

# Cong, activists slam government over monsoon preparedness

There is only disaster, no management, they say, asking for an audit of money spent

Team Herald

PANJIM: The Congress party and social activists on Wednesday criticised the State government for its lack of preparedness ahead of the monsoon, stating that despite spending crores on disaster management, various parts of Goa were left submerged after two days of unseasonal rainfall.

In a statement, a Congress spokesperson said, "The rainfall has once again exposed the complete collapse of the BJP government's disaster management machinery under Chief Minister Pramod Sawant. It is shocking and shameful that despite spending hundreds of crores and conducting so-called 'high-level meetings', Goa was left helpless and paralysed within hours of rain."

The spokesperson further alleged that the flooding across cities and villages was not a natural calamity but a man-made disaster caused by an "irresponsible, insensitive and corrupt BJP govern-

ment that has repeatedly failed to provide even basic governance."

"Drainage cleaning, disaster preparedness, and flood mitigation have been nothing but eyewash exercises for publicity. What we witnessed was the reality — waterlogging, overflowing gutters, stranded citizens, property damage, and absolutely no on-ground response from the authorities," the spokesperson said.

"Government claims to have spent crores in the name of Smart City, cyclone preparedness, and monsoon readiness. If that is so, then where has that money gone?" the spokesperson demanded to know.

Holding Chief Minister Sawant and the BJP government directly responsible for the widespread suffering, the party demanded a white paper on the funds allocated and spent on disaster management and drainage works in the past five years. It also called for an independent audit by a reputed third-party agency of all public works and

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— Trajano D'Mello, Political analyst

flood mitigation projects, immediate compensation to affected families, traders and households, and accountability from ministers and officials who failed to act despite early warnings.

"Goa needs a government that works for the people, not one that hides behind excuses. The BJP government has failed at every level, and the people of Goa are paying the price,"

the spokesperson said.

South Goa MP Captain Viriato Fernandes criticised the state of the capital city, calling it an "Amphibian City". "Because of the development that has come up, the drains are choked. Just look at the Smart City project. During the rainy season, you can swim through it. There is no vision, no focus, no planning by the Goa government. And who suffers?

The taxpayers. This government is responsible for the flooding. Earlier, there was rain but no flooding. Now it's happening because of this so-called unplanned development," he said.

Social activist Anthony D'Silva said, "Unexpected rainfall has occurred in the State. It is like a mini monsoon. Those who are supposed to take precautionary measures have been caught unaware. By now, preparedness works should have been completed, but from the extent of waterlogging, it appears that not even 50 per cent of the work has been done."

"There have been incidents of flooding in both villages and cities. Unimaginable destruction has taken place in Mapusa. I hope at least now the works will be completed as soon as possible," he added.

Social activist Mariano Ferrao said, "The departments that claimed to be prepared after spending crores of rupees have been exposed. Flooding and wa-

terlogging have been reported in many areas. This shows that the government and its officials have failed to carry out effective work. But these rains are just a trailer — the full picture is yet to come."

Political analyst Trajano D'Mello echoed this view, "The pre-monsoon showers have been a disaster. No corner of Goa has been spared. I don't know what will happen when the regular monsoon begins in a few weeks. The reason is simple. In the name of development, Goa has been destroyed. Catchment areas have been filled, constructions are coming up there, hills are being cut, and slopes are being flattened. In such a situation, where will the water go? The government claims it is ready with its disaster management team, but in reality, it creates the disaster and then fails to manage it. Will the Town and Country Planning Department now open its eyes and stop the cutting of trees and hills? Goans must stay alert."

## Tree crash incidents keep fire-fighters busy in Candolim, Arpora, Reis Magos

Team Herald

CALANGUTE: Following heavy downpour, several tree-falling incidents reported across the Bardez coastal belt kept fire-fighters on their toes on Wednesday.

### MONSOON MAYHEM

In the first incident which occurred around 12:30 pm in Vaddy, Candolim, a mango tree collapsed onto a house. The estimated damage to the property is around Rs 40,000. The fire-fighters from the Pilerne Fire Station were able to salvage belongings worth approximately Rs 90,000.

Later at around 4 pm, fire-fighters responded to another call in Nerul near the petrol pump regarding a mango tree

that was on the verge of collapsing. As a precautionary measure, they cut down the tree.

