

# Hazardous stagnant pool: A neglected dengue breeding ground in Alto Betim

**I** write with deep concern and growing frustration over a serious public health hazard that has plagued our locality—Alto Betim, Reis Magos, Porvorim—for far too long: an abandoned under-construction swimming pool that has become a stagnant cesspool of rainwater and rotting debris.

Despite repeated complaints to the Verem Panch, no concrete action has



been taken. As a resident and responsible citizen, I feel compelled to bring this issue to the attention of your esteemed publica-

tion—and, through it, to the authorities who have so far remained indifferent. What was initially intended to be a swimming pool for a private villa now stands as a grim symbol of civic neglect and administrative apathy. Left unfinished for over three years, the site fills with rainwater every monsoon, which remains stagnant for months without drainage or maintenance. The water turns dark, foul, and becomes a dumping ground for garbage and decaying matter—ideal conditions for mosquito breeding. The most alarming fall-out of this inaction has been a spike in dengue

cases in our neighbourhood. Last year, several residents—including my own son—suffered from dengue infections. This year, with the monsoon underway, the mosquito population has surged once again, and we fear another outbreak. It is distressing to know that such illness and suffering could have been easily avoided if the authorities had acted in time. This is not an isolated grievance. Residents have made multiple verbal appeals and met the local

Panch member in person, requesting even basic interventions like fogging. But these pleas have either been met with vague assurances or complete silence. In a functioning democracy, where civic authorities are meant to safeguard public welfare, this kind of inaction is unacceptable. Beyond dengue, the stagnant pool has introduced other dangers. Snakes have been spotted around the site, posing a serious threat to children and pets. Given its close proximity to residential homes, the risk is

real and growing. We understand that construction delays are sometimes inevitable. But even basic preventive measures—like installing a drainage system, regular water removal, and disinfecting the site—could have mitigated the danger. If the Panchayat is unable to manage this, at the very least the site should be secured and sealed off from public access. Through this letter, we urge the authorities to wake up to the seriousness of this issue. Public health

cannot be treated as an afterthought, especially when preventable diseases are affecting lives each year. We demand immediate inspection of the site by local health and sanitation officials, urgent drainage and removal of stagnant water and debris and regular fumigation and mosquito control in the affected area. We are not asking for luxuries—just the basic right to live in a clean and safe environment. It's time to put people before neglect. Let this be a wake-up call before more lives are put at risk.

**CITIZEN KEITH FERNANDES**  
Alto Betim

## Frequent breakdown of ferry services on Dauje-Tolto route

**A** recent incident on the Dauje-Tolto ferry route across the Cumbarjua Creek has raised serious safety concerns. The ferry malfunctioned midstream and narrowly avoided a collision with a passing barge—an alarming situation that underscores the urgent need for intervention by the River Navigation Department.



The vessel to veer dangerously off course and the overall condition of the ferry has deteriorated significantly. The attached image clearly shows how the ferry drifts hazardously when vehicles board, highlighting the risks posed to both passengers and cargo.

## Cattle have a free run on Benaulim roads



**C**attle seem to have taken over the roads of Benaulim in recent weeks. Every morning, cows and buffaloes from the beach road their permanent home, creating a constant nuisance for residents and visitors alike. To make matters worse, the roads are frequently littered with cattle dung, creating unsanitary and unpleasant conditions. It's high time the local panchayat steps in and takes concrete action to address this growing menace. Clean, safe roads are a basic expectation—not a luxury.

## Pothole menace returns with vengeance on Goa's roads

**W**ith the arrival of the monsoon, the pothole menace in Goa has returned—this time with a vengeance. The rains have exposed the poor quality of road construction, making daily commutes increasingly hazardous and frustrating for citizens.



Potholes have resurfaced in massive numbers across the State, especially on city roads, sparking public outrage. Many of these roads appear to be constructed without proper planning or engineering logic, resulting in misshapen, uneven surfaces that crumble almost immediately after rainfall. At Patto, the situation is worsened by an inadequate

drainage network and overflowing drains, leading to waterlogged roads. The quality of work reflects how poorly the Public Works Department values taxpayers' money. The biggest enemy of roads is water—yet, instead of a proper gradient that allows water to run off, most roads are built with a centre-high, shoulder-low structure, allowing water to stagnate and seep into the surface layers. This only accelerates the deterioration. A sustainable solution lies

in the use of plastic waste in road construction. In 2015, the Supreme Court recommended that 8% to 10% of hot mix used in roads be plastic-based. While this is followed on national highways, city roads continue to suffer due to lack of enforcement and accountability. Contractors are not mandated to adopt this method, and the result is clear: roads that don't survive a single monsoon. Our crumbling roads have become a symbol of civic neglect and a recurring subject of public frustration.

**CITIZEN VENAN DIAS**  
Santo Estevam

## Pavements along iconic Swatantra Path in shambles

**S**watantra Path in Vasco, once regarded as one of the most beautifully designed promenades in Goa, now lies in a state of disrepair. Once lined with majestic Ashoka trees and offering a pleasant walking experience, the route has become an eyesore due to the deplorable condition of its pavements.



Square to the IOC Terminus. The problem began after the pavements were dug up for laying underground cables. Citizens had hoped the walkways would be restored with new pavers once the work was completed—but that never happened. Now, with the onset of the monsoon, the condition has only worsened.

