

# Dark and winding, unlit Arlem bypass keeps commuters on edge

Locals decry the lack of streetlights, or even basic cat-eye reflectors and signage to mark the ends of the road; complain of rampant dumping of garbage and poultry waste

Team Herald

**MARGAO:** The Arlem-Nuvm bypass, a vital artery in South Goa's transport network, continues to lie in complete darkness due to the absence of streetlights—raising serious safety concerns for daily commuters and residents.

Despite repeated complaints, authorities have failed to act, leaving the stretch hazardous, especially for two-wheeler riders and pedestrians after sunset. Locals say the lack of illumination has turned the bypass into a nightly threat, heightening the risk of accidents and making it a haven for anti-social activities and garbage dumpers.

"This road has become very dangerous at night," said Peter Colaco, a resident



of Nuvm. "There are no streetlights at all, and with vehicles speeding by, it's a nightmare for anyone riding a bike or walking. We've raised complaints, but nothing has been done so far." The bypass is the the shortest route between Arlem

and Nuvm, and caters to residents of Arlem, Fatorda, Gogol, Raia and beyond.

With no streetlights, the road's twists and turns, the shrubby and garbage on the side become one with the inky blackness of the landscape. As a result, all on-

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coming motorists have their headlights on high beam, blinding each other — but not slowing down.

Menino Quadros, another local, echoed the frustration. "The authorities keep giving assurances, but the ground reality remains unchanged. This road is heavily used, and we are putting our lives at risk every day," he said.

Commuters are particularly alarmed during the monsoon, when poor visi-

bility and fogged-up windshields makes the situation worse. "The authorities need to wake up before something tragic happens," said Ritesh Shirodkar, a regular user of the bypass. "Do we really have to wait for an accident or a crime for someone to act?"

To make matters worse, locals report that some chicken vendors are dumping poultry waste along the unlit stretch, attracting stray dogs and adding to the danger. Yet, the Public Works Department and local bodies remain silent, with no timeline or plan in sight for installing streetlights.

Until basic infrastructure is provided, residents and commuters are left to navigate a dark, dangerous route—waiting for the system to act before it's too late.

# Complete road work by May 31, Collector warns depts

Team Herald

**MARGAO:** With the monsoon fast approaching, the South Goa District Collector's office has directed all government departments to complete ongoing road excavation works and ensure full restoration by May 31—or risk chaos during the rains.

Currently, multiple agencies are engaged in large-scale road digging across the district for projects like sewage network expansion, underground cabling, and water pipeline installation. However, the lack of co-ordination and slow pace of restoration have triggered frustration among residents and commuters alike.



In several areas, commuters face daily traffic snarls and safety hazards due to dug-up stretches. In some cases, water pipelines have also been damaged during the excavation, worsening public inconvenience. "If these dug-up roads are left as they are, it will be a nightmare once the rains begin. Slippery roads, flooding, and traffic chaos will become a daily struggle,"

warned Swati Naik, a resident of Fatorda.

Srinet Kothwale, Additional Collector-I, confirmed that the administration has taken stock of the situation. "A review meeting was held with all departments. Instructions have been issued to complete all road digging works and restore the roads by May 31," he said, adding that compliance is expected without further delay.

# Goan excavator owners allege contract bias at industrial estates, threaten stir

Team Herald

**VASCO:** The All Goa Excavator Owners Association on Saturday accused the Goa Industrial Development Corporation (IDC) of sidelining local contractors in favour of a select group of outsiders, warning of mass agitation if the State government fails to intervene.

At a press conference, association members alleged that government excavation contracts—particularly at IDC sites—are routinely awarded based on favouritism and connections, with little regard for transparency or merit. "We are constantly side-

**The members claimed that Goan excavator operators are being systematically excluded, while a handful of contractors continue to receive repeated favours. Attempts to flag these irregularities, they said, have been met with intimidation and harassment.**

**The associations are demanding immediate government intervention, a transparent probe into contract allocation practices by the Goa IDC, and safeguards to protect employment opportunities for Goans. They also called for the resignation of certain IDC officials over alleged favouritism and negligence**

lined despite following all legal procedures. Contracts are awarded based on favouritism and connections, not merit or transparency," said a senior member of the association. The members claimed that Goan opera-

tors are being systematically excluded, while a handful of contractors continue to receive repeated favours. Attempts to flag these irregularities, they said, have been met with intimidation. "If we highlight the

wrongdoings, we are harassed. This is unacceptable," said Bhohe, a long-time excavator operator and association member.

