

Rickshaw trapped as footpath caves in

Heavy rain exposes Smart City claims; locals blame it on substandard execution

Team Herald

PANJIM: The heavy rainfall over the past four days has laid bare the substandard work carried out under the Imagine Panaji Smart City Development Limited (IPSCDL) initiative, with sections of the footpath at St Inez having caved in, posing a serious threat to pedestrians.

On Friday, an autorickshaw's front wheel got stuck in one of the sunken portions of the footpath, prompting public outrage. Locals strongly criticised the authorities for neglect and poor-quality construction, accusing the contractors of executing the project without proper planning or supervision.

Despite official claims that Smart City works are nearing completion, the situation on the ground paints a different picture. "See the condition of Smart City work. Since the beginning, we have been complaining of the shoddy work. It was an autorickshaw, so the damage was less. Had there been a bike rider, he would definitely have sustained serious injuries. The footpath couldn't even sustain the weight of an autorickshaw," said Abdul Khan, a resident of the area.

Khan added, "Not only in Pan-



“The footpath couldn't even sustain the weight of an autorickshaw

– Abdul Khan, Panjim resident

“We've seen trucks stuck in caved-in roads before but I never imagined an autorickshaw could get trapped like this. At many places, pavers are either broken or have sunken. The work is of poor quality and lacks proper engineering. And this isn't even peak monsoon season yet

– Utpal Parrikar, Panjim resident

jim but roads and footpaths have caved in at several other locations across the city. Despite repeated complaints, none of the Smart City officials have visited the site. Drains have been left open for months. Works are incomplete—who cares? Anybody can fall into these drains. Claims are made that the work is complete, but just look at the state of things. If this is the result after the first rains, what will the next

four months bring?”

Safroddin Khan, the autorickshaw driver whose vehicle was trapped, explained that the incident occurred while he was attempting to park.

Activist Cecille Rodrigues voiced her frustration: "Pavements in many areas have caved in. Debris remain uncleared in several places. How are people supposed to walk? The cameras

installed on poles are dangling. All the pavers have come loose. There are bus stops, but no seating arrangements have been made for passengers. Everything has been left incomplete. There are holes in the footpaths. Is this supposed to be Smart City work? Is this the capital city of Panjim?"

Utpal Parrikar added, "We've seen trucks stuck in caved-in roads before, but I never im-

agined an autorickshaw could get trapped like this. At many places, pavers are either broken or have sunken. The work is of poor quality and lacks proper engineering. And this isn't even peak monsoon season yet."

As public dissatisfaction grows, the incident has raised serious concerns over the integrity and oversight of Panjim's Smart City infrastructure development.

Government reviews monsoon preparedness for Goa

Team Herald

PANJIM: The North Goa District Disaster Management Authority (DDMA), under the chairpersonship of Yashaswini B, IAS, Collector of North Goa, convened a meeting on Friday to assess preparedness for the upcoming seasonal hazards and to streamline co-ordination among various departments and agencies involved in disaster risk reduction and emergency response.

The Indian Meteorological Department has extended the Red Alert for extremely heavy rainfall till Sunday

During the meeting, representatives from the Health Department, Police,

Fire Services, Public Works Department (PWD), Municipal Administration, Power and Water Supply, Directorate of Panchayats, Department of Fisheries, Water Resources Department, and other key stakeholders provided updates on their readiness. Special emphasis was placed on monsoon preparedness, flood mitigation, cyclone response planning, and early warning dissemination.

The Chairperson directed all concerned departments to enhance inter-agency coordination and ensure the uninterrupted functioning of essential services during emergencies. "Preparedness is the cornerstone of disaster resilience. All agencies

EMERGENCY HELPLINES ACTIVATED FOR NORTH AND SOUTH

The State Disaster Management Authority has activated emergency contact numbers for both North and South Goa districts to ensure a swift response during crises. The helplines will operate 24x7 through the District Emergency Operations Centre-Control Room. Residents of North Goa can contact 0832-225383 or 0832-2426578, while South Goa residents may call 0832-2794100. Taluka-level control rooms have also been

activated.
North Goa: Tiswadi: 0832-2225383; Bardez: 0832-2262210; Bicholim: 7709136535; Pernem: 0832-2201223 / 9067910323; Sattari: 0832-2374090
South Goa: Salcete: 0832-2794100; Mormugao: 8793043014; Ponda: 0832-2312121 / 8766563700; Dharbandora: 8263825335; Sanguem: 0832-2604232 / 7822069067; Quepem: 0832-2662228 / 9588427336; Canacona: 9272057863

must work in close synergy to ensure that our response is swift, effective, and focused on safeguarding lives and livelihoods," Yashaswini stated.

