

WITH RAINS, POTHOLE ARE BACK IN SMART CITY

Cracks on roads expose shoddy work, test the public's patience

Team Herald

PANJIM: The recent downpours haven't just opened up potholes across Panjim — they've also exposed gaping holes in the grand claims made by officials about the completion and quality of Smart City works. As rainwater collects in crumbling stretches of road, the narrative of a modern, well-planned city infrastructure is rapidly falling apart, leaving behind a trail of frustration and questions.

One of the most glaring examples is the stretch near the junction close to Hotel Vivanta, where potholes have reappeared just weeks after the supposed completion of roadworks. Similar conditions plague other parts of the city, including Bhatlem and Santa Cruz, revealing what many residents say is a clear case of substandard execution under the Smart City banner.

In Bhatlem, residents are increasingly vocal about the poor state of the main road. Although sections have been paved with interlocking blocks, the surface remains uneven and treacherous, especially for two-wheelers navigating



The alternate Mala-St Cruz section of the road posing a threat to motorists and (right) the recently completed Smart City road at St Inez seen riddled with potholes

the rains. An alternative route, constructed to facilitate bridge work along the Mala-St Cruz Road, is also riddled with potholes, resulting in bumpy and unsafe rides for motorists.

"It is difficult to drive on this type of road, especially during rains. If you are riding a two-wheeler, it becomes more challenging. The road is uneven and full of potholes at multiple places. The paving of blocks has made it more uneven," said Rohan Mandrekar, a motorist.



Ranjit Kumar, a local resident, echoed this frustration. "This is not new for us. Last year the road remained with potholes for a considerable period of time even during rains. After much hue and cry, it was repaired, but again see the condition. Potholes have appeared. We do not know when we are going to get rid of this problem,"

he said. Activist Mariano Ferrao was blunt in his criticism of the authorities. "The rain of 15-20 days has exposed the substandard work carried out by the contractors. This means a considerable amount of taxpayers' money has gone down the drains. But the sad part is that there is nobody to take responsibility for this. The

authorities are interested in lip service and show off. The question is who benefits from this — contractor, public or the authorities. Certainly it is not benefiting common people," he said.

He added, "The roads are so dangerous that there can be accidents at any moment of time. People may lose their lives. Already there have been fatal accidents. When will the roads be laid properly? We are tired of raising our voice."

Another local activist, Anthony D'silva, questioned the delay in addressing these perennial issues. "The roads with potholes are dangerous for motorists. The state has started receiving rains for the past few days. Even June has not ended and this is the condition of Smart City roads. I do not know why the local issues have not been fixed yet. I do not know what type of rocket science is required to fill the potholes. This is really a nuisance for the city as well as the state," he said.

As the rain persists, so does the public's frustration — with no real solutions in sight, only more waterlogged promises.

IN SAFE HANDS



Achal, the Rs 473-crore fifth Fast Patrol Vessel (FPV) with 60% indigenous content and dual-class certification, built by Goa Shipyard Ltd for the Indian Coast Guard during its launch to enhance coastal security and offshore asset protection, in Goa

Court orders FIR against ex-minister over bribery claims

Viral video sufficient to call for probe: Sessions Court

Team Herald

PANJIM: The North Goa Sessions Court in Mercas has directed the Anti-Corruption Branch (ACB) of the Vigilance Department to register an FIR against former Minister Pandurang Madkaikar, following a viral video from March 4 in which he allegedly admitted to paying a bribe of Rs 15 to Rs 20 lakh to get a file cleared. In the video, Madkaikar also claimed that all ministers are preoccupied with 'counting money'.

Two days after the video was out, activist Kashinath Shetye and five others filed a complaint with the Police Inspector (PI) of ACB, and subsequently with the Superintendent of Police (SP), ACB, on March 10. The complaint, filed under Sec-

tion 175(3) of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS) 2023, urged a probe into the alleged bribery and legal action against Madkaikar.

