

SMART CITY MESS: Oppn wants work done before monsoon

Cong warns IPSCDL of criminal proceedings for negligence & misappropriation of public funds; AAP says BJP should be awarded for turning Panjim into a dumb city

Team Herald

PANJIM: Slamming the Imagine Panaji Smart City Development Limited (IPSCDL) for failing to meet the March 31 deadline, Congress on Tuesday that it will be forced to initiate criminal proceedings for negligence and misappropriation of public funds.

In a presentation submitted to the CEO of IPSCDL, Congress Panjim Block President Pratibha Borkar said the Congress has resolved to undertake an independent scrutiny of all IPSCDL projects and publicly expose the rampant corruption and fraud being orchestrated under the guise of Smart City development.

The Congress also demanded a white paper detailing full account of all completed and pending works along with expenditure incurred, action against contractors responsible for substandard work, including blacklisting them from future projects and a clear timeline with guaranteed completion dates, failing which IPSCDL must be held accountable before the public and the courts.

"The current state of Pan-



The incomplete works at Taad Maad, St Inez

jim is a living testament to the BJP government's monumental failure. With the monsoons approaching, the reckless delays and disastrous planning will only make matters worse for the people. The government's and IPSCDL's actions suggest that their sole intention is to siphon off public funds under the garb of Smart City development with complete disregard for the suffering of common citizens," Borkar said.

She said, "The so-called 'Double Engine Sarkar' has utterly failed to transform Panjim into a Smart City. Instead, 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." Meanwhile The Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) Goa along with residents of Panjim expressed disappointment and anger over the incomplete work at Taad Maad road in St Inez.

Speaking to mediapersons, AAP Goa Convenor Amit Palekar highlighted that the IPSCDL failed to

CONGRESS DEMANDS

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INCOMPLETE WORKS DRAW AAP 'S IRE

- Expresses disappointment and anger over the incomplete work at Taad Maad road in St Inez
- Highlights the IPSCDL failed to meet the deadline imposed by the court as most areas were not completed
- Laments that by now the Panjim should have been developed into a full-fledged Smart City, but the ground reality shows no signs of development

meet the deadline imposed by the court as most areas were not completed.

He lamented that by now the Panjim should have been developed into a full-fledged Smart City, but the ground reality shows no signs of development.

"It has been four years now, but the roads in St Inez are yet to be completed. The Bharatiya Janata Party (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," he said.

AAP Goa vice president Valmiki Naik said, "It has been seven years when the Smart City work was started, but no engineer or supervisor was seen in the city. Even I have not seen any officials holding plan and explaining it to the workers. Question is what the residents of the city are going to get after spending Rs 1,400 crore?"

Health officials visit labourers living in miserable conditions at Farmagudi

Inspect the site after O Herald highlighted the plight of labourers living in tents without basic facilities

Team Herald

PONDA: Taking cognisance of O Herald report on the plight of labourers involved in highway development works—who were living in tents, facing hardships without proper accommodations and basic facilities at Farmagudi—health official Dr Smita Parksekar and sanitary inspector Manoj Naik inspected the site.

Reportedly, the officials discussed hygiene and accommodation issues with the contractor, calling for necessary steps to be initiated.

O Herald report in its April 1, 2025 edition had highlighted the plight of labourers living in tents, facing hardships without proper accommodations



and basic facilities at Farmagudi. Expressing his gratitude

to O Herald for highlighting the miserable living conditions, Viraj Sapre, said, "We provide good treatment to our pets and dogs. However, the condition of labourers is the worst during this scorching summer without proper accommodations."

He noted that for the past six to eight months, the labourers engaged by the contractor had been staying by the roadside without basic facilities and were allegedly defecating in the open.

APRIL 1, 2025

Highway labourers forced to reside in squalor in Ponda

Workers live in temporary shelters covered with plastic sheets by roadside, lack essential amenities such as toilets and bathrooms

These workers do not get proper accommodation, toilets, and bathrooms. They are not even allowed to use the public facilities. This is not only for the workers but also for the people living in the area. The workers are not allowed to use the public facilities. This is not only for the workers but also for the people living in the area.

