

EIGHT YEARS ON, PANJIM MARKET FIRE HYDRANTS STILL DEFUNCT

Fire dept says fire hydrants were found non-functional during the last system test conducted in 2017; CCP declines to comment until an official report on the equipment's status is received

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PANJIM: In a shocking revelation it has come to light, the fire hydrants installed in the Panjim market have been rendered non-functional for nearly eight years.

According to a senior fire brigade official, the fire hydrants in the city market were found to be non-functional during the last system test conducted in 2017.

Acknowledging the situation, a senior Corporation of the City of Panaji (CCP) official declined to comment until an official report on the equipment's status was received. He also did not specify when the report would be available.

Expressing serious concerns about the equipment's reliability, Raju Damaskar, president of the market shop owners association, said the safety equipment has never been tested or used since its installation. "We don't know if it even works. The munic-



The fire hydrant station in an utter state of neglect

ipality is responsible for its maintenance, but they haven't checked on it," he stated. Damaskar highlighted the risks posed by the market's dense footfall and frequent power outages.

"In the event of a fire, we would have no option, but to rely entirely on the fire brigade. In the old market,

there were two major fires reported around 10 years ago that completely gutted the premises. Safety checks should be conducted every two to three months," he said. He also noted that any safety concerns or recommendations are formally communicated to the government.

The Panjim market, home to around 500 shops offering everything from daily essentials to seafood, fruits, vegetables, mobile phones, and festival decorations, has become a bustling commercial hub. Originally established during Portuguese rule, the market was redeveloped in

SAFETY EQUIPMENT NOT USED SINCE ITS INSTALLATION: SHOP OWNER

“The safety equipment has never been tested or used since its installation. “We don't know if it even works. The municipality is responsible for its maintenance, but they haven't checked on it. In the event of a fire, we would have no option, but to rely entirely on the fire brigade. In the old market, there were two major fires reported around 10 years ago that completely gutted the premises. Safety checks should be conducted every two to three months

– Raju Damaskar, president of the market shop owners association

MAINTAINING FIRE SAFETY SYSTEMS IS CCP'S RESPONSIBILITY: FIRE OFFICIAL

“The fire hydrants in the city market were found to be non-functional during the last system test conducted in 2017. Maintaining the fire safety systems is the responsibility of CCP. I am currently unaware of its present condition. I will look into the matter

– A senior official from the Panjim Fire services

two phases between 2002 and 2003, with support from the late Chief Minister Manohar Parrikar, following a request from the shopkeepers association.

A senior official from the Panjim Fire Department

confirmed that maintaining the fire safety systems is the responsibility of the municipality. "I am currently unaware of its present condition," the official admitted but assured that he would look into the matter.

Two arrested for felling, smuggling of teak at Mollem

SANTOSH NAIK



Team Herald

PONDA: Forest officials arrested two individuals for the illegal felling and smuggling of teak wood logs in Mollem.

The arrested individuals, who have been arrested by Range Forest Officer (RFO) Anil Fernandes and his team, have been identified as Raghu Naik, 26, from Cuncolim, and Dilip Talwar, 42, from Kirlalpal.

The operation followed the cutting down of two large teak trees, which were then processed into 13 pieces. According to infor-

mation released by the Forest Department, a person named Umesh from Valandav, Dharbandora had permitted the trees to be cut on his property for a sum of Rs 25,000.

Acting on intelligence, the Forest Department personnel maintained a close watch on the area. Raghu and Dilip were taken into custody by RFO and his staff upon their arrival at the location.

Forest officials stated that Umesh will be taken into custody tomorrow, and further legal action will be pursued in accordance with the prevailing forest laws.

Oppn slams nuke power plant push

Says Goa must not become a "lab for BJP's dangerous experiments"

Team Herald

PANJIM: Voicing their strong opposition to the Centre's suggestion of establishing a nuclear power plant in the State, the Opposition parties in the State stated that Goa must not become a "laboratory for BJP's dangerous experiments".

Goa Pradesh Congress Committee (GPCC) president Amit Patkar sharply criticised Union Minister Manohar Lal Khattar's proposal, accusing the BJP government of damaging Goa's hills, forests, agriculture, and rivers. He warned that introducing a nuclear project would further endanger the State and vowed to resist it completely, declaring that Goa's land, livelihoods, and environment are "non-negotiable".

The Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) also rejected the idea. Party State president Adv Amit Palekar questioned the need for a nuclear facility in Goa when the

GOVT'S POLICIES HARMING GOA'S NATURAL RESOURCES: OPPN

- The Opposition stated that the BJP gov't policies are harming Goa's natural resources and a nuclear project would worsen this
- Emphasised the "non-negotiable" value of Goa's land, livelihoods, and environment
- Questioned the need for such a facility given the existing Kaiga plant in

- Karnataka stressed the importance of govt consultation with elected officials and the public before considering the plant
- Highlighted the risks of such infra, especially in a tourism-dependent State, noting the lack of adequate disaster management plans

Kaiga plant in neighbouring Karnataka already exists. He alleged that the Centre and state government are systematically depleting Goa's natural resources and warned that AAP would oppose any such project "tooth and nail".

Goa Forward Party (GFP) president and MLA Vijai Sardesai demanded that the government should take elected repre-

sentatives and people into confidence before setting up a nuclear power plant. Since Goa is a tourism hub, the nuclear power project becomes a high-risk infrastructure and therefore the Disaster Management plan has to be a full-proof. In the State, both on-site and off-site disaster management plans had failed.

Pointing to nuclear mishaps reported across the

world, Sardesai said that the State government had no vision and had not applied its mind. Though there are advantages of nuclear power, its disadvantages are more precarious and could affect the public health and environment. He also recalled that in the past the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) had opposed the India-US nuclear deal.

Political commentator Trajano D'Mello said, "The idea floated by the Union Power Minister Manohar Lal Khattar of having a nuclear plant is a disastrous idea that can destroy the State. The BJP should stop toying with the idea and making Goa a laboratory of nuclear experiment having failed in its laboratory of communal divide. Goa is too small a State that could be in for radiation or any leakage which could spell a drastic effect on human and animal health and destroy the environment. I strongly oppose any such move and will take neces-

sary steps to thwart such evil designs."

South Goa MP Capt Virato Fernandes said, "It is ill-thought of and an absurd statement. Goa is a small State. We are only dependent on tourism. Other things have failed because of the inefficiency. Now the Union Minister is trying to destroy this also by talking of having a nuclear plant here. Is he aware that there is a nuclear power plant at Karwar? These are very critical statements concerning the security and energy needs of our country. Does this statement have the endorsement of the scientific advisor to the Prime Minister or scientific community of the country? There is a severe deficiency of talent in ministers."

The opposition parties underscored Goa's eco-sensitive status and raised serious concerns over potential environmental and safety risks, promising determined resistance to any move to advance the proposal.

IMD extends weather warning till May 16, forecasts thunderstorms

Team Herald

PANJIM: The India Meteorological Department (IMD) Goa on Tuesday extended weather warning till May 16, 2025, forecasting thunderstorms with winds gusting to 30-40 km/h in isolated places of the State.

"Thunderstorm accompanied with winds gusting to 40-50 kmph is likely at isolated places over North and South Goa districts and light to moderate rainfall is likely in the evening hours over North and South Goa districts of the State on May 14, 15 and 16, 2025," the IMD said.

Earlier, the IMD had issued weather warning till May 14.

It may be recalled that IMD had said that very light to moderate rainfall occurred at a few places over Goa during the last 34 hours ending at 7 pm of May 13.

Helmetless riding, drunk driving causes of fatal accidents in Goa: DGP

FILEPHOTO



Team Herald

PANJIM: Director General of Police (DGP) Alok Kumar said on Tuesday that the primary causes of fatal road accidents in Goa are riding without a helmet and drunk driving.

Speaking with reporters at an event in Altinho, he explained, "Not wearing a helmet and drunk driving are the two major factors contributing to fatal accidents in Goa. Addressing these two issues and fostering a change in public behaviour will significantly improve road safety

– Alok Kumar, Director General of Police

“Not wearing a helmet and drunk driving are the two major factors contributing to fatal accidents in Goa. Addressing these two issues and fostering a change in public behaviour will significantly improve road safety

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Individuals take to the road without understanding traffic rules, the impact of further education is limited. Habits are difficult to break, which is why it's crucial to educate children early about being responsible road users."

"Instilling traffic awareness in schools is essential," he concluded.



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