

IN RUSH TO TAR ROADS, DEBRIS LEFT BEHIND

Not a very Smart City: Road-side rubble yet to be cleared, no deadline in sight

Team Herald

PANJIM: In their rush to tar the roads and try to finish patchwork repairs by March 31, the Smart City authorities seem to have forgotten the debris dug up and left behind at many places in Panjim.

An O Herald inspection showed that stretches such as SV Road, from Geeta Bakery to DB Road Junction, the



HELIODORO SALGADO ROAD

Market to DB Road and behind Signal Training Centre Headquarters, have huge piles of debris that have made movement for both, traffic and pedestrians, difficult.

According to the residents at some locations the

“The debris has been here for a month now and customers hesitate to come to the shop. We have no idea when the work is going to get completed

– Harun Sheikh, shop owner in the market

debris has been piling for a month and the contractors do not care to take it away.

Harun Sheikh, a shop owner in the market, said, “The debris has been here

for a month now and customers hesitate to come to the shop. We have no idea when the work is going to get completed.”

According to Kashim Mulla, a bus driver, the debris was making it difficult to manoeuvre

the vehicles.

“We are also finding it difficult to park the vehicles at the regular parking spot. I hope that these debris are removed soon,” he said.

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Authorities seek fresh deadline in court

PANJIM: The Imagine Panaji Smart City Development Limited (IPSCDL) has requested an extension from the High Court to complete the ongoing Smart City work along the Taad-Maad stretch at St Inez. Advocate General Devidas Pangam informed the court on Wednesday that the project is now expected to be completed by the end of May.

According to Pangam, the delay is primarily due to the need for additional precautions in handling a crucial 12-metre sewerage line that runs from Taad-Maad to the Sewage Treatment Plant (STP). He explained that the line must be carefully man-

aged to avoid damage to a parallel sewerage line and a gas pipeline in the area. “The work there is delicate,” Pangam added.

The govt also informed the Court that, aside from a few locations facing technical challenges, all other road and sewerage projects under the Smart City initiative have been completed as per the schedule outlined in the initial submission.

In response to the High Court's request for an update, the IPSCDL submitted an affidavit detailing the current status of infrastructure projects under the Smart Cities Mission and AMRUT 1.0.

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War over Waqf bill in Parliament

Unconstitutional, says Oppn; no interference in religious matters, says Shah

PTI, NEW DELHI: The ruling NDA on Wednesday launched a feisty defence of the Waqf (Amendment) Bill in the Lok Sabha amid the opposition's charge that it was unconstitutional and targeted Muslims, as Home Minister Amit Shah asserted that the government had no intention of interfering in their religious matters and was solely driven by the aim of transparent administration of Waqf properties.

Shah's intervention came during the day-long debate that witnessed a fierce exchange between the two sides, with Congress Deputy Leader Gaurav Gogoi alleging that the bill was an attempt to attack the basic structure of the Constitution, defame minorities, disenfranchise them and divide the society.

Minorities Affairs Minister Kiren Rijiju in his opening remarks rejected the allegation that the proposed law was an interference in the constitutionally guaranteed freedom in religious affairs.

The bill has nothing to do

with religion, but deals only with properties, he said tabling the Bill, which was examined and redrafted by a joint committee of Parliament.

“The government is not going to interfere in any religious institution. The changes made in the Waqf law by the UPA government gave it overriding effect over other statutes, hence the new amendments were required,” Rijiju said amid noisy opposition protests.

“You (opposition) tried to mislead the people on issues which are not part of the Waqf Bill,” he said to the opposition.

Both ministers asserted that the proposed reforms would ensure the welfare of poor Muslims and women.

The BJP was bolstered by a show of support from its key allies like the TDP, JD(U), Shiv Sena and Lok Janshakti Party (Ram Vilas), while the INDIA bloc put up a united show in opposing the bill.

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WAQF (AMENDMENT) BILL, 2024 – WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

■ A waqf is a religious or charitable donation, usually property, made by Muslims

WHAT IS WAQF?