ARE RULES MEANT TO BE BROKEN

UPENDRA NAIK



Vehicles belonging to BJP MLAs and office bearers were parked in a no-parking zone outside the Institute Menezes Braganza in Panaji on Monday during the BJP's Core Committee meeting

Post-graduate seats increased for better diversity, claims university

Team Herald

PANJIM: Students are upset over Goa University increasing post-graduate seats for all courses to students from other Universities. The University denied that Goan students would lose admissions but claimed that it was done for better diversity among the students.

From a maximum of two seats for other Universities the number has gone up to as many as 10 in a large and high demand programme of MSc Chemistry where total 100 seats are offered and keeping 10 out of these seats reserved for outsiders means Goan students will lose 8 seats which were in either open and reserved categories of students.

The rules earlier stated in Ref 1, the reservation guidelines stated that "10% of seats,

Now because of various reasons the number of seats has increased. In certain cases the number has gone to 60 seats. So we have removed the cap and said that the seats for students from other Universities will be reserved at 10 per cent

—Ashwin Lawande, Goa University Deputy Registrar

subject to a maximum of two seats and a minimum of one seat in each programme of study, shall be made available for candidates of other Indian Universities."

But now in this year's notification in Ref 2, the reservation guidelines states that "10% of seats shall be made available for candidates of other Indian Universities" which means the Goa University has removed the maximum and minimum limit and resorted to outright 10 per cent, the students said.

Accordingly the seat ma-

trix showing all the available seats per programme and for each category of reservations including other Universities category is shown in these notifications and thus shows that there is now a sudden rise in seats offered for outside students.

But there is no circular from the government that stipulates the number of outside GU students permitted nor any University formal decision is cited, according to the students.

Also MA programmes in French, Portuguese and Women's Studies are show-

ing less than 10 seats for this compared to 19 that were shown during the last year.

GU Deputy Registrar Ashwin Lawande said, "Earlier we had around 15 to 20 seats for programmes. Of that 10 % seats were reserved for students from other universities with a capping being two. It was 10 to 15 years back. Now because of various reasons the number has increased. In certain cases the number has gone to 60 seats. We have removed the cap and said that the seats for students from other Universities will be reserved at 10%, if we are unable to fill these seats then these will be converted into general category."

He said, "We have held entrance exams and will announce the results. On April 4 And 5 we will have counselling at multiple locations."

No debate on cabinet rejig at BJP core panel meet

Team Herald

PANJIM: Core Committee of Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) met at the party's state headquarters in the city to discuss programmes to be organised on the occasion of party's Foundation Day on April 6, 2025. However, there was no debate with regards to issues related to alliance or cabinet reshuffle at the meeting.

Speaking to mediapersons after the meeting, Chief Minister Pramod Sawant said the meeting discussed the vari-

ous kinds of meetings to be organised on April 6, 2025, the party's Foundation Day.

BJP Goa President Damu Naik said, "It was the first meeting of the core committee this year. Issues related to alliance or cabinet reshuffle were not discussed in the meeting. Decision on these issues will be the central leadership of the party in consultation with the State leaders."

Naik said, "It has been decided that the party workers will hoist party flags at their residences. They will take selfies

with the hashtag 'Vikasit Bharat'. 'Gaon Chalo Abhiyan' will be launched. Meeting of party workers will be held," he said.

Meanwhile, Dhavalikar brothers (Power Minister Sudin Dhavalikar and Maharashtra Gomantak Party (MGP) President Deepak Dhavalikar) met BJP National General Secretary (Organisation) B L Santosh in New Delhi.

However, both Pramod Sawant and Damu Naik said that there is not much significance in the MGP leaders meeting BJP's central leadership in Delhi.

UP native held with ganja worth Rs 5 lakh in Siolim

Team Herald

PANJIM: The Anjuna Police have arrested Sonu Yadav (29), a native of Deoria, Uttar Pradesh, for allegedly being in illegal possession of five kg of ganja, worth approximately Rs five lakh. The police also seized the scooter used in the crime.