A tree fell on the Shree Bhumiapurush temple in Sonarbhath, Reis Magos, damaging the temple structure. In another incident, a house in Arpora was damaged after a tree fell on it.

The recent pre-monsoon downpour has exacerbated the condition of roads in the coastal belt. The areas that were dug up for laying water pipelines and power cables have been in a muddy mess, with many ditches left open.

The St Anthony's chapel junction in Calangute, the Nagoa Circle and the Saligao-Pilerne road have been affected, resembling muddy drains. Furthermore, several low-lying areas experienced flooding.

## OUT OF SERVICE



SANTOSH NAIK

The newly-constructed service road along Curti-Khandepar highway, caved in and developed cracks following heavy downpour. Another service road at Kapileshwari on the Dhavalim-Farmagudi Highway got submerged. The locals expressed serious concerns about the risk of accidents and urged authorities to install warning signs to slow down traffic. Despite being newly built and recently hot-mixed, they demanded that the road be repaired and restored immediately to ensure public safety

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## Locals blame construction work for Odxel mudslide

Jayshree Sarmalkar echoed similar concerns, stating that the family had anticipated danger when mud began accumulating dangerously close to the homes. "Mud and water entered our bathroom, making it impossible to use. We were relocated to a hotel for the night, but this cannot continue. The authorities need to act before something worse happens."

Taleigao MLA Jennifer Monserrate warned that action would be taken

against the builder for conducting excavation without proper safety precautions. "The construction work may have started years ago, but this is the first time we've seen such a flow of mud. The builder has been instructed to carry out immediate remedial measures," she said. Monserrate, along with Taleigao Sarpanch Maria Fernandes and Panchayat Secretary Gaurish Pednekar, visited the site to monitor the situation.

## TALEIGAO MLA IN EYE OF STORM FOR 'PUSHING' AAP ACTIVIST

The incident triggered a loud verbal exchange, with Rodrigues audibly demanding, "Jennifer, why did you push me? What did I do to you? I didn't say anything to you. Give them (the affected residents) accommodation. You gave permission to the builder when you were the NGPDA chairperson."

Monserrate, in response, retorted, "Why are you here? I don't talk to you," brushing aside the confrontation. Speaking to media the following day, Monserrate openly admitted to pushing Rodrigues. "Yes, I pushed her — and she deserved it," she stated unapologetically. "We were working till 1 am and were back at 8 am. What did she do besides make noise and create confusion?"

The flashpoint reportedly began when a local youth began recording the discussion between Monserrate and the villagers. Barreto allegedly tried to stop the filming and attempted to snatch the phone. Rodrigues claims that in the ensuing scuffle, she was manhandled. "Suddenly MLA Jennifer caught me, pushed me and abused me," she told O Herald.

On Wednesday, Rodrigues escalated the

matter by filing a formal police complaint against MLA Monserrate, panchayat member Sidney Barreto, and builders Sadique Shaikh and Mudhit Gupta. The complaint includes serious allegations such as assault, criminal intimidation, outraging the modesty of a woman, and endangering human life.

Rodrigues has demanded the immediate registration of an FIR under relevant sections of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS), along with the recording of eyewitness testimonies, seizure of mobile footage, CCTV evidence, and a medical report of Francis Coelho, who was reportedly injured in the incident.

She has also called for a probe into alleged violations at the Anantam Project construction site, including illegal hill-cutting and unsafe excavation practices, which residents believe contributed to the mudslide.

In response to Rodrigues' complaint, Monserrate dismissed the accusations and stated that her team would also be filing a counter-complaint. "Let her file what she wants — we will also file one," the MLA said, doubling down on her stance.

## Pre-monsoon trailer leaves Mapusa flooded



A choked gutter overflows during the first pre-monsoon showers at Duler, Mapusa

Team Herald

MAPUSA: The residents of Mapusa were caught off guard by the continuous heavy rainfall that swept through the State.

The downpour caused widespread flooding, with roads submerged in every part of the town, and water entering houses and shops. Overflowing and unclean gutters exacerbated the situation, while several mud houses in different areas of the town collapsed following heavy downpour.

Traders faced losses, as shopkeepers and vendors struggled through knee-deep water to salvage their merchandise. Shops, supermarkets, and stores were inundated, forcing closures for the day.

