

# PANJIM'S GATEWAY OF DISCOMFORT: Crumbling infrastructure at the main bus stand

Overcrowded, poorly maintained and lacking basic amenities, the Panjim bus stand exposes the gap between smart city claims and ground reality

AJIT JOHN

**PANJIM:** For many visitors, the Panjim bus stand serves as their first impression of Goa's capital — a city internationally renowned as a tourist paradise. This vital hub connects local routes within Panjim, state-wide destinations, and outstation services, catering to thousands of residents, interstate travellers, and budget tourists from across India and abroad.

However, despite Panjim's label as a "smart city," the bus stand paints a very different picture. From inad-

equated cleanliness and haphazard parking to neglected waste management and safety lapses, the facility struggles to meet even basic public expectations. With over 1,000 buses operating daily and more than one lakh passengers using the stand, the case for better infrastructure and planning is urgent.

As Roland Martins, convenor of NGO Goacan, put it while observing the chaos, "They don't seem to know how to handle the goose that lays the golden egg," referring to the substantial revenue the State earns through public transport.

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— Roland Martins, Convenor, Goacan

**“Cleanliness is the minimum you expect. This place fails that basic standard**

— Nidhi, a passenger from Candolim



## PARKING WOES AND FIRE SAFETY CONCERNS

Adding to the chaos is the state of parking within the complex. Martins noted that in the paid parking zone, many vehicles — often from out of state — are simply abandoned and left to occupy space indefinitely. "There's no reporting mechanism," he said. "The person managing the parking should inform Kadamba Transport Corporation (KTC) if a vehicle hasn't moved for months."

He also raised concerns about the lack of demarcation between paid and unpaid parking areas and the weak enforcement of no-parking zones. "Even the claim that the stand is under the control of a single authority can be contested," he added.

The issue of fire safety also remains neglected. Martins recalled a past fire that gutted several shops within the premises.

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Equally alarming is the absence of a police kiosk — a critical facility in any major transit hub. "A police presence is essential to handle emergencies and ensure general safety," he said.

When asked about infrastructure upgrades, KTC's Managing Director Rohan Kaskar acknowledged that the current structure, built in 1983, is due for an overhaul. Plans are underway for a new terminal under a public-private partnership (PPP) model. However, it is clear that the timeline for approvals, permissions, and construction is uncertain.

## FIGHTING FOR SPACE



One of the most glaring issues at the bus stand is the sheer lack of space for the large number of vehicles. Buses are often forced to manoeuvre through tight spots, creating frequent gridlocks.

Abdul Salam Qureshi, a conductor with a private bus service, admitted that navigating the area has become increasingly difficult. Driver Dada Bhir echoed this concern and pointed to the widespread problem of double parking — especially by two-wheelers — which worsens congestion and creates a hazard for pedestrians and drivers alike.

## POOR CLEANLINESS, MISSING AMENITIES

Sanitation is another serious concern. While the Corporation of the City of Panaji (CCP) had provided waste bins, many have been removed or replaced with broken containers, leading to littering and foul odours.

Idris, a visitor from Belgaum, noted the poor condition of toilets and general waiting areas. Nidhi from Candolim, traveling with her sisters, said, "Cleanliness is the minimum you expect. This place fails that basic standard." Frequent commuter Daniela Fernandes said she avoids the stand during the monsoon due to severe waterlogging and lack of maintenance. "Monsoon is almost here, and the authorities seem unprepared," she warned.

A Goa Tourism outlet near the entrance has been closed for months for renovations, yet a large promotional board continues to advertise its presence. According to Martins, tourists — especially foreigners — are often left confused in the absence of proper signage and assistance.

Seating is another sore point. Commuter Malik highlighted the shortage of waiting areas for outstation passengers. While there is a designated room for women to breastfeed, it remains locked, with a sign asking users to contact the manager for access — a step many are reluctant or unable to take.

Access to clean drinking water is also lacking, further inconveniencing the large number of travellers passing through.

For the differently abled, the infrastructure is far from adequate. Kaskar stated that two ramps — one at the entrance and one in the Panjim-Mapusa section — have been built, along with a disabled-friendly toilet and tactile tiles to assist the visually impaired. However, a walk around the premises reveals that truly inclusive design is still far from reality.

As monsoon season looms and tourist numbers continue to rise, the urgent need to upgrade the Panjim bus stand becomes ever more pressing. Until then, the facility remains a bottleneck in the heart of a city that aspires to call itself "smart."

## 'Trolls over jobs' Vijai blasts govt for inflation, cyber attacks

Team Herald

**MARGAO:** Fatorda MLA Vijai Sardesai has sharply criticised the state government, accusing it of prioritising cyber-attacks on the opposition over addressing pressing issues such as the hacking of government websites, rising inflation, and unemployment in Goa.

