construction, concreti-

and the resultant destruc-

irreplaceable environment.

The entire highway cutting

across Goa has reduced its

green cover to a large ex-

tent. The current highway

work at Porvorim right up

to Guirim has mowed down

old heritage trees and our

future of carbon sequestra-

tion, oxygen power houses

and anti-landslide sentinels.

The fields of Taleigao are

continuously being assault-

ed and ravaged with dump-

ing of debris, land filling and

conversion to commercial

zones with gated colonies

and more hotels slated to

rise above our food security

and flood management sys-

tems, decimating them all

with sewage, pollution and

increased heat island effect.

The hills of Bambolim and

the ground water aquifers

are being silently raped and

pumped out for more luxury

villas and proposed/under

construction Casino hotels.

The large open pits, the size

of football grounds have

been dug out nearly 3 floors

deep for basements that are

flooding with fresh water

from the springs below and

the developers are clandes-

tinely pumping out this per-

ennial source of fresh water

into the nearest Nalla that

drains out into the Zuari bay.

The Oxel spring and many

others are at a risk of being

polluted and run dry because

of large developments com-

# O HERALDO The Voice of Goa - since 1900

# Will Smart City deadline of March 31 be met?

ith just nine days to go before the Smart City deadline for completion of all road works in Panjim, the question which is hanging over every Panjimite like a Damocles' sword is-will the road works be completed by March 31? The city and its residents, visitors and tourists alike, have been reeling under the Smart City dust pollution, dangerous pits, dug up roads, barricades and lack of signboards and traffic marshals for eight long years. Will this tortuous ordeal end with little over a week to go?

The Imagine Panaji Smart City Development Limited (IPSCDL) through the Advocate General has assured before the High Court that the Smart City road works in Panjim will be completed before March 31, 2025. However, till date the work remains sluggish, chaotic, disorganised and with lack of supervision.

As of date, in central Panjim, there are 3,450 metres of road work which remain unfinished. Contrary to this, an affidavit has been filed in the High Court of Bombay at Goa that only 200 metres of roadwork in St Inez is pending out of a total of 3,000 metres. As pointed out by **O Heraldo**, on Rua de Ourem, a staggering 13,800 metres of roadwork remains incomplete.

However, completing the road works with poor quality tar is not the end of the ordeal, as residents have found out since the roads face the prospect of being repeatedly dug due to poor planning. Sanjit Rodrigues the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) and Managing Director has himself declared that the road tarring

People as well as

fed up complaining

**about Smart City** 

negligence, delays, bad

roads, dust pollution

and the general

upsetting of the lifestyle

and disturbance of the

peace of the beautiful

city, they so much loved

to visit, sit at particular

joints, such as the Café

Bhosle joint, have a cup

to tea and muse about

life in general or catch

up with the latest on

politics

is not final, since if required, the roads will be activists are completely dug again.

The contractors, their supervisors and workers who are seldom supervised by government engineers are reportedly digging and re-digging the same areas despite earlier claims of completion of work. For instance, the roads near UCO Bank-Govinda Building junction, Vishal Mega Mart Junction and Atmaram Borkar Road have been dug up multiple times.

The Smart City digging and re-digging has had tremendous impact not only on the psyche

of the commuters and motorists, but it has led to loss in business to the local shopkeepers. Businessmen have admitted that the number of customers visiting their shops has reduced, even as they have been doing business at the same location for years. Other businessmen say that it is a very bad phase for them, since they have to pay the salaries of their employees, even as the business is not thriving.

The most important default on the part of the Smart City Mission is the non communication of their proposed works to the people. Roads are dug up overnight and left closed for days. Even if the roads are opened for traffic, they are left incomplete.

The bureaucratic hurdles will also determine whether the deadline of March 31 will be met. The Smart City workers pointed to the need for official clearances for hastening of works. They assume that only works which have received clearances from the authorities will be completed on time.

People as well as activists are completely fed upcomplaining about Smart City negligence, delays, bad roads, dust pollution and the general upsetting of the lifestyle and disturbance of the peace of the beautiful city, they so much loved to visit, sit at particular joints, such as the Café Bhosle joint, have a cup to tea and muse about life in general or catch up with the latest on

Citizens are pessimistic about the city road works being completed by March 31. The Café Bhosle square, the Duarte Pacheco road near Real Barberia, and most importantly the Panjim Municipal Market road area work in progress. The latter too have been freshly dug up for relaying. Are there more roads which the Smart City wise men will dig? No information has been made available to the public. Will the assurances given to the Court be revised?

