

# Govt starts inspection of South Goa bridges for wear & tear

Assolna bridge first on agenda; citizens push for new span connecting to Chinchinim

Team Herald

**MARGAO:** A detailed structural audit of bridges and culverts across South Goa is now underway, as a government-appointed consultancy begins inspecting key transport links—both old and new—for signs of wear, damage, and long-term viability. Among the first to come under the scanner is the Assolna-Chinchinim bridge, a decades-old structure over the River Sal that continues to serve as a crucial lifeline for Assolna, Ambelim, Velim, Betul, and even Agonda.

The inspection, led by M/s Concius Engineering Services in a joint venture with M/s Sri InfoTech, involves condition surveys, structural health monitoring, and the formulation of repair and rehabilitation plans. Consultants have sought access to all available technical data from the Public Works Department (PWD), including design documents, structural de-



The Orlim bridge

The effort marks a long-awaited move by the State to assess the safety of its aging infrastructure and plan for future needs, particularly in regions where traffic loads have grown sharply

tails of box culverts, and maintenance records such as past inspections and repair works. The findings from this documentation and on-site inspections will feed into a Detailed Project Report (DPR) to guide future action on each bridge.

The Assolna bridge, which last saw major repair over a decade ago through the Guniting process after signs of corrosion were de-

ected in one of its spans, is now being re-examined for further structural concerns. While officials insist there is no immediate risk, locals believe the bridge has already exceeded its useful lifespan and that plans for a parallel structure should no longer be delayed.

In fact, Velim MLA Cruz Silva had previously taken up the demand for a new span across the River Sal

to supplement the existing Assolna-Chinchinim bridge. The issue has also been raised in gram saba meetings of both village panchayats, where residents pointed to recent traffic diversions via Cuncolim—necessitated by power works near the bridge—as evidence of the urgent need for alternate connectivity.

Alongside older bridges, newer structures like the Assolna-Cavelossim and Rawanfond bridges are also set to undergo health assessments as part of the district-wide review. The exercise aims not just to identify

immediate repairs but also to establish a more proactive bridge maintenance regime for the region.

Meanwhile, similar safety concerns are being flagged by civil society groups elsewhere in the district. The NGO GOACAN has pressed for a structural audit of the Margao flyover built over the Konkarn Railway tracks nearly 25 years ago. The flyover, now maintained by the PWD-NH after being handed over by the Konkarn Railway Corporation, has reportedly not undergone major structural repairs since its construction. While surface upgrades, including asphalt overlay and rubber joint replacements, were taken up in 2022, GOACAN insists that a full structural stability test is essential to ensure public safety.

The consultant's findings are expected to help the state decide which bridges require urgent attention and which need long-term solutions, including parallel constructions.

# Another unsafe bldg bites the dust in Margao market

Team Herald

**MARGAO:** There was yet another incident in Margao where the gallery portion of the Antao building near Cine Lata came crashing down on Saturday early morning.

On Friday, a portion of a parapet on the upper floor of an old building near Pimpalkatta, along the road leading to Gandhi Market in Margao, gave way on Friday.

Unlike the Friday incident where vehicles were damaged, no such vehicles were damaged but locals felt that it was luck that the incident took place early in the morning otherwise, if it was during the day, it could have fallen on any one passing by as that is a busy street.

Vivek Naik from Margao, urged the authorities to look into such issues thoroughly so that public safety is not compromised in view of the back-to-back incidents.

Shadow Council for Margao (SCM) Convenor Savio Coutinho also questioned if real estate developers were eyeing such lands and waiting for it to fall so that they could carry out redevelopment of the area.

As soon as the incident occurred, authorities rushed to the site.

Soon afterwards, Margao MLA Digambar Kamat who also inspected the site, stated that instructions were given to the South Goa District Collector to appoint a good contractor having the right equipment to remove the unsafe portions of this building so that there is no



The gallery portion of the Antao building near Cine Lata came crashing down on Saturday

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— Digambar Kamat, Margao MLA

further harm to the public. The MLA added that MMC or fire brigade do not have the tools or manpower for such operations and thus this would be a better approach.

