

O HERALDO

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Warning ignored, disaster invited

A cement slab connecting two pillars of the Porvorim flyover collapsed on Sunday while under construction. By sheer chance, no vehicle was passing below at that exact moment. A few workers were injured, but thankfully, no lives were lost.

Yet to call this incident a "lucky escape" would be dangerously misleading. It is not luck we should be banking on, but accountability, foresight, and safety.

This collapse is not just a construction glitch. It's a dire warning. The Porvorim flyover, a 5-km-long infrastructure project costing crores of rupees, is meant to ease traffic and enhance connectivity. But what happens when a project designed to protect lives starts threatening them?

The current state of the highway from Guirim to O Coqueiro is not just chaotic, it's perilous. Ongoing work has turned the road into a maze of potholes, exposed pillars, heavy machinery, and confusing detours. Drivers, particularly those on two-wheelers, are left navigating through it like a minefield. One misstep or misjudged puddle in the monsoon and it could be a fatal error. The question that echoes loudly in the minds of commuters is: Who will take responsibility if something goes wrong?

Even more troubling is the apparent lack of urgency from the administration following this serious incident. No concrete safety measures have been announced. There appears to be no coordinated traffic management plan. No clear signages have been placed. And no accountability has been fixed. The silence is deafening. If this slab collapse wasn't enough to jolt the authorities into action, what will be?

To call this incident a "lucky escape" would be dangerously misleading. It is not luck we should be banking on, but accountability, foresight, and safety. This collapse is not just a construction glitch. It's a dire warning. The Porvorim flyover, a 5-km-long infrastructure project costing crores of rupees, is meant to ease traffic and enhance connectivity. But what happens when a project designed to protect lives starts threatening them?

What's more, the flyover project, initially scheduled for completion by April 2026, was ambitiously pushed to finish five months ahead of schedule. Speeding up timelines is not a badge of efficiency if it compromises quality. Sunday's incident raises uncomfortable questions about whether safety checks are being skipped in the rush to meet deadlines. And if so, at whose expense?

The contractor responsible must face consequences. The threat of being "blacklisted" is not punishment, it's a press release. The public needs to see action, not just hear promises. We've

been here before, remember the Kala Academy slab collapse? That too was brushed aside because no lives were lost. Today, the structure lies in neglect, a symbol of our apathy toward preventive action.

A pattern is emerging. Accidents happen. There's brief outrage. Committees are formed. Reports are shelved. Life goes on until the next slab falls.

The flyover project spans several agencies. The construction department, traffic police, transport authorities. Yet there seems to be zero coordination. Reports suggest internal disagreements on whether to close the Sangolda-O Coqueiro stretch have left commuters confused and vulnerable. If officials can't even agree on when to close a road, how can we trust them to build something that will carry thousands safely every day?

The issue is not just engineering. It's systemic neglect. No infrastructure project, especially of this scale, should operate without thorough, stage-by-stage inspection. Not just after accidents, but proactively. The lack of regular auditing, absence of transparent reporting, and the missing sense of urgency, turn small oversights into ticking time bombs.

And amid all this, the monsoon has arrived. Rainfall obscures potholes, weakens freshly poured cement, and turns minor errors into major tragedies. We are now testing this infrastructure under the most demanding conditions, and it is already showing cracks.

To be clear, development is welcome. Flyovers, highways, and urban expansion are essential, but not at the cost of lives. Not at the cost of transparency. Not at the cost of trust.

The slab collapse is not just an accident. It's a symptom. A symptom of poor planning, rushed execution, inter-departmental confusion, and a tragic indifference to public safety. Let us not wait for the next headline to do what should have been done already. Because in matters of infrastructure, there are no small warnings, only ignored ones.

comment



AAKAR PATEL

If China gets another decade to grow without distraction, it will eclipse the United States as the world's largest economy. It has already done so in what is called Purchasing Power Parity terms, but in a decade it will likely be larger also in absolute terms



in my experience are both insecure and petty. Let us leave it at that.