According to police, the alleged accused was arrested after a raid was conducted near Primary Health Centre, Siolim, Bardez, during which he was found with the contraband. He was produced before JMFC, Mapusa, which remanded him to five days police custody.

An FIR has been registered and the case is being investigated by PSI Viraj Naik of Anjuna Police Station.

Two Pune kayakers rescued from drowning at Palolem

Two foreign nationals saved at Arossim and Arambol

Team Herald

PANJIM: Two kayakers from Pune were rescued from drowning off Palolem beach in South Goa by lifesavers during the extended Eid weekend, which also witnessed the rescue of two foreign nationals off the State's coastline.

Two men from Pune, aged between 30 and 33 years, who were kayaking off the Palolem coast, panicked when seawater flooded their

boat when they were around 500 metres into the sea. Spotting their distress, lifesaver Laxmikant rushed into the water using a jetski and brought them safely ashore.

At Arossim Beach, a minor girl from Russia was suddenly pulled into the sea by rough waves when she and her parents were swimming. A lifesaver rushed to her rescue, bringing the victim to the safety of the shore.

At Arambol beach, a 40-year-old man from Kazakhstan was rescued from drowning off the Arambol coast after he was caught in a rip current. Capt Sandeep Mapankar rushed to his aid and brought him ashore.

Also at Ashwem beach, a 30-year-old woman from Delhi, who had ventured around 70 metres into the sea, found herself trapped in a rip current. Her cries for help caught the at-

tention of lifesaver Sumit Ankolekar, who immediately informed the lifesaver tower, before rushing seaward with a rescue board. Capt Nagesh Sarang also joined the lifesaver in the rescue operation with a jetski and brought the person ashore safely.

A 50-year-old from Delhi who started drowning off the coast was saved at Agonda.

Tourist recounts road rage assault in viral post

Vows never to return to Goa; the youth shares experience of being chased down & beaten up near Margao rly stn

Team Herald

MARGAO: A tourist's social media post describing a road rage incident near Margao Railway Station has gone viral online, raising concerns about visitor safety in Goa. The tourist, who was on his way to catch a train after dropping his girlfriend at Dabolim Airport, claims he was chased, blocked, and assaulted by two locals on a two-wheeler who accused him of cutting them off in traffic.

According to the viral post shared on Reddit titled "Got physically abused in Goa, will probably never come back," the incident occurred as the tourist was driving a rental car toward Margao Railway Station. The tourist had rented the car specifically to avoid riding a two-wheeler in the scorching heat during his fourth visit to Goa with his girlfriend. After dropping her at the airport (GOI), he was rushing to catch his train from Margao station

when the incident occurred.

The tourist insisted there was no contact between the vehicles during the alleged traffic dispute, writing, "No bump, no scratches, our vehicles did not touch, and frankly I didn't even cut him." He mentioned that the two local men asked him to stop, but he continued driving as he was in a hurry to catch his train.

The two men allegedly followed him all the way to the railway station where they blocked his car. "One guy got off, picked

up a stone and threatened to break the windshield if I didn't open the window," the tourist wrote in his post. Upon opening the window, he claims he was immediately punched and repeatedly hit while being verbally abused by the men, who allegedly made derogatory comments about him being an outsider and used offensive language against him and his family.

The tourist described the tense situation, noting that all this occurred when he had only

7-8 minutes left to return the rental car and board his train. The situation was eventually defused when some local bystanders intervened, allowing the tourist to return his rental car and board his train just in time. "This was so horrible I haven't even processed it fully yet," the tourist wrote, adding that the experience had "scarred all the good times" he had previously enjoyed in Goa.

The viral post has sparked numerous reactions online, with

some users sharing similar experiences. "Exact same feeling. Faced something similar but comparatively a very mild reaction but yes never going to go to Goa again," commented one user, while another wrote, "I had a similar experience though it didn't go to punches as I am heavily built and look menacing myself. Goa has gone down to the dumps. This was my 9th visit and yes like you, the last."

The tourist mentioned his intention to file a police complaint.

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