Apart from the completing the roads, which have only been given a single coat, the next deadline is the completing of all works before May 31, 2025. This includes the completion of the parking lots and the footpath and traffic islands. But as far as the March 31 deadline, with just nine days left, serious apprehensions persist that the Smart City work may not be completed on time, leaving the residents, visitors and tourists back again on a rough road.



The rising heat is not the only problem Goa is currently facing. There is no drinking water in this high rainfall state. Wells are going dry. Even with tube wells, the desertification of Goa is becoming imminent. We are soon to witness a



The turtle nesting sites of Morjim and Agonda are also not left alone with numerous business establishments literally operating right over these eco-sensitive areas. And this is not a comprehensive list because

Can you feel the heat? ll roads in Goa seem to Delhi NCR like Lodha, Bhutani, DLF, Sabh Infra, Axon, lead to the highway of Veera Group, Axis Ecorp, are sation, rampant urbanisation all on an acquisition spree announcing or in the process of announcing second homes tion of Goa's pristine and

> in Goal Now all tourists are coming back to purchase land in Goa to live like tourists in villas with swimming pools. But can Goa survive this?

> Yes, Goa is the richest state. It is the most luxurious state too. Its richness and luxury comes from its forests, resources like fresh water, abundance biodiversity including marine life and peace loving people. But isn't it sad that instead of hoardings promoting this natural beauty all that we see today in advertisements right from the airport or border entry points are casinos and real estate promotions for luxury homes that are being built with the most substandard quality cleverly hidden with heavy makeup of synthetic paint and cosmetic drama. And most buyers are getting fooled by this short term glitter oblivious to the open wounds of hill cutting, bleeding forest trees sliced mercilessly, black filth oozing out into our rivers and water bodies. What are the new citizens going to eat, breathe and survive on if the very es-

> sence of Goa is damaged? The rising heat is not the only problem Goa is currently facing. There is no drinking water in this high rainfall state. Wells are going dry. Even with tube wells, the desertification of Goa is becoming imminent. We are soon to witness a severe water crisis. What will the new Goans with luxury villas and swimming pools do to sustain their metropolitan lifestyles here in Goa? Where will the water for all the swimming pools come from?

> It is ironic that even after the Supreme Court had to intervene and order for safeguarding Goa's environment and biodiversity, it has fallen on deaf ears and the Government of Goa is blatantly violating all laws and human

Goa is getting plundered. Where are the custodians, its guardians and lawmakers to protect and conserve this paradise for its future generations? Is the Chief Ministhe real estate giants from ter of Goa listening, seeing,

feeling? Is the TCP Minister listening, seeing, feeling? What about the other departments and ministers and local representatives? What has happened to them that they are killing their own mother land and are not feeling any pain? Can power and greed for money make one so blind that you begin to not care for your own and are willing to commit crimes on innocent people and the environment that nurtures you? Isn't the role of the Development body to plan for the future and the wellbeing of its people and environment? Isn't the natural cover, trees, rivers, hills, fields all our critical infrastructure to help us live well and survive? Therefore, isn't the primary role of the TCP, PDA to plan for the conservation of this natural infrastructure for the future generations of the State? Or is it to only pass plans by taking bribes, aid land use change and conversions for concretization and kill our motherland? Village Panchayats are demanding money for approving construction licences. They are violating laws by permitting massive developments with no public participation or accountability. At the recent silent protest at the Panjim Church to demand for the ouster of the TCP Minister for permitting large scale conversions of private forest lands and others to building developments both residential and commercial, it was shocking to see yet again the misuse of power where the

to submit the appeal letter. Is it too much to ask Mr Chief Minister and TCP Minister to safeguard Goa's rich natural assets for all children including yours? Isn't that the least you can do to ensure that your children and all children have a future full of clean air, lush trees and forests with fruit and medicines. intact hills full of ground water and khazans full of fish, curry and rice? Goa is dying. Our mother is dying. Aren't we going to save her?

police obstructed the silent

protesters from walking up

to the CM's office at Altinho

(Tallulah D'Silva is an Architect and silver awardee of the Golden Door Award 2020 for truth and integrity.)

### people'sedit

#### **CONSTITUENCY DELIMITATION AND LANGUAGE POLICY: A FEDERAL DEBATE**

**EVERETTE ASSIS TELLES** 

The issue of parliamentary constituency delimitation has sparked significant debate, particularly in Tamil Nadu and Kerala. Both states have voiced strong opposition to what they term a "unilateral move" by the central government to redraw constituency boundaries. Tamil Nadu Chief Minister M K Stalin and Kerala Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan have united under the banner of "Constituency Delimitation: Unity Against the Unilateral Move," extending mutual support for a conference organised by Tamil Nadu to address this contentious issue.