Kamat also shot back at critics and said ultimately it is the owner of such private buildings who should be held responsible for the

maintenance of these old buildings. He added that if the buildings were maintained regularly, such incidents would not occur.

"The Margao Municipal Council (MMC) or the MLA cannot be blamed for such things as there are processes involved in taking action against such buildings. There are also the legal aspects of what happens to the tenants or if the owner goes to the court to prevent the demolition of the building," he said.

While acknowledging that MMC had carried out a survey of unsafe buildings, Kamat said that he will soon speak to the Chief Minister about this issue as he felt there is a need for a pan-Goa policy for taking action on unsafe buildings. He said such a policy should make clear the legal proceedings as well and who takes care of the demolition.

# Fishers' forum demands halt to tourist canoe ops in Sinquerim river during monsoon

Team Herald

**MARGAO:** The National Federation of Small-Scale Fishworkers (NFSF) has urged the Goa government to suspend all tourism canoe and water sports operations in the Sinquerim river from June 1 to August 31, citing severe ecological and livelihood impacts on local fishing communities during the monsoon ban period.

In a letter addressed to the Captain of Ports, Director of Fisheries, and Director of Tourism, NFSF General Secretary Sebastiao

**For the past 3 years, the All Goa Small Scale Responsible Fisheries Union (AGSSRFU), an affiliate of NFSF, has been reporting disturbances caused by tourism activities like boat rides for dolphin sightings in the river mouth. According to local fishers, the noise and movement generated by the canoes deter fish from entering the river, affecting fish availability throughout the season**

Rodrigues raised strong objections to the continued operation of 24 tourism canoes in the Sinquerim river during the monsoon. These boats, which reportedly operate with 40 HP outboard motors, have been allowed by the Captain of Ports for

the past three years, despite the annual monsoon fishing ban meant to allow marine fish populations to regenerate.

"The operation of high-powered tourism canoes during the ban period is a mockery of the very

intention behind the fishing ban," Rodrigues stated. "The continuous activity in the mouth of the Sinquerim river disrupts fish breeding and has a serious negative impact on the livelihoods of over 350 small-scale fishers from Sinquerim, Candolim and Nerul."

Rodrigues noted that tourism permissions were granted without consultation with local fishing communities and called it a violation of their rights under international and national policy frameworks. India is a signatory to the Voluntary Guide-

lines for Securing Sustainable Small-Scale Fisheries (VG-SSF Guidelines), which advocate for the recognition of small-scale fishers' roles in co-managing and protecting aquatic ecosystems.

The NFSF has called on the Captain of Ports to revoke any permissions granted to tourism canoes operating in Sinquerim river during the monsoon months, and urged the Tourism and Fisheries Departments to ensure that fish breeding grounds remain undisturbed during this critical period.

government of pushing locals out of the beach shack business. "The tourism minister wants a five-star Goa. It was already first-class. Now, it's third-class. Shack operators are burdened with taxes and fees. Locals are being forced out, with outsiders taking over," he claimed.

Taking a direct swipe at Lobo, Fernandes said the Calangute MLA was responsible for the coastal belt's decline. "Calangute was once a world-famous destination. Today, it's infamous for sleaze and prostitution. That's due to the leadership there, which lacks moral values," he said. Accompanied by Calangute Congress block members, Fernandes said he was there to strengthen the party's base. "The leadership in Calangute must change so future generations can once again be proud to call it home," he added.

# Anjuna demolitions betrayal of people's mandate: MP

Team Herald

**CALANGUTE:** South Goa MP Viriato Fernandes on Friday criticised Calangute MLA Michael Lobo, calling the ongoing demolitions in Anjuna a betrayal of the people's mandate. Addressing a press conference, Fernandes said, "We get elected for five years. Do what you can for the people in that time. Don't fool them, don't make money off them, and don't rob them. The same people who elected you will reject you with chappals."

Referring to the demolition drive, Fernandes accused Lobo and his wife, Siolim MLA Delilah Lobo, of hypocrisy. "Before the elections, they cried about the government targeting their hotel. Now, when people's homes are being demolished, they remain silent. They couldn't care less," he alleged.