The All Goa Truck Owners Association also extended support, stating that local workers are facing rising threats from illegal practices and increasing reliance on migrant contractors. "We have been assured by the Chief Minister that this issue will be addressed. But if action is not taken soon, frustration among Goan workers may lead to unrest," said a representative.

The associations are demanding immediate government intervention, a

transparent probe into contract allocation practices by the Goa IDC, and safeguards to protect employment opportunities for Goans. They also called for the resignation of certain IDC officials over alleged favouritism and negligence.

"If the government fails to intervene, we will be forced to take matters into our own hands," the association spokesperson warned, hinting at large-scale protests.

A formal memorandum is expected to be submitted to the Chief Minister and concerned departments in the coming days, urging prompt and fair resolution.

# Curtorim MLA sets deadline for Sonsoddo leachate fix

Team Herald

**MARGAO:** In a bid to prevent further accidents and health hazards at the Sonsoddo dumpsite ahead of the monsoon, local representatives convened an urgent afternoon meeting with officials from the Margao Municipal Council (MMC), including engineers and site supervisors.

The meeting was aimed at addressing persistent issues related to drainage and waste spillage, which have previously endangered public safety. Curtorim MLA Aleixo Reginaldo Lourenco has set a deadline for the MMC, urging them to complete the work by Tuesday. The action comes in the wake of a series of mishaps in early April, where leachate from the dumpyard spilled onto the main road making the surface slippery and causing accidents.

Following detailed discussions on risks, concerns, and long-term solutions, it was unanimously decided to repair the existing drain and install an additional drainage system to prevent future leachate or waste overflow onto the roads—especially during heavy rains. "We have issued a clear deadline to the Margao Municipality to complete the work by Monday or Tuesday," said Lourenco. "If no action is taken within this timeframe, we will proceed with the repairs using our own manpower."

# Margao baby swap a 'miscommunication', say Hospicio docs

Team Herald

**MARGAO:** Confusion over an alleged baby swap at the South Goa District Hospital has been laid to rest, with hospital authorities confirming that no mix-up occurred and attributing the incident to a miscommunication.

Medical Superintendent Dr Rajendra Borkar clarified that hospital records confirmed the newborn in question was a girl, as originally documented, and that the concerned parents—who initially believed they had delivered a boy—have accepted the explanation.

"It was purely a case of miscommunication," Dr Borkar told O Heraldo on Saturday. "Our records—from the operation theatre to paediatric and newborn handover documentation—clearly show the woman delivered a baby girl. Even the documents signed by the parents at the time of handover state the child was female."

The controversy erupted after the family, based in Quepem, raised suspicions that their newborn had been mistakenly swapped following a caesarean delivery on April 8. An internal inquiry was immediately initiated to verify the claim. The hospital revealed that the woman had been admitted on April 7, and was one of eight mothers to undergo a caesarean section the following day. Of those, six gave birth to baby girls.

**NO MIX-UP**

- Woman from Quepem delivers baby girl via C-section on April 8
- Nurse allegedly informs her family that she gave birth to a boy
- All records—from the operation theatre to newborn handover documentation signed by parents—clearly show the woman delivered a baby girl
- Hospital MS explained the facts to the parents, who have now accepted the situation

The confusion reportedly stemmed from a nurse allegedly informing the family that the baby was a boy—contradicting official records and sparking alarm among relatives.

"I personally met both parents and explained the facts to them. They are now convinced it was simply a communication gap," Dr Borkar added. "However, they are free to pursue DNA testing or any other verification they deem necessary for peace of mind." Hospital authorities have urged the public not to speculate further, stressing that strict protocols are followed to ensure the accurate identification and documentation of newborns.

# Congress, locals upset over hoisting of BJP flag at Navelim village panchayat

Team Herald

**MARGAO:** A group of residents from Navelim and the Congress party have strongly objected to the installation of a BJP flag within the premises of the Navelim village panchayat, criticizing the act as an attempt to politicize a neutral public institution.

The flag was reportedly put up to commemorate the BJP's foundation day by an unknown, but its presence has triggered backlash from opposition leaders and local residents.

Taking serious note of the matter, Congress leaders visited the site on Saturday and condemned the move, asserting that panchayat premises should remain politically neutral and not be used to promote any particular party.

"This is a blatant misuse of public space for political propaganda," said Savio D'Silva, South Goa District Congress President. "The Navelim panchayat belongs to the people, not to any one political party. We demand the immediate removal of the BJP flag from the compound wall."

