

## Tarikh pe tarikh, Smart City saga an unending soap opera

Smart City CEO can't give finishing date for project, says 'wait till May 31'

Team Herald

PANJIM: For the tired residents of Panjim enduring road blockages, barricades, and dug-up roads for seven years, the nightmarish experience unleashed by the Smart City works is far from over.

Fresh from missing the High Court-given deadline of March 31, Sanjit Rodrigues, CEO of Imagine Panaji Smart City Development Limited (IPSCDL), had a pithy answer on Tuesday: "Wait until May 31."

Rodrigues was addressing the press, where he faced tough questions about the missed deadlines. But he did not – or could not – clearly specify the date by which the work would finish and Panjim finally become 'smart'. He acknowledged that the work on Taad Maad Road near Caculo Mall at St Inez



remains unfinished due to certain 'complexities', which require additional time for completion.

"I will follow my affidavit, and the court is monitoring the process. I can only provide updates as per the status, which is being supervised by the court. I cannot override the court's queries. I am answering very clearly to the court's questions," he said.

When asked why the project was delayed for so long, Rodrigues explained, "Many smart cities, including Panjim, requested an extension of the deadline from the Central Government. The Centre set March 31 as the final date. It's not that I extended or shortened the project timeline; the mission was supposed to end on March 31."

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– Sanjit Rodrigues, CEO of Imagine Panaji Smart City Development Limited (IPSCDL)

"BJP should be awarded for turning Panjim into a dumb city. This is a corruption of nearly Rs 1400 crore. The government should inform people where Rs 1,400 has been spent. We will see the state of the Smart City roads in the first week of monsoon

– Amit Palekar, AAP Goa Convenor

"Since October 14, 2015, when people were first sold a false dream, Panjimites have been left with nothing but a nightmare of broken roads, incomplete projects, substandard infrastructure and a city in ruins. The only thing 'Smart' about this project is how cleverly public funds are being looted under the pretext of development

– Pratibha Borkar, Congress Panjim Block President

## It's a political weapon: Kamra on govt silencing dissent

Shares satirical guide on how to kill an artist

PTI, NEW DELHI/MUMBAI: Comedian Kunal Kamra on Tuesday shared a five-point post on X titled "How to Kill an Artist: A Step-by-Step Guide" in which he criticised the violent outrage against his recent show and said artists can either sell their soul or wither in silence.

Kamra's video "Naya Bharat", released on his YouTube channel last week, led to massive political controversy over his traitor comment seen to be against Maharashtra Deputy Chief Minister Eknath Shinde.

### 'HOW TO KILL AN ARTIST: A STEP-BY-STEP GUIDE'

- 1) Outrage - just enough for brands to stop commissioning their work
- 2) Outrage more - until private and corporate gigs dry up
- 3) Outrage louder - so big venues won't take risk
- 4) Outrage violently - until even the smallest spaces shut their doors
- 5) Summon their audience for questioning - turning art into a crime scene



Shiv Sainiks destroyed the venue where Kamra shot the comedy show. The stand-up comic faces three FIRs in Mumbai and is currently in Tamil Nadu.

On Tuesday, he put out a post slamming the way he is being hounded by authorities.

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## Blast, blaze at firecracker godown in Gujarat kills 18

PTI

PTI, PALANPUR (GUJARAT): Eighteen persons were killed and five others injured after a blast at a firecracker warehouse led to a blaze and collapse of the building in Gujarat's Banaskantha district on Tuesday, officials said.

The incident took place in an industrial area near Deesa town at around 9.45 am.

"As many as 18 persons died in the incident, and five others were injured after the slab of the building collapsed following a massive blast," Superintendent of Police Akshayraj Makwana said.

He said the victims were workers from Madhya Pradesh and their family members, and most of them died after the slab collapsed on them.



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Fire-fighters try to douse a fire that broke out in a chemical factory in Rajkot, Gujarat, on Tuesday

## Private forest conversion: SC notice to Bhutani, others

Team Herald

PANJIM: The Supreme Court has scheduled the next hearing of Goa Foundation's appeal against the conversion of private forest land on May 13. The apex court has issued notices to Vikas Santhan Nannu, Parmesh Construction Company Limited (Bhutani) and the Zuari Industries Limited when the matter came up for hearing on March 28.

In an interim relief on March 3, 2025, the Supreme Court bench comprising Justice Abhay S Oka and Justice Ujjal Bhuyan had directed the Goa government not to issue conversion sanads for 855 survey numbers classified as private forests by the V T Thomas and Francisco Araujo Committees, effectively halting the conversion of 8.64 square km of private forest land in the State.

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## Road on comunidade land raises hackles in Cavelossim

Team Herald

MARGAO: Cavelossim residents have raised concerns over a road being built on comunidade land, questioning whether it is a public or private road and whether the PWD is involved in its construction.

They also sought clarification on the basis for the Cavelossim Panchayat's issuance of a No Objection Certificate (NOC) for the project. According to Sarpanch Dixon Vaz, the party constructing the road had submitted the required permissions, and the Panchayat would ensure public access to the road once completed.

While speaking to the media, Cavelossim residents, including Natividade Fernandes and Clide Fernandes, pointed out that trees and vegetation had been cleared for the project. They further alleged that a sand dune had been disturbed, affecting local water bodies.

Natividade Fernandes questioned how the construction was permitted when the road was

not designated as a public road. Calling for an inquiry, he stated that residents would escalate the issue to concerned departments and the South Goa MP for a detailed investigation.

Clide Fernandes questioned the PWD's absence in the project if the road was indeed public. He emphasised that a public

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road should serve a broader purpose but noted that this road ends near a company's property. "This raises several doubts, and we will seek answers from the authorities," he said.

Meanwhile, Sarpanch Vaz reiterated that the project is privately funded but assured that the Panchayat would ensure its public use, adding that necessary approvals had been obtained from relevant authorities.

## HC raps govt, gives 3-month deadline to raze illegal structures in fields

Team Herald

PANJIM: Issuing a stern warning to the State government for disobeying its order and failing to demolish 51 illegal structures, the High Court of Bombay at Goa on Tuesday ordered the razing of the structures in order to restore the low-lying paddy fields to their original state at Socorro, Guirim and Sangolda within the next three months.

Ever since a High Court order in 2021, government officials have found different reasons over the last four years to not comply with it. During Tuesday's hearing, the government counsel told the Court that the Rs 69 lakh budgetary sanction for demolition of structures and restoration work of the lands was awaited.

During the hearing of a PIL writ petition filed by Harihar Chodankar and Avertino Miranda, the High Court in March 2021, had observed that the North Goa Collector and the Bardez Deputy Collector, Mapusa, had already passed orders under Section 33 (3) of the Goa Land Revenue Code, 1968 on June 27, 2019 and

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May 26, 2020 respectively, on the alleged unauthorised activities regarding filling up of the paddy fields.

Representing the Comunidade of Serula, Adv Y V Nadkarni, had also submitted that these activities were still on. Government Advocate P Arolkar had assured the Court as well that steps will be taken to implement the order both in letter and spirit.

In August last year, the Court had requested the Administrative Tribunal to dispose of the pending appeals as soon as possible, preferably within six months. The Court had also asked the government authorities to submit the plan of action for implementation of its own orders. But since the government authorities did not initiate any action, the petitioners again approached the Court praying to direct the government authorities to execute the order.

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