The Collector issued necessary directives to departments for compliance and instructed all line depart-

ments and stakeholders to ensure a timely response in the event of a disaster.

She further emphasised that the trimming and cutting of dangerous trees should be undertaken on a war footing. Directions were issued to Panchayats and Municipal Adminis-

trations to implement all measures to prevent flooding in municipal areas and villages.

Instructions were also given to agencies not to accumulate debris or mud at construction sites, as this could obstruct drains or nullahs and result in mud

sludge affecting residential areas.

Nodal officers from the Directorate of Panchayats, Water Resources Department (WRD), PWD (Roads), PWD (Water Supply), and Department of Electricity were directed to issue instructions to work-executing agencies to ensure that no debris is left unattended after completion of works. Appropriate measures must be taken to avoid mishaps, including the use of warning signage.

The Department of Mines and Geology was instructed to take necessary action in the event of water-logging incidents in leased and non-leased mining areas, particularly in Bicholim and Sattari talukas.

Tenants assn denies fund misappropriation in sluice gate lease

Team Herald

PANJIM: The Morombi-O-Grande Tenants Association of Mercers has strongly denied allegations of misappropriation of funds in connection with the annual lease of the Vaddy Manos sluice gate at Patto-Panjim. The association claims that lessee Sebastiao Das Mercers Fernandes is retaliating against the managing committee following the termination of his fishing lease.

Responding to the allegations and a police complaint filed by Fernandes, Association Chairman Shamir Coutinho said, "The lessee is playing a revenge game against the managing committee for issuing the termination of the fishing lease granted to him."

Coutinho revealed that the association has appealed before the Panjim Deputy Collector, challenging the Tiswadi Mamlatdar's decision to allow Fernandes to continue operating the fishing lease, despite its termination by the managing committee.

He explained that the public auction of the Voddli Manos sluice gate was held on December 18, 2024, during which Fernandes was declared the highest bidder by the Mamlatdar. A lease agreement for Rs 7.30 lakh was subsequently signed in the Mamlatdar's presence.

However, following a committee meeting on March 1, 2025, it was resolved to terminate Fernandes' lease on grounds of subletting and inundating nearby fields—both violations of the auction

“The lessee is playing a revenge game against the managing committee for issuing the termination of the fishing lease granted to him

– Shamir Coutinho, Association Chairman

terms, which explicitly prohibit subletting and the use of proxies."

In retaliation, Fernandes filed a false complaint with the Mamlatdar, alleging he had paid Rs 3.20 lakh to the association a day prior to the auction and was issued a receipt for Rs 7.30 lakh," Coutinho said.

The Mamlatdar investigated the complaint and, in an order dated May 15, dismissed the case, stating that Fernandes had failed to provide credible evidence of the alleged Rs 3.20 lakh payment.

Coutinho further stated that the full lease amount of Rs 7.30 lakh had been transferred to the association's account not by Fernandes, but by one Cipriano Joao, who had actually been operating the fishing activities.

"Although the lease was granted to Fernandes, it was Cipriano who was conducting the fishing activities," he said.

Asserting that the actions of the lessee have tarnished the reputation of the Tenants Association and its committee members, Coutinho concluded that the association intends to take appropriate action against Fernandes, including initiating legal proceedings for defamation.

Five illegal structures razed in Curti following court order

Team Herald

PONDA: The Curti Khan-depar Panchayat, under the leadership of Sarpanch Nilkant Naik, on Thursday demolished five illegal encroachments—including chicken shops, scrapyards, and rented rooms—on Panchayat-owned open space at Zingadimaal, Curti. The action was carried out in compliance with a court order, bringing an end to a dispute that had been pending since 2012.