The proposed delimitation exercise, which aims to adjust Lok Sabha constituencies based on population has raised concerns among southern states. They argue that such measures disproportionately favour northern states with higher population growth, potentially reducing the political representation of southern states that have successfully implemented population control measures. This has been perceived as a threat to the principles of democracy and federalism.

Adding to the tension is the central government's push for the National Education Policy (NEP) and its three-language formula, which has been met with resistance in Tamil Nadu and Kerala. The formula mandates the inclusion of Hindi alongside regional languages and English, a move seen by many as an attempt to impose Hindi on non-Hindi-speaking states. Tamil Nadu, in particular, has historically adhered to a two-language policy and has refused to implement the NEP, citing concerns over linguistic and cultural autonomy. The central government's decision to withhold funds under the Samagra Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA) for non-compliance with NEP provisions has further escalated the conflict.

The language debate is not new. India, as a multilingual and multicultural society, has grappled with the question of linguistic identity since independence. While Hindi and English are official languages, the imposition of Hindi has often been resisted by states like Tamil Nadu, which view such moves as undermining their linguistic heritage. Linking federal funds to compliance with language policies has been criticized as unconstitutional and contrary to the spirit of cooperative federalism.

Even Goa has faced its share of language-related agitation. The Konkani language movement in the 1980s highlighted the need for linguistic preservation and autonomy. Eventually, Konkani was recognised as the official language of Goa, with schools given the choice to select their medium of instruction and include Konkani as an optional subject. The state's policy set a precedent for linguistic inclusivity, ensuring that educational institutions could accommodate diverse linguistic

The challenges faced by Tamil Nadu, Kerala and other non-Hindi-speaking states underscore the importance of respecting regional identities in a federal structure. In a diverse nation like India, every state must have the autonomy to adopt language and education policies that reflect its unique cultural and linguistic heritage. The ongoing debates over constituency delimitation and language policies demand dialogue, mutual respect and consensus, ensuring that the unity of the nation is preserved without compromising the principles of democracy.

#### High accident rate remains a challenge

Goa has witnessed a worrying rise in road accidents in recent months. In September 2024 alone, the state recorded 195 accidents, resulting in 18 fatalities and several injuries, with two-wheeler riders being the most affected. The situation worsened in October 2024, with the number of accidents increasing to 260, leading to 17 deaths. These alarming figures highlight the growing safety concerns on Goa's roads and the urgent need for stricter regulations and awareness initiatives. However in 2025 there has been no difference either, accidents still take place on a daily basis.

To address this issue, authorities in Goa have intensified traffic law enforcement. The Transport Directorate issued over 12,000 challans in September and more than 13,000 in October for various violations. Additionally, the Goa Police introduced motorcycle patrolling to monitor traffic infractions more effectively and ease congestion. Despite these measures, the high accident rate remains a major challenge, emphasising the need for sustained public awareness campaigns and stricter enforcement of road

The general public in Goa should not wear helmets, seat belts and other safety precautions just to avoid the fines that have been implemented, however this mentality has to be changed and the public should be made aware even further on the importance of these safety

water quality, but it's important to minimise this practice to conserve water. Chemicals like chlorine or bromine are added to sanitise the water, killing bacteria and preventing algae growth. Allowing swimming pools in apartment colonies and high end bungalows will have a lasting impact on water availability for Goans. Levying tax on swim-

letters**to**the**editor** 

For letters to the editor contact us at editor@herald-goa.com.

All letters must contain correct postal address and telephone number. Letters are liable to be edited for brevity.

ming pools is a small consolation. Adelmo Fernandes, Vasco

### Nurture nature back to health

The editorial 'Nurture Nature back to health first' (Herald March 21, 2025) is hard hitting. Yes, you've rightly stated, Nurture Nature back to health first, and I'm convinced everything else will fall in place. We all need to understand that climate change is for real, it is at our doorstep, it has entered our system. We need to come out of that 'not in my backyard' syndrome! Repeated signals from Nature seem to have been ignored not just in Goa but in other cities like Mumbai and in the

meanwhile, yes, 'the Heat is on!!!'

#### Margao Council's decision is unjust

The Margao Municipal Council's decision to bring Advocate chambers under the trade license net is unjust and goes against the legal principles of fraternity. The council should not carry out the decisions as per whims and fancies. Imposing trade license fees on Advocate chambers/office based on erroneous assumption that of commercial activity, as that the Advocates do not conduct any trade.