He also accused the BJP

government of pushing locals out of the beach shack business. "The tourism minister wants a five-star Goa. It was already first-class. Now, it's third-class. Shack operators are burdened with taxes and fees. Locals are being forced out, with outsiders taking over," he claimed.

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# Half-done sewage job leaves Colva road in ruins

**MARGAO:** Residents of Ward No. 2 in Colva are voicing their frustration over incomplete sewage installation work that has left their road in a severely damaged condition.

The project, which began several months ago, involved digging up the road for laying sewage pipelines. However, according to residents, the work has been left unfinished.

"The road was dug up for sewage work, but nothing has been completed. Water now accumulates along the sides of the road and outside people's homes, making it difficult for residents to enter or exit their properties safely," said Simon Rodrigues, local resident.

With stagnant water collecting after rains and poor drainage due to the incomplete infrastructure, residents fear a rise in mosquito breeding and health hazards. The muddy and uneven surface has also made commuting difficult.

# ANJUNA: Tracing the tide of change in a village caught between myth and market

A narrow path off Anjuna beach leads to its tidepools—natural rock formations where tiny marine ecosystems flourish, and where some tourists pause to watch the sun dip below the horizon. But before you reach this slice of coastal beauty, you're stopped in your tracks by a stark, unfinished concrete shell—garbage-strewn, asphalt-laced, and jarringly out of place.

For journalist and researcher Saachi D'Souza, this collision of



land are treated like commodities."

It's a sentiment D'Souza echoes. "This research made me realise that water isn't just an environmental resource—it's a witness to change," she says. "When groundwater is over-extracted, when tide patterns shift, when beaches erode—those are signs of imbalance. Development without respect for natural rhythms is erasure."

Breakwaters—tetrapod structures placed along Anjuna's coast to halt erosion—were installed after locals raised the alarm in 2013. Back then, over 50 metres of shoreline had reportedly vanished, and some 20 families were affected. While such coastal defences have shown success in parts of Southeast Asia, the results in Anjuna are inconclusive. "We've noticed patterns of sand change," a local resident says, "but there is nothing definitive yet."

D'Souza hopes her work will spark deeper reflection. "My dream is for Goa to strike a balance where conservation isn't an afterthought. Where we protect not just land and water, but the histories and relationships embedded in them."

In archival images from the 1970's and 80's, Anjuna appears almost mythic—hippies and locals coexisting in a fragile economy of snacks, souvenirs, and scooter rentals. But beneath the nostalgia lies a cautionary tale.

"We need to pause and ask what kind of future we are building," D'Souza says. "Because if we don't, one day we'll all be asking that same question—where is Anjuna?"

**Goa Water Stories is a collaboration with the Living Waters Museum, the Centre for Public Policy and Governance at the Goa Institute of Management, the Goa University and the Sunaparanta Goa Centre for the Arts.**

**Anjuna's transformation highlights a stark imbalance between the anti-capitalist ideals (of the hippies) that once defined it and the large-scale construction that now threatens its fragile ecology. What drew me to this project was the chance to explore how a place can be sold—not just as a tourist destination, but as an aesthetic, often at the cost of its biodiversity**

— Saachi D'Souza



construction and coastline is more than just an eyesore. It's a symbol of everything Anjuna has become—and everything it's at risk of losing.

"Anjuna has always intrigued me," says D'Souza, whose work spans culture, civic issues, and the environment. "It's where multiple narratives collide—the hippie counter-culture, the rise of mass tourism, and now, growing tensions between local identity and commercial development."

Her project for Goa Water Stories, part of a wider research initiative into Goa's ecological futures, investigates Anjuna as both place and metaphor—how it has been sold not just as a destination, but as an aesthetic. That sale, she says, has come at a steep cost: to biodiversity, to community, and to memory.

Among the stories that stayed with her was a conversation with a local vendor who looked out at the sea of villas and cafés mushrooming around his shop and asked quietly, "Where is Anjuna?" It wasn't just about maps, D'Souza says. "It was about identity—whether the place he knew and loved still existed beneath all this."



Scan the QR code to experience Saachi D'Souza's provocative project, 'Where is Anjuna?'

Today, Anjuna's changing landscape is tied to a deeper pattern

myth of endless growth, where people and natural resources like