereira, Cacra

“Illegal slums receive government-sponsored tankers, while tax-paying residents are left struggling. We have spent Rs 1,000 per tanker for water and at times even had to plead for water from tanker operators
– Sigmund D'Souza, Porvorim

list of 21 cities that will have no access to drinking water by 2030.

Opposition Leader Alemao asked, "This brings us to the question of whether Goa has the carrying capacity to accommodate so many residences. We are moving from bad to worse."

Calangute MLA Michael Lobo asked, "Will the government provide water connections to the three to four thousand houses and flats that are coming up in Bardez?"

The Chief Minister stated that while there is a shortage of water in April and May, no new NOCs are issued. However, the government faces an uphill task in securing more water for the State and improving distribution before the crisis spirals out of control.

PARCHED AND ANGRY



water amid celebrations.
Siolim villagers – 17 September 2024
Frustrated and furious, locals from Siolim marched in protest to the PWD office on September 17 over the acute water shortage. Residents said their taps had been dry for weeks, and repeated complaints had gone unheard. Women led the protest, demanding immediate action.

Bordem-Bicholim villagers – 14 November 2024
Due to a severe water shortage in Bordem-Bicholim, residents were forced to postpone the Tulsi Vivah festival to another date.
Nanoda village – 31 December 2024
Nanoda village in Sattari plunged into an acute water

shortage at the end of the year. While water supply officials assured resolution within 10 days, locals continued to struggle without adequate water.

Canacona – 31 December 2024
Like Nanoda in North Goa, Canacona in South Goa also suffered severe water shortages on December 31. Locals alleged that while hotels and industries received an uninterrupted water supply, villagers continued to face little to no access to water.

Cacra village – 17 January 2025
Cacra villagers have been demanding regular water supply for months. Since November 29, 2024, the village has faced acute water scarcity, which continued up until January 17, 2025. Frustrated, residents visited the Water Supply Department office in Panjim on January 17 to demand a resolution.

Bardez taluka – January & February 2025
The entire Bardez taluka was thrown into a large-scale water crisis in January and February after a rupture in the Tillari Dam canal, which supplies water to the Anthane Dam. What was initially expected to be a four-to-five-day disruption stretched into 15 days of complete water scarcity across almost the entire Bardez taluka.