What China needs is time. In 1991, when India entered this new phase called liberalisation, we were level with China in economic terms. The average India produced as much as the average Chinese. It is true that China had been reforming for a decade before that, and that is seen as an advantage over us, however it had done so from a position which was much below India's. In industry and agriculture, it had been shut off from the world for decades, unlike India. And also unlike us, the Chinese leadership had put ordinary Chinese through gratuitous suffering out of which the country was just emerging.

Over the next 35 years,

US, China fighting for global economic dominance

Max Hastings, a historian, described the Second World War as primarily the death grapple between two gargantuan monsters — Adolf Hitler's Nazi armies against Joseph Stalin's Soviet forces. The rest, Winston Churchill's speeches and the American struggle against Japan in the Pacific, was at the most a sideshow and that is true as the nationality of those killed reveals.

The great contest of our time is also between just two powers: Donald Trump's United States of America and Xi Jinping's People's Republic of China. The rest of the world is a noisy sideshow. The contest between America and China is not military, at least not yet, but the stakes are similar and in many ways higher.

From the outside it can be seen as the struggle for global economic dominance between the west and Asia. Ordinarily we would or should support a fellow Asian power against the West, but desis

China averaged 9 per cent annual GDP growth, faster economic advance than any power had ever achieved in the west. In the last 10 years China has slowed to average 5.8% growth, which was similar to India's but on a base five times larger.

If China gets another decade to grow without distraction, it will eclipse the United States as the world's largest economy. It has already done so in what is called Purchasing Power Parity terms, but in a decade it will likely be larger also in absolute terms. Being number two in a world it has dominated for 150 years is totally unacceptable to the United States. Western political scientists like John Mearsheimer say that China's rise will inevitably lead to conflict because of what is called the Thucydides Trap, which theorises that when a rising power is about to displace the dominant one, war is the result. In this view, violent conflict is the inevitable result because the existing dominant power, in this case the US, will never accept second position and will subdue its rival however it can. Some argue that this is probably a western way of looking at things and that Asian powers are not interested in meddling in global affairs in the way that Europe and the US have done for the last two centuries. They think China's rise will not threaten US military bases around the world or the American stranglehold on institutions like the IMF, World Bank and United Nations Security Council. And therefore the US should consider that when assessing what China's becoming number one means. But just like the Thucydides Trap, this is also mere theory and nobody knows how China will act when it eclipses the US.

For the last eight years, the US has tried to stall and block China's economic progress. It has denied China's companies access to advanced semiconductors. It has imposed duties on Chinese exports using the drug Fentanyl as an excuse just as much as it has used 'dumping'. It has accused China of building over-capacity in industry, though this is normally what is called export-oriented

growth. And under Trump's second presidency it has tried to decouple from China entirely through imposing tariffs so high that trade would become impossible.

Unfortunately for the US, that has failed. The stock and bond markets told Trump firmly that any idea of isolating China would lead to harming the US economy and this has forced Trump to backtrack.

China has now won time. How much time? I believe it is enough to see it through. Already the focus of the Trump administration has moved away from trade to tax cuts and for the rest of this year that will take up most of its energy. With the midterm elections in 2026 for US Congress, the appetite to do reckless things of the sort Trump has done on trade over the last few months will be lower. That will also buy China time. Given the failure of Trump's trade gambit, it is possible and perhaps likely that his successor will not go down the same road after 2028.

The Chinese have prepared for the last eight years for a trade war. They have deliberately removed state support from floundering real estate businesses and let them collapse, to get capital to flow to industry. They have tried to build markets for their exports around the world outside the US and they have consolidated their supply chains through deals in Africa and Latin America.

The US is only the third biggest trading partner for China now, behind the Association of SouthEast Asian Nations and the European Union. Above all, they have accelerated their lead in a range of future-facing technologies. The leverage that Trump's US has on Xi's China has shrunk.

If things continue as they are, for the first time in 200 years, the largest economic power in the world will not be Western but Asian. The implications of this will affect all nations though the government in no country, including the US, has prepared its citizens for the shift.