The complainants argued that if Madkaikar's claims were false, he should be held accountable for misleading the public and defaming constitutional authorities. In response, both the respondents submitted detailed objections to the application. Public Prosecutor S Mandrekar supported their stand, stating that a statement had been recorded from Madkaikar and, since no offence was made out, the FIR had not been registered. He prayed for the application to be dismissed.

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3 Boeing 787s abort India routes in 36 hours

AGENCIES, NEW DELHI: A Lufthansa flight to Hyderabad was forced to return to Frankfurt mid-air on Sunday following a bomb threat, capping off a concerning 36-hour period during which three India-bound Boeing 787 Dreamliner aircraft — operated by different international airlines — had to turn back shortly after take-off due to safety issues.

Lufthansa flight LH752, which had departed from Frankfurt for Hyderabad on Sunday afternoon (local time), was diverted after German authorities received a bomb threat targeting the flight via social media. The airline confirmed that the aircraft returned to Frankfurt "out of an abundance of caution" and that passengers were provided hotel accommodation overnight.

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Iran threatens to leave nuclear weapons treaty

AGENCIES, DUBAI: Iran's Foreign Ministry on Monday confirmed that parliamentarians are preparing a bill that could pave the way for Tehran to withdraw from the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), raising concerns over escalating tensions in the region following Israeli airstrikes and renewed scrutiny by the UN nuclear watchdog.

Foreign Ministry spokesperson Esmaeil Baghaei acknowledged that the proposal was under consideration but emphasised that no final decision had been made. "In light of recent developments, we will take an appropriate decision. The government has to enforce parliament bills, but such a proposal is just being prepared and we will coordinate in the later stages with parliament," Baghaei told reporters.

Iran ratified the NPT in 1970, agreeing to forgo nuclear weapons in exchange for access to civilian nuclear technology under the oversight of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). However, tensions have surged in recent days after Israel launched airstrikes on Iranian territory, claiming Tehran was on the verge of developing a nuclear bomb — a charge Iran has repeatedly denied.

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Transponders fitted on 660 fishing boats

Fisheries director says the remaining 200 vessels are inactive

Team Herald

PANJIM: Director of Fisheries Dr Shamila Monteiro on Monday said that around 660 mechanised fishing vessels have been fitted with transponders, while about 200 vessels are yet to be equipped. The installation of transponders is mandatory, as they allow fishermen to send emergency text messages at sea. Most of the vessels without the system are currently non-operational, she added.

Speaking to O Herald, Dr Monteiro explained that the Government of India has approved a national project under the Pradhan Mantri Matsya Sampada Yojana (PMMSY) to roll out the Vessel Communication and Sup-



Fishing trawlers docked at Malim jetty, Betim

port System, which includes free transponder installation for fishing vessels in all coastal states.

As part of coastal security measures, the installation of transponders is compulsory. Fisheries department staff post-

ed at jetties will verify whether vessels heading out to sea are fitted with the system, alongside checking fishing licences and other required documents.

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Goa braces for more rain

PANJIM: The India Meteorological Department (IMD) has issued an Orange Alert for Goa, forecasting heavy rainfall at a few places and very heavy rainfall at isolated locations on June 17 and 18, 2025.

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AI-171 CRASH Cockpit voice recorder recovered from wreckage

DNA tests identify 119 victims

PTI, AHMEDABAD: Investigators probing the tragic crash of an Air India Dreamliner in Ahmedabad have recovered the Cockpit Voice Recorder (CVR), a vital component that, along with the previously retrieved Flight Data Recorder (FDR), is expected to significantly aid in determining the cause of the disaster that claimed 270 lives.

The confirmation came during a high-level review meeting chaired by Principal Secretary to the Prime Minister, P K Mishra, who visited the crash site near B J Medical College and later the Civil Hospital to oversee rescue, relief, and identification efforts.