Savio Coutinho, another senior Congress leader, joined D'Silva in denouncing the act, calling it "an insult to the democratic fabric of grassroots governance."

Locals also expressed their frustration, echoing the Congress party's concerns. Many said the installation of a political party flag within government premises undermines the non-partisan nature of panchayat bodies.

When contacted by Congress leaders, the panchayat secretary

clarified that the panchayat was unaware of the flag installation and did not authorise it. The circumstances under which the flag was placed remain unclear, raising further questions about procedural violations.

Congress leaders have urged the local authorities to act swiftly and ensure the removal of the flag to maintain the impartiality of the panchayat. As of Saturday, no official action had been reported.

MAX. TEMP	34.6 °C
MIN. TEMP	26.3 °C

idharudhar



Relax! They're all sterilized and vaccinated now!

# Of millets, milk and missing streams: Dhangars' pastoral way of life at risk

Team Herald

**MARGAO:** In Goa's forested hinterlands, between mist-covered foothills and shaded plateaus, lives a community whose rhythms are set not by clocks but by rain clouds and grass. The Dhangars—traditional pastoralists and millet cultivators—have for generations lived in sync with the terrain, moving with their livestock through the lush but rugged corridors of the Western Ghats.

Their way of life, built on rain-fed millets and cattle herding, is a model of ecological wisdom. "It's a culture shaped by generations of living with the land and adapting to its constraints," says Ruchika Tiku, an environmental science researcher at Goa University, whose Goa Water Stories project explores the socio-ecological traditions of Goa's Dhangars.

The Dhangars' intimate knowledge of the Western Ghats' ecology has allowed them to thrive in these challenging terrains. "They knew where the streams reappeared after the first rains, which slopes held the richest grass, and where to sow millets for the best yield with the least water," Tiku explains.



protein-rich diet of milk and millet gave them tremendous strength, and it shows—I met several elders over a hundred years old who were ambulatory, lucid, and proud keepers of oral traditions," she says.

Natural springs and seasonal streams once dotted their routes.

"Mineral-rich water from these sources wasn't just for survival—it was something to relish," says Tiku. "Now, tap water is available in many settlements, but they describe it as tasteless in comparison."

The construction of the Mopa airport in Pernem has disrupted this delicate balance. "What were once perennial springs and stream-fed pools like Vajar and Foparne are now filled with rubble or drying out," says Dhangar



**The U.N. has declared that two-thirds of the world's population will live in water-scarce regions by 2025. The construction of the Mopa airport in Pernem destroyed an entire ecosystem, innumerable perennial springs and at least two crucial streams Vajar (completely destroyed) and Foparne (reduced water flow and rubble in place of deepwater pools). These water bodies were a fresh water source for the entire Pernem taluka and their destruction disrupted the way of life of one of the last few traditional Dhangar settlements residing here**

rective to protect natural water sources, little was done to shield them from construction debris. "The plateau once absorbed monsoon rain, slowly releasing it into aquifers and wells below. That cycle is broken. Now, rain rushes off the concrete, flooding villages and draining away," Tiku says.

The loss isn't just environmental—it's cultural. The Dhangars' agricultural practices, especially millet cultivation, supported not just their families but their herds. Post-harvest crop residue served as nutritious fodder, boosting milk yield and quality. Their sustainable practice of grazing cattle

these aren't pipe dreams. They're possibilities.

What's needed now, she says, is a shift in priorities. "Development can't come at the cost of erasing the very ecosystems that sustained people for centuries. The Dhangars are proof that coexisting with nature isn't primitive—it's profoundly wise."

*Goa Water Stories is a collaboration with the Living Waters Museum, the Centre for Public Policy and Governance at the Goa Institute of Management, the Goa University and the Sunaparanta Goa Centre for the Arts*



Scan the QR code to experience Ruchika Tiku and Ryan Bhengra's project, 'Pastoralism, Millets and the Ecology of Western Ghats'

These semi-nomadic communities, settled in areas like Pernem, Sattari, Quepem and Canacona, would migrate seasonally through the forests with herds of goats and buffaloes—each household managing dozens of animals. "Their

farmer Dnyaneshwar Varak. "Earlier, we walked a kilometre to fetch water for ourselves and our cattle. Now, we walk five. There's barely any agriculture, and food-bearing trees have dwindled." Despite a Supreme Court di-