Speaking to reporters at the commencement of pre-monsoon desilting work in the Fatorda constituency, Sardesai said the government had turned a blind eye to the growing challenges faced by Goans. "Inflation and unemployment are rising rapidly, but the government seems least bothered. Instead, it is more interested in attacking opposition leaders on social media," he alleged.

Sardesai launched the pre-monsoon desilting work on Friday through the Water Resources Department, stating that his group, We For Fatorda, had stepped in following multiple public complaints about the Margao Municipal Council's (MMC) failure to undertake timely monsoon preparedness. "We will complete the desilting at our own cost to ensure that people do not suffer during the rains," he said.

Commenting on recent cyber-attacks on government websites, Sardesai said the state had failed to take cybersecurity seriously. "The government should be strengthening its digital infrastructure, not hiring people to troll and target the opposition online," he said.

He also criticised the government for encouraging non-Goan businesses, which he claimed had led to the marginalisation of local entrepreneurs. "The government must explain why the inflation rate in Goa is so high and why local businesses are being neglected. They are welcoming outsiders at the cost of Goan livelihoods," Sardesai concluded that Goa's major occupations, including traditional trades, are suffering due to poor governance and lack of support, warning that the economy is in steady decline.

## Pajifond locals irked as raw sewage sullies roads for 20 days

Team Herald

**MARGAO:** Residents of Pajifond in Margao continue to suffer due to untreated sewage flowing on public roads, as the Public Works Department (PWD) has failed to repair a damaged pipeline despite repeated complaints.

The issue, persisting for over 20 days, has now drawn sharp criticism from local councillor Raju Naik, who has demanded immediate intervention from health authorities.

The damaged pipeline has led to sewage spilling onto the roads and into roadside gutters, creating an unbearable stench in the area. Residents of the Junta Quarters locality are particularly affected, as the stagnant sewage has turned the neighbourhood into a breeding ground for mosquitoes.

**“Instead of repairing the pipeline, they have merely diverted the sewage water into roadside drains, which has only made the situation worse**

—Raju Naik, local councillor

"The authorities have completely neglected this area," said Councillor Naik, speaking to O Herald.

"There is no proper maintenance of the residential buildings, and now sewage is openly flowing on the streets and in open spaces. This is a major health hazard."

Naik also criticised the PWD for its temporary and ineffective measures. "Instead of repairing the pipeline, they have merely diverted the sewage water into roadside drains, which has only made the situation worse," he said.

The councillor has called upon officials from the Urban Health Centre to inspect the area and take preventive measures against the possible spread of vector-borne diseases. "We fear an outbreak of diseases like malaria and dengue, especially since children are often seen playing near these contaminated areas," he added.

Residents have echoed these concerns, questioning how long they will have to endure these unsanitary and dangerous conditions. With monsoon season approaching, locals fear the situation could deteriorate further unless urgent repairs and sanitation efforts are undertaken.

Councillor Naik has warned that if swift action is not taken, the situation could soon escalate into a full-blown health crisis.

## Weeks without water: Salcete residents reach boiling point

Team Herald

**MARGAO:** A growing water crisis in several parts of Salcete has sparked widespread frustration among residents, who are now demanding immediate action from the government to restore regular water supply.

Areas such as Raia, Navelim, Benaulim, Colva, Nuvem, Curtorim and parts of Margao have been grappling with inconsistent or non-existent water supply for over two weeks, forcing many households to rely on bottled water to meet their daily needs.

The crisis, which residents say has become an annual summer ordeal, has once again exposed the vulnerabilities in the region's water infrastructure. Milagres Fernandes, a resident of Colva, expressed his anger at the continued apathy. "We have been raising this issue for

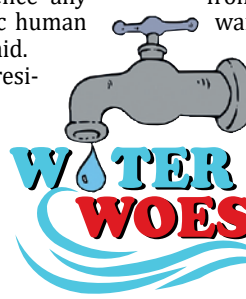
years, but no one seems to care. Every summer we face the same situation—dry taps and broken promises. This is not just a minor inconvenience anymore; it is a basic human rights issue," he said.

In Navelim, residents are reportedly receiving water for barely an hour each day. "It's impossible to run a household like this. We're spending extra money on tankers, and yet there is no word from the authorities on when this will end," said Anthony Dias, another affected resident. "It's shameful that in 2025, people still have to fight for something as basic as water."

The crisis has also impacted small businesses, with restaurants, schools, and clinics struggling to function under water-starved conditions.