Sarpanch Nilkant Naik confirmed that the demolition followed a directive from the court. "One Damu Naik had encroached upon the Panchayat's open space in Curti in 2012 by constructing various rooms, chicken shops, scrapyards, and more. Around 1,000 square metres of land were cleared today by a demolition squad," he stated.

Panch Bika Kerkar recalled that an earlier at-



An earthmover in action during the demolition of illegal structures at Curti

tempt to remove the encroachments had failed in 2012. "The then Panchayat body had arrived with a demolition squad, but the PWD team had failed to turn up at the site and as a result, the demolition was postponed for eight days. However, the party involved in the encroachment approached the court and obtained a stay order," Kerkar explained. "The is-

sue was also raised repeatedly during gram sabha meetings, with strong demands for its resolution."

He further added that the court had recently ruled in favour of the Panchayat, which led to the removal of all unauthorised structures on the encroached land, including chicken shops, several tenanted rooms, and scrapyards. "Even one building was found en-

croaching upon the open space. Moreover, a nullah had been encroached for construction purposes," said Kerkar.

Kerkar also noted that following the recent court order directing the removal of roadside encroachments, the Panchayat would be acting against several more such violations to ensure smoother traffic movement in the area.

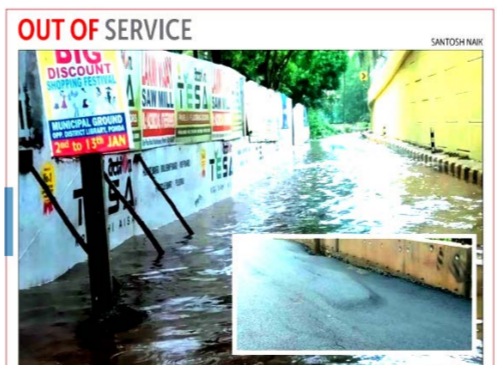
Waterlogging cleared at Kapileshwari junction, locals relieved

Team Herald

PONDA: Three days after persistent waterlogging and a choked gutter rendered the service road at Kapileshwari underpass on the Dhavlim-Farmagudi bypass highway hazardous, the issue has been resolved following swift action by the Kavlem Panchayat.

O Herald had highlighted the problem in its May 22 edition, publishing a photograph of the flooded road. The waterlogged stretch had become dangerously slippery, leading to multiple injuries among two-wheeler riders attempting to navigate the area.

Deputy Sarpanch Sushant Kapileshwarkar stated that urgent intervention was necessary as the



The newly-constructed service road along Curti-Khan-depar highway, caved in and developed cracks following heavy downpour. Another service road at Kapileshwari on the Dhavlim-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

submerged road posed a serious risk to commuters. "Due to mud accumulation, several bikers fell while trying to pass through the

flooded road," he said. The Panchayat informed National Highway (NH) authorities and police were deployed to as-



sist in clearing the choked gutter on the Ponda-Kavlem main road. The water was subsequently drained into a nearby nullah us-

ing an earthmover and a team of workers, while police managed traffic flow during the operation. NH officials also conducted an inspection of the site.

Meanwhile, local residents have renewed calls for improved drainage infrastructure. They are demanding that the water from the gutters on the Kapileshwari slope be diverted directly into the main nullah by extending the existing drainage system at the junction. In the absence of a proper outlet, some nearby houses have reportedly experienced flooding.

Locals expressed relief over the immediate clearance of the road but stressed the need for a long-term solution to prevent recurring flooding in the area.

shorttakes

36-YR-OLD MAN ELECTROCUTED IN VEREM

PANJIM: A Ravi Biradar, 36 tragically died after being electrocuted at Verem, on Thursday evening. The incident reportedly occurred at around 6 pm when Biradar is believed to have come into contact with a live wire. He was rushed to Goa Medical College and Hospital (GMC) in Bambolim, where doctors declared him dead on arrival. A post-mortem examination is awaited. Porvorim Police have registered a case of unnatural death. Police Sub-Inspector Akash Chodankar is leading the investigation into the circumstances surrounding the incident.