■ Once a property is designated as waqf, it cannot be sold or transferred

■ Proceeds are used to maintain mosques, graveyards, madrasas, and orphanages

■ Waqf boards are estimated to control 8.72 lakh properties (over 9.4 lakh acres)



■ Mandates inclusion of non-Muslims in the Central Waqf Council and state waqf boards

CONTENTIOUS CLAUSES

■ Waqf tribunal will include a district judge and a state government official of joint secretary rank

■ Tribunal decisions can be challenged in High Court

■ Every waqf property must

be registered on a central portal within six months of the law's enactment

■ No property used for religious/charitable purposes to be recognised as waqf without formal documentation

PATH TO PARLIAMENT

■ Amends the Waqf Act of 1995, governing the management of properties donated by Muslims

■ Initially tabled in Parliament in August 2024, but sent to Joint Parliamentary Committee (JPC) after protests

■ 14 amendments were cleared, and 44 opposition amendments rejected

■ Approved by the Union Cabinet in February 2025

Dhavalikar bros assert brotherhood with BJP

Claim alliance to stay for next State and Lok Sabha polls, but certain elements within BJP were trying to jeopardise alliance

Team Herald

PONDA: Fresh off the plane from Delhi after a meeting with BJP national general secretary (Organisation) B L Santosh, Maharashtra-Gomantak Party (MGP) president Pandurang aka Deepak Dhavalikar asserted on Wednesday that the MGP-BJP alliance would stay in place for the 2027 Assembly polls and even the 2029 Lok Sabha elections.

His statement assumes significance in the backdrop of two recent developments that are significant for the State's political climate – the impending Cabinet reshuffle and Chief Minister Pramod Sawant's recent assertions that BJP would keep the Priol and Mandrem constituencies in the 2027 State polls.

Pushed on the defensive by these assertions, the Dhavalikar brothers – Deepak and Ramakrishna aka Sudin – had rushed to Delhi earlier

“The post-poll alliance was formed with BJP national leaders after the 2022 Assembly results; so we took up the matter with BJP national general secretary and also asked whether one of the Cabinet Ministers in the State has been given authority to speak on the alliance between the two parties

– Deepak Dhavalikar, MGP president

er this week to meet the BJP top brass. Deepak's statements on Wednesday seem to suggest that the meeting went off satisfactorily, though he claimed it was a goodwill visit.

Dhavalikar said, “The post-poll alliance was formed by BJP national leaders after the 2022 Assembly results, so naturally we took up the matter with BJP national general secretary and also asked whether one of the Cabinet Ministers in the State has been given authority to speak on the alliance between the two parties.”

The unnamed ‘Cabinet Minister’ is a reference to Art and Culture Minister Govind Gaude, who followed up the

CM's declaration on Priol by saying that the announcement gave him the strength of ‘10 elephants’.

However, the MGP president said that Santosh had promised them that the alliance would continue into the next Assembly and Lok Sabha elections. He went on to add that since both parties had a common voter base, unity would be important and that seat sharing would be decided after a survey before the elections.

He claimed that there were certain elements within the BJP that were trying to jeopardise the alliance, but the BJP central leadership had taken note of this.

Yashasvi quits Mumbai, to pad up for Goa as captain

Team Herald

PANJIM: Indian cricketer Yashasvi Jaiswal is leaving Mumbai and is set to join Goa ahead of the 2025-26 domestic season. The left-handed opener, regarded as one of India's brightest batting talents, made the decision due to personal reasons, bringing an unexpected end to his association with the Mumbai Cricket Association (MCA), the institution that played a key role in shaping his international career.



Jaiswal formally communicated his decision to the MCA on Tuesday, requesting to be relieved from Mumbai's domestic squad. The governing body has since accepted his request, paving the way for his move to Goa.

“Goa has thrown me a new opportunity and it has offered me a leadership role. My first goal will be to do well for India and whenever I'm not

MATCHWINNER ARRIVES

■ In June 2023, Jaiswal scored 171 against West Indies in his debut Test

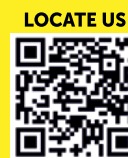
■ He scored back to back Test double hundreds last year during England's tour of India, becoming the third batsman after Vinod Kambli and Virat Kohli to achieve this feat

■ He holds the record for the quickest 50 in IPL, scoring the runs off 13 balls while playing for Rajasthan Royals against Kolkata Knight Riders in 2023

on national duty, I will be playing for Goa and try to make them go deep into the tournament. This was an (important) opportunity which came my way and I just took it,” a news portal quoted Jaiswal as saying.

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