The Aircraft Accident Investigation Bureau (AAIB) is leading a detailed probe, with the US National Transportation Safety Board assisting under international aviation protocols, as the ill-fated Boeing 787-8 Dreamliner was American-made.

Meanwhile, the DNA identification process is progressing steadily, with 119 victims identified and 76 bodies handed over

to their families till Monday evening, according to Dr Rakesh Joshi, Medical Superintendent at Ahmedabad Civil Hospital. Authorities hope to complete the DNA matching of all victims by Tuesday evening or Wednesday morning.

Among those identified was former Gujarat Chief Minister Vijay Rupani, whose remains were handed over to his family. The civil hospital is handling the identification process for the charred or severely damaged bodies of passengers and those on the ground.

At the Forensic Science Laboratory in Gandhinagar, Mishra reviewed the DNA profiling efforts and urged authorities to maintain scientific rigour while expediting the process. He also met with grieving families and injured survivors, assuring them of full support from the Prime Minister's Office.

"This is an unimaginable tragedy. Every life lost is deeply mourned. We are committed to ensuring justice, compassion, and swift action," Mishra told reporters.

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Months after hit-and-run, Judith fights back with music and faith

AUGUSTO RODRIGUES

BAMMONVADDO, SIOLIM: Nearly four months after a horrific hit-and-run accident left Judith Fernandes critically injured and abandoned on the roadside, the Siolim resident is slowly but resolutely reclaiming her life — with the help of her family, her faith and her music.

On the night of February 18, Judith — a music teacher at Ardee School in Sangolda — was struck by a speeding Mercedes while she was taking an evening walk around 8.30 pm near Sao Joao Chapel, Siolim. The momentum of the car flung her into a nearby wooded area, where she lay bloodied and battered as the driver fled with the car.

The fighter that she is, Judith walks with the help of a walker now and has resumed teaching music from home. "Hit-and-run accidents are not just accidents," she said quietly. "They are human tragedies caused by thoughtless and inhumane people."



Judith relaxing with her husband Prajay at their home at Siolim

Judith, a music teacher by profession, has set herself a deadline: to return to the classroom by August 1.

Her husband, Prajay Simeprushkar, calls her recovery nothing short of miraculous. "She is a story of strength. I remember telling people I didn't know the way forward. But she's shown me that, with God, we don't need to look back — even if the scars take time to heal," he said.

Judith's recollection of the

incident is fragmented. "I remember flying off the ground and seeing a white vehicle pass by. Then, there are flashes — my top being torn by a nurse, me insisting to my godmother that I had to go to school," she recalled.

What haunts the couple as much as the accident itself is the apathy of the driver and his family. "In a moment of crisis," shared Judith, "the difference between life and death often comes down

to a single action — the decision to help. If the driver had stopped, if he had called for help, if he had just shown a moment of compassion, my experience could have been very different."

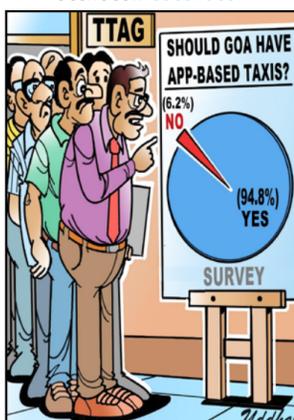
"The man who hit me never called. His parents offered a settlement of Rs 50,000, without even checking if I was alive," Judith said, her voice tinged with emotion. "The consequences of their actions should carry moral weight, not just legal."

In the aftermath of the accident, Judith's condition sent shockwaves through her village. "We didn't recognise her when she was found. Her face was bloodied and her body limp," recalled neighbour Liberata Fernandes. "She is living proof of God's grace."

Despite ongoing physical limitations — Judith cannot sit or walk for extended periods — she manages household responsibilities.

MAX. TEMP 31.6 °C
MIN. TEMP 24.8 °C

idharudhar



Exactly 6.2% of Goa's population are taxi drivers.