(Aakar Patel is a writer and columnist)

people's edit

THE MORE WE GIVE, THE LESS WE GET

ALISHA MARTINS

Have you ever been in a situation where you feel like you don't receive as much as you give? It could show up in house chores, emotional support, affection, or even in the effort to simply keep a conversation going.

Often, we invest deeply in people we care about, sometimes without noticing how little we're getting in return. According to Transactional Analysis (TA), a psychological framework developed by Eric Berne, every interaction is like a transaction — an emotional or social exchange. These exchanges happen through three ego states: the Parent, the Adult, and the Child. In healthy relationships, these ego states interact smoothly. You give, and you receive. But in many of our close relationships, we unknowingly operate from the Child state — giving with hope, seeking approval, or trying to keep peace. Meanwhile, the other person may respond from a Critical Parent state — distant, dismissive, or cold — or remain in an Adult state that feels emotionally unavailable. This creates imbalanced transactions that, over time, leave us feeling unseen, unheard, and undervalued. The proper transactions often come from the Adult ego state — where communication is clear, needs are acknowledged, and emotional energy flows both ways. This balance builds mutual respect and strengthens connection.

Of course, giving isn't a bad thing. It's an essential part of love, friendship, and care. But when giving becomes habitual or desperate — when it comes from a place of self-neglect — it starts to take more from us than it gives back. That's when we need to pause and reflect. Imagine playing a two-player game where you're the only one holding the controller, trying to keep both sides going. Exhausting, right? TA invites us to step into our Adult ego state — a place of awareness, balance, and conscious choice. From there, we can ask ourselves: Why do I give as much as I do? Why do I hope for something that might never come my way? Is this really a two-player game, or am I playing alone? These questions help us recognise patterns and gently push us toward setting healthy boundaries. This may sound simple in theory, but if you're in the middle of such an experience, it can feel overwhelming. That's why slowing down matters — enough to clearly see what has been quietly draining you. To make it easier, think of it like preparing for an exam. You've studied hard, memorised everything, and feel confident. But when the results come, you've scored poorly. You wonder, how is that possible? You did your part, but the result doesn't match the effort. That's what it feels like emotionally sometimes. The only difference is, there's no visible score and no one else sees the gap between what you gave and what you got. Only you know.

In real relationships, just like in practical transactions, your well-being is shaped not just by what you give — but also by how the other person responds. If that response stops or shifts in ways that feel cold or withholding, it's natural to feel hurt. Over time, this can lower your self-confidence and self-worth, and even make it hard to enjoy the things that once felt light and joyful. You don't want to lose that part of yourself. It's also important to consider that sometimes, people aren't intentionally taking more than they give — they might not know how to meet you where you are. Communication styles, emotional histories, and differing needs can all play a part. But regardless of the reason, your feelings remain valid. What I want to highlight here is this: your emotional balance isn't a luxury — it's a foundation. It allows you to show up fully and healthily in all your roles. You deserve relationships where care, effort, and presence flow both ways — not just out of you.

Tackling alcoholism in women

It is learnt that a dedicated women's Alcoholics Anonymous (AA) has been launched in Goa with meetings to be held every Saturday at the Cansaulim group meeting.

Goa currently has 60 AA meeting points for men across various regions. A women-specific helpline has also been introduced. It is learnt that the number of women suffering from alcoholism has increased since the introduction of sweeter alcoholic beverages. Women are reportedly more susceptible to alcohol related damage even when drinking less than men and the death rate among women is reportedly 50 percent higher as compared to their male counterparts.

Alcohol withdrawal symptoms start to kick in once the alcohol has left the body. This is due to a neurochemical imbalance in the brain. These side effects are also known as withdrawal symptoms. Depending on the degree of the alcohol abuse and the severity of the addiction, the symptoms can actually be life-threatening.