As the legal profession is considered a non-commercial activity. The purpose of Law in society is to maintain Order and preserve moral sanctity that holds the society. Lawyers are officers of the court and one of the most indispensable pillars of the justice delivery system.

Legal profession is a noble profession and absolutely distinct from business, commerce and trade. It's a professional service because it's very person specific and based on skill and knowledge of the person. Moreover Law Firms do not require registration if the lawyers have already been recognised by the Bar Council of India.

By the Rules framed by the BCI, the lawyers are prohibited from actively participating in any trade or profession. Therefore, the legal profession cannot be called as the commercial activity, trade or business. The lawyer's activities are

held by the Supreme Court and by various High Courts. K G Vilop, Chorao

not commercial establishment as

## The great cricketing extravaganza kicks off

The Indian Premier League (IPL) is known to showcase domestic cricket talent in a big way. It has been a stepping stone for plenty of young Indian cricketers hoping to make it big. From the initial leagues, to the upcoming 18th edition, it has metamorphosed into a tournament that has a keen eye for talent and skills. Along the way, the league has shed its early teething problems.

Despite a few inherent flaws, the IPL has groomed and encouraged players. Presence of senior Indian and foreign cricketers alongside, freedom to go for their natural game and a significant financial cushion have ensured that young names like Riyan Parag, Sai Sudarshan, Rinku Singh came to the forefront along with a lot of others.

Fearless and committed, sincere and ambitious, the young guns in the IPL editions of the IPL have paid scant respect for reputations. Their focus is more on the ball; bowlers are secondary. The confidence reposed by franchises on some players despite their lackadaisical form has made sure that they repay the trust reposed in them.

Numerous local leagues modeled on the IPL are trying their best to hone talents. Fame and money are deceptive and dangerous companions; they need to be prioritised vis-a--vis duty and dedication.

Ganapathi Bhat, Akola

#### are water guzzlers Raising an alarm over water shortages in various parts of

Warren Pereira, Tivim

the state, the Aldona MLA has reportedly called on the government to ban new construction licenses for large apartment complexes and high-end bungalows with attached swimming pools.

measures, mainly because it is

for the benefit of the public's well

being rather than the police.

Swimming pools

It appears that swimming pools have now become more of a necessity than a luxury. It is a fact that people now want to live a luxurious life and are willing to pay for the amenities. However these swimming pools are putting a lot of pressure on the water availability for the locals for their daily use. Without a swimming pool cover, a lot of water in the pool is wasted due to evaporation. This loss of water is all the more during the hot summer season. Using a cover regularly reduces evaporation by 90 to 95%. Swimming pools are water guzzlers and lead to depletion of underground water. Recycling swimming pool water can be an environmentally friendly way to manage water usage and maintain pool hygiene. These pools must have a filtration system that circulates the water through filters to remove debris, dirt and contaminants. Periodically draining and refilling the pool can help manage

rest of the country as well. Here in Mumbai, there was a heat wave warning recently and then suddenly at night, there was a dip in the night temperatures. It is evident now, that the situation is going to be so erratic in the near future. The government and the health department have a huge task ahead of them. In the

Melville X D'Souza, Mumbai

How to contact us For press notes, general queries desk@herald-goa.com For Reporters reporters@herald-goa.com. For Business news

For Sports news sports@herald-goa.com For Advertisements advt@herald-goa.com

business@herald-goa.com For Letters to the Editor editor@herald-goa.com

**Printed and published by** Walter Ligorio D'Sousa for and on behalf of Herald Publications Pvt. Ltd. Printed at Herald Publications Pvt Ltd, Plot No: L-135, Phase II, Verna Industrial Estate, Verna, Salcete, Goa. Published at PO Box 160, Rua Sao Tome, Panjim, Goa - 403001.

Editor-in-chief: Raul Francisco A. Fernandes. Executive Editor: Satadru Ojha (Responsible under PRB Act) **Regd Office:** St Tome Road, Panjim. Goa. Tel: 0832-6750840 (Editorial) and 0832-6750839 (Advertising) Margao: 2737689. **Mumbai Office:** 16-A, Bell Building, 2nd Floor, 19 Sir PM Road, Fort, Mumbai - 400001 (Tel: 22840702/ 22844908). RNI No: 43667/83.

Disclaimer: Except for the editorial above, articles and letters in O Heraldo represent the views of the concerned authors, and do not necessarily reflect the

views of the O Heraldo editor, publisher, and/or owners.

Disclaimer: The advertisements published in O Heraldo are based on information furnished by the advertiser. O Heraldo does not authenticate the printed information in the advertisement. The advertiser will bear all the consequences of issues arising out of the advertisements if any, and not the O Heraldo.