MAN REMANDED FOR ATTEMPTED MURDER OF GIRLFRIEND

MARGAO: Anant Kadam (25) of Aquem-Margao has been remanded in 14-day judicial custody for stabbing his girlfriend at Sirvoi, Quepem on May 12. The victim, from Borim-Shiroda, is admitted to the ICU at the GMC Bambolim and is unable to give a statement to the police. Kadam allegedly stalked, assaulted and stabbed the victim after she refused to get into his car. A case under BNS 2023 was registered following a complaint by Angel Travasso.

TWO ARRESTED WITH CANNABIS WORTH RS 3.8 LAKH IN MARGAO

MARGAO: Feroz Pathan of Nipani and Nadeem Bagwan of Belgaum were arrested with 3.8 kg of suspected cannabis during a raid at Gandhi Road, Comba. Margao Police booked the duo under Section 20(b)(iii)(B) of the NDPS Act. PSI Sameer Gaonkar is investigating.

BANASTARIM BRIDGE TO BE CLOSED FOR TWO HOURS ON MAY 25

PANJIM: The Banastarim Bridge on NH-4A will be closed to all vehicular traffic on May 25 between 6.30 and 8.30 am for inspection and deck level recording, authorities confirmed.

TIATR ACADEMY OF GOA TO HOST ONE-DAY ORIENTATION IN TIATR

PANJIM: The Tiatr Academy of Goa (TAG), an autonomous body under the Government of Goa, will conduct a one-day Orientation Course in Tiatr on June 2. The course, focusing on direction, scriptwriting, acting, singing and technical aspects, will take place at the TAG Conference Hall from 10 am to 5 pm. The initiative aims to engage youth, college students and aspiring tiatrists, offering expert training in stagecraft, direction, make-up and related fields to elevate production standards and promote Goa's Tiatr heritage.

Participants will receive hands-on training from industry professionals, equipping them with essential technical skills for Tiatr production. Application forms are available at the TAG office and online at <https://tiatracademyofgoa.com>. Completed applications must be submitted by May 29, during office hours.

APPLICATIONS INVITED FOR JOSEPHINE DIAS PUROSKAR 2025

PANJIM: The Tiatr Academy of Goa (TAG) is inviting applications for the Josephine Dias Puroskar 2025, an award recognising young talent contributing to the development of Tiatr, including its songs and music. The award, comprising a memento and a cash prize of Rs 10,000, is open to male and female artistes aged 16 years or below as of the application deadline. The winner must attend the award ceremony, scheduled for July 2025. Application forms and guidelines are available at the TAG office, AS-1, 2nd Floor, Campal Trade Centre, Campal-Panjim, and online at <https://tiatracademyofgoa.com>. The deadline for submission is June 10, during office hours.

UTAA URGES TRIBAL YOUTH TO LEAD COMMUNITY PROGRESS ON 'PRERANA DIN'

MARGAO: As the Directorate of Tribal Welfare prepares to host the annual 'Prerana Din' on May 25 at Rajiv Gandhi Kala Mandir, Ponda, the United Tribal Association Alliance (UTAA) has called on Goa's Scheduled Tribe (ST) youth to take an active role in the upliftment of their community. Speaking at a press conference in Margao, UTAA President Prakash Velip stressed the importance of youth involvement in community development and expressed optimism that long-pending political reservation for STs in the Goa Legislative Assembly would soon be realised.

The event will also pay tribute to late tribal leaders Manguesh Gaonkar and Delip Velip. In addition, four distinguished personalities from the ST community will be felicitated for their contributions, with the aim of inspiring the next generation through the recognition of tribal role models. Velip described 'Prerana Din' as a platform to celebrate tribal identity and to strengthen efforts towards progress in education, employment, and political representation. "We urge the youth to come forward—not just to attend events, but to be leaders and change-makers in their villages and beyond," he concluded.

PHOTOGRAPHY WORKSHOP FROM MAY 26

PANJIM: The Directorate of Art and Culture, Government of Goa, will hold a five-day workshop on the 'Art of Photography' from May 26 to 30. Sessions will run daily from 10 am to 12 noon at Sanskruti Bhavan, Patto-Panjim. The workshop will be inaugurated on May 26, at 10 am, in the Multipurpose Hall, Sanskruti Bhavan.