**CITIZEN ADELMO FERNANDES**  
Vasco

The paver blocks along the stretch are either broken, displaced, or missing altogether, posing a serious hazard to pedestrians. Several elderly people and children have reportedly suffered falls while walking along these damaged footpaths. Adding to the mess, construction debris is scattered across multiple sections of the pavement. The situation is particularly bad along the entire route from Vasco Church

With the Saptah festival approaching and foot traffic in the area set to increase, immediate attention is needed. It is high time the authorities act swiftly and restore Swatantra Path to its former glory—for the safety, convenience, and pride of Vasco's residents.

## Revamp needed for govt-run school bus transport system

**I**would like to draw the attention of the Education Department and the Government of Goa to the urgent need for a rethink and revamp of the current government-run school bus transport system.



**CITIZEN WILSON DA COSTA**  
Quepem

At present, school buses from different institutions ply the same village routes, with each bus catering only to its own students. This results in multiple buses covering the same areas, leading to unnecessary duplication and wastage of resources. With proper planning, this can be easily avoided. A more efficient model would involve school buses trans-

porting students from multiple schools in a given area, based on lists provided by the respective schools. This would ensure optimal use of the buses and help reduce the number of vehicles on the road. Furthermore, I suggest that the maintenance and servicing of these school buses be handled by the Kadamba Transport Corporation (KTC), which already has the infrastructure and expertise to manage public transport efficiently. In many cases, school

buses either run with very few students or are overcrowded. To address this imbalance, a proper audit should be conducted to assess the number of students traveling from each village to various schools. Based on this data, the required number of buses can be deployed. The ADEI of each taluka should be tasked with coordinating and overseeing the school bus system, ensuring that it functions efficiently, economically, and in the best interest of students and parents. A well-managed and integrated school transport system will not only save public funds but also improve safety and reliability for school-going children across Goa.

## Accident-prone zone at Merces needs attention



**E**very day, cows and stray dogs sit along the Merces-Curca main road near Atithi Restaurant, St. Caitan Waddo,

**CITIZEN RAHUL KAMAT**  
Merces

Merces, making it extremely difficult for traffic to pass smoothly. This ongoing situation has turned the stretch into a serious acci-

dent-prone zone. Despite the daily risk to commuters, no action has been taken so far by the MLA of the Santa Cruz constituency, the Panchayat, the Animal Husbandry Department, or the Government of Goa. It is high time that strict measures are implemented to address this issue and prevent potential accidents. Authorities must act before it's too late.

## Govt apathy towards civic complaints is disheartening

**"P**WD policy aims to streamline water supply management"—a promising headline, but one that rings hollow for many citizens on the ground. Every year, we mark World Water Day on March 22 with grand functions, speeches, and expensive government-sponsored events. Yet, once the day passes, the promises fade and so does the urgency to act.

plumber. However, instead of resolving the issue, he informed me that I would need to secure permission for road cutting before they could fix the water leakage. Until then, he said, the water would continue to flow, and potholes would naturally form.

**CITIZEN GREGORY E. D'SOUZA**  
Soliim

While the PWD Goa app is a useful tool for flagging water and road-related issues, it is disappointing to witness the glaring lack of follow-up. I recently lodged a complaint through the app and, to my surprise, received a call from a PWD

Is this truly the message we want to send to proactive, concerned citizens—that action will only be taken after an accident or major damage occurs? Policies and digital platforms are of little use if there is no will or accountability to back them. Civic engagement deserves to be met with responsive governance. Delaying action until a problem escalates not only wastes public resources but erodes public trust.

## FDA should inspect unhygienic food stalls in Karaswada

**E**very evening, a large number of employees from the Karaswada Industrial Estate and labourers stop by roadside food stalls near the petrol pump for a quick cup of tea before heading home after a hard day's work.



What is truly shocking, however, is the appalling state of hygiene at some of these stalls. Fish is cleaned and sold right at the entrance of one restaurant, creating an unbearable stench. Adjacent to this makeshift fish market,

**CITIZEN RALPH GUDINHO**  
Porvorim

tandoori chicken is sold, while in another corner, a vendor briskly sells pan masala and gutka. The entire area is unhygienic and poorly maintained, with swarms of flies freely moving between raw fish and cooked food. Stray dogs and cats roam in and out of the premises, and cows rest outside at night, leaving behind dung and urine

that further worsen the mess. To top it off, customers are seen hopping over muddy puddles at the entrance just to get in. It is hard to understand how such a large eatery, situated right by the service road along the Mumbai-Goa Highway, has escaped the scrutiny of the Food and Drugs Administration (FDA), especially when the agency has been actively cracking down on hotels, biryani outlets, and meat and chicken stalls for safety violations. What started as makeshift tin sheds on the roadside—allegedly in the road-widening zone—have now transformed into concrete structures. This clearly could not have happened without political patronage. If the FDA is serious about enforcing hygiene and safety norms, then the same standards must apply here. The establishment should be investigated, and if violations are found, it must be sealed immediately. After all, what's the sauce for the goose is sauce for the gander. Public health cannot be compromised. The honourable High Court's orders against illegal commercial structures must be enforced uniformly across all roadside violators, without exception.

## So-called subsidy or exploitation? Farmers pay the price for govt apathy

**T**he other day, I visited the Krishna Bazar in Mapusa to check the prices of Jaya and Jyoti paddy seeds. To my shock, I found that a 25 kg bag of Jyoti was priced at Rs 735, and Jaya at Rs 750.

This is baffling, considering the government buys these same seeds from farmers at Rs 22/kg for Jyoti and Rs 18/kg for Jaya, yet sells them back at Rs 29.40 and Rs 30/kg re-

**CITIZEN PEDRO LOURENCO**  
Sangolda

spectively. So who exactly benefits from this so-called "subsidy"? Is this what the government means by supporting farmers—buying cheap and selling dear? Over the years, productivity has