Rohan Naik, a youth activist from Housing Board, Gogol, warned of collective action if the issue continues to be ignored. "We are tired of empty assurances. If the government and PWD fail to act within the next few days, we will organize peaceful protests across Salcete. Water is not a luxury; it is a necessity," he said.

Despite repeated complaints, residents say the authorities have failed to provide any concrete solution or timeline for repair and restoration. Many suspect that outdated pipelines, poor maintenance, and lack of planning have contributed to the crisis.



## S Goa Collector imposes ban on digging roads

Infra work will require prior written permission

Team Herald

**MARGAO:** The District Magistrate of South Goa, Egna Cleetus, has issued an order prohibiting the digging of roads, road shoulders, lanes, or any part of a thoroughfare without prior written permission.

The directive comes into immediate effect and applies to all individuals, agencies, and organisations operating within South Goa.

The order has been issued ex-parte, citing the urgency and impracticality of serving prior notice to potential violators. "The order has been issued keeping in mind the upcoming monsoon season in Goa, during which any unauthorised digging can cause severe disruption to traffic, damage to road infrastructure, and pose a danger to public safety," the notice stated.

Road excavation activities—whether by the general public, private contractors, or government agencies—will now require written approval from the District Magistrate.

However, applications for essential and urgent services such as water supply, sewerage systems and electricity connections must be routed through the concerned departments.

Officials stressed that uncoordinated and unauthorised digging has historically led to public inconvenience, increased road accidents, and costly repairs, particularly during the rainy season when roads are more vulnerable to erosion and flooding.

To ensure strict compliance, all police officers of the rank of Police Inspector and above have been directed to implement the order and take prompt action against any violations.

## Tiatr fraternity mourns as legendary actor-director Samuel Edwards Carvalho passes

Team Herald

**MARGAO:** The vibrant world of Konkani theatre mourns the loss of one of its brightest stars. **Samuel Edwards Carvalho**, an iconic figure in Goa's tiatr scene and a stalwart contributor to Konkani performing arts, passed away on Friday, leaving behind a rich legacy and a grieving tiatr fraternity.

Anthony Barbosa, President of the Tiatr Academy of Goa, led the community in paying tributes. "He was a legend and contributed immensely to the tiatr stage. His work left a remarkable impact and won the hearts of tiatr lovers. His death is a huge loss to the tiatr community," Barbosa expressed with heartfelt sorrow.

He was recently awarded the prestigious TAG award for his contribution to the tiatr stage. Born on March 1, 1967, to Agostinho and Emiliana Car-



valho, Samuel's journey on the tiatr stage began with the local production Tuka Kiteak Podlam, directed by him and written by Menino Fernandes. His portrayal of a villain in this production won immediate acclaim, setting the stage for a prolific and influential career.

Carvalho's professional tiatr journey took flight in 1985 when he was cast in Noket, a khell tiatr by veteran director Patrick Dourado. This marked

the beginning of a long and illustrious association with some of tiatr's most revered names, including A.M. Pacheco, Anthony San, C. D'Silva, Jose Rod, Milagres de Chandor, Pascoal Rodrigues, Jr. Nelson, and Comedian Agostinho.

In 1998, Carvalho founded his own production banner, "Samhën", debuting with Hem Tumkam Sogleank, which brought together some of the finest talent in the industry. Over the years, he wrote and directed 17 tiatrs, many of which became benchmarks in the Konkani theatre scene. His acclaimed works include Purtugez Goenkar, Bogsonnem, Daddy, Mhaka Sangat, Mummy, Tum Feliz Zaum, Susegad Goenkar, Tin Horancho Raja, Hanv Patki Kiteak, Daddy 2, Tarvotti, Serkat, Kezarim Mornak Soirim Jevnak, Meulelem Naka Sandlele Zai, and Nhoi Mogache Punn Rogtache ani Dogui Bodmas.

Beyond the live stage, Carvalho explored video and music mediums with equal passion. He directed 13 Konkani video films including Khoro Tiatrist, Maim Zanna Chedvam Ami, Tyag, Bin Toxem Bhat, and Ghoi Dukhi Bail Sukhi. His music career was marked by the release of five heartfelt Konkani CDs: Pai, Tum Ogi Rau, Ghorabho, Dev Boram Korum, and Purtugez Goenkar.

Carvalho's influence extended internationally. He performed across India, the Gulf, the UK, and even Paris. Notably, he staged seven shows within three days in the UK and broke ground with Bhogsonnem, an all-women tiatr staged in the Gulf, featuring 13 women artists flown in from Goa.

He was also felicitated by the 125th Anniversary of Tiatr Celebration Committee for his lifelong dedication to the art form.