The town residents, traders, vendors, and others criticised the Mapusa Municipal Council for the neglected and clogged drains, asserting that cleaning should have been completed in the first week of May.

"This is insensitivity to the plight of the people by an incompetent administration. The mess is all over for the people to see. Why does the Municipality wait for the end of summer to clear the gutters and repair the roads," thundered



A woman helplessly watches her house which was destroyed following heavy rains in Mapusa

Adv Creighton de Sousa.

Prasad Mandrekar, a resident, stated, "The drains and the nullahs should have been cleaned somewhere in the first week of May. Why have they waited to do this job at the eleventh hour? You cannot blame the situation on the unseasonal rains."

Sources indicate that traders have repeatedly urged town wardens to improve basic amenities, but these requests have been ignored, leading to flooding in the market.

Juhi Silveira, a market trader, said, "This is just a pre-monsoon trailer. The real drama is yet to unfold once it begins to pour. Not a single gutter has been cleaned till date."

Shashikala Govekar, president of fish workers, added, "Even dustbins filled with waste are not cleared for days. The gutters are choked and have now overflowed with the first rains, making it difficult for the people to enter the market."

## Sanguem resident booked for endangering human life

Team Herald

MARGAO: The Sanguem Police booked 56-year-old Xavier Sequeira from Sanguem, for riding his motorcycle in a rash and negligent manner, thereby endangering human life.

According to police, the incident occurred as Xavier was travelling from Uguem

towards Sanguem. On reaching the vicinity of Miracles High School in Sanguem, he reportedly lost control of his motorcycle and fell onto the main tar road.

### RECKLESS RIDING

The impact was such that the pillion rider sus-

tained grievous head injuries and is currently receiving medical treatment at Goa Medical College and Hospital at Bambolim.

The Sanguem Police registered an offence under Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS) 2023.

The complaint was lodged by Head Constable Vinod Naik.

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**Message from the Hon'ble. Minister, Environment & Climate Change Government of Goa, Chairperson, Goa State Biodiversity Board (GSBB)**

**Shri. Aleixo Sequeira**  
Hon'ble. Minister, Environment & Climate Change Government of Goa,  
Chairperson, Goa State Biodiversity Board (GSBB)

**On the occasion of International Day for Biological Diversity 2025**  
Hearty greetings to all my beloved Goans on "The International Day for Biological Diversity (IDB)- 2025". This year's theme is "Harmony with nature and sustainable development". By working towards harmonious and sustainable relationships with nature, we shall strive towards human well-being, a healthy planet, and economic prosperity for all people. We observe and celebrate IDB to commemorate the adoption of the text of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) on 22 May 1992. Our commitment to conserving biodiversity as a country, being a signatory to the Convention on Biological Diversity, and ensuring sustainable actions have been continuous. After releasing our National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan, our Goa State Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan is prepared by involving over 50 local experts through 16 subcommittees. The first draft is released for public consultation. The 23 action targets of Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (KMGBF) are aligned with the 2030 Agenda for sustainable development and its 17 SDGs and contribute to their achievement. This policy-level document needs maximum input from all levels of society and this should be the people's plan, which will ultimately get operationalized on the ground. I appeal to everyone to be a part of our plan and join hands in sustaining a harmonious relationship with nature.

The mission "Lifestyle for Environment -Mission LiFE" envisaged by our Hon'ble Prime Minister Shri. Narendra Modi is core to the harmonious relationship with nature. And the initiative of "Swayampurn Goa" by our Hon'ble Chief Minister Dr. Pramod Sawant in line with "Atmanirbhar Bharat" is the best example of achieving balance between Sustainability and Harmony. The actions should start from each one of us and since we are all part of web of life.

In Goa, our ancestors have laid down a strong foundation with an exemplary and heritage system of Khazan farming, an integrated model of Kulagar and traditions of coexistence with nature by creating sacred groves and an eco-friendly contented lifestyle. It's time that our policy prioritises sustainability and harmony with nature in every action. It might need the involvement of more experts, integration of People's Biodiversity Registers in planning and promoting coexistence with other species of fauna and flora. Our Biodiversity Management Committees (BMCs) are trying to be the drivers of change and need support from everyone.

We at GSBB will make maximum efforts to achieve the success of the theme of IDB 2025 in this year along with our BMCs and the people of Goa.