Research suggests women are more likely to experience hangovers than men. Like men, women too become alcoholic and are characterised by an impaired ability to stop or control alcohol use. Alcoholism can cause lasting changes in the brain that make alcoholics, especially women vulnerable to relapse. Goa is a place where alcohol flows freely being a tourist State. Unfortunately several Goans have fallen

letterstotheeditor

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prey to alcoholism and these now include women. Alcoholism is not just an individual problem but a social problem. Women who drink during pregnancy put their babies at risk of being born with disorders which include abnormal facial features and severe developmental and learning disabilities. Hence, it is absolutely necessary for women with drinking problems to take timely help from Alcoholics Anonymous group in Goa dedicated for women.

Adelmo Fernandes, Vasco

Be alert this monsoon

Undoubtedly, monsoon is a season of joy for everyone as it provides so much relief from the sweltering heat. But, perhaps, this monsoon particularly we ought to be cautious and alert in view of the developments that are underway everywhere without precautionary measures in place for the safety of the common man. With roads dug up everywhere, trenches uncovered, mud heaped in mounds, uneven roads surfaces adding difficulty, especially to two-wheelers, and unexpected injury to life, temporary or permanent, could be the order of the day to regular travellers. Incidentally, no authority in power takes the blame. Come what may, for the general public, life must go on, but to be more on the alert

side, it will go a long way to add safety to life.

Ayres Sequeira, Salvador do Mundo

Delegation to other nations

All along, a perception was created by the Bharatiya Janata Party and the right wing groups that there is a very big image for PM Modi in all foreign countries and that, it is only because of the rapport created by him with the world leaders, India has earned an unassailable and enviable support in the external world.

However, this perception got shattered as a myth recently, when we witnessed no country coming forward to extend its unstinted support openly to India, post "Operation Sindoor". Even Russia, Israel, UK and the US failed to offer even their basic support, leave alone unconditional support to India and stopped short of advising both India and Pakistan to stop further escalations, they both being nuclear-weaponised countries. Our foreign policy has, thus, taken a severe beating and our External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar has yet again proved his inefficiency in handling his ministry.

In a video widely circulated, Jaishankar is seen admitting that India informed Pakistan before attacking their terrorist infrastructures under "Operation

Sindoor" and, this has come to severe criticism by the Opposition is also a case in point. Moreover, the people of the nation who remain shell-shocked over the above revelation are also left with many unanswered questions about the above operation, which again, was withdrawn abruptly, without assigning any reasons.

All the above developments have resulted in India sending seven delegations comprising 59 selected MPs to different countries to apprise them of the dastardly terrorist attack in Pahalgam in which 26 innocent people were killed in cold blood, about our "Operation Sindoor" and to expose the terrorist-face of Pakistan.

It is necessary that the BJP government discusses with absolute transparency about "Operation Sindoor", at least with the 59 delegates so that all of them will speak in one voice and narrate the developments coherently without any ambiguity when they meet the leaders of different countries. Otherwise, this mission will prove to be a futile exercise and become cost unproductive.

Tharcus S Fernando, Chennai

Tragicus maximus

The biggest tragedy presently unfolding on the face of earth is the Israeli attempt to exterminate every single human being

in Gaza.

They are hell-bent on eliminating the very people who once welcomed them to their land. A war weary world looks the other way as the Israeli Jews go about committing mass slaughter.

It is a cruel paradox that a race that was once the victim of genocide is now heaping exactly the same onto the Palestinians.

A 3D mural of an aerial view of the main camp at Auschwitz concentration camp in Poland shows a giant flame extending below ground level as a reminder of Crematorium 1, where the maximum number of Jews were cremated during the Holocaust. The words "Indifference to Injustice is the Gate to Hell" is seared into the base. Also, inscribed on one of the prison walls is the heart rending phrase, "If there is a God, he'll have to beg my forgiveness". The world has forgotten these tenets as much as the Jews have.

Vinay Dwivedi, Benaulim

Palestine needs global aid

The people of Palestine are slowly being murdered through starvation. Israel has blocked all land and sea routes into Palestine and is not allowing food or medicines or construction equipment to Palestinians.

Because Israel has US backing, no one in the region can dare do anything to help Palestine. India is too far away to help the people of Palestine and is presently fighting a giant bully (Pakistan) on its borders.

Jubel D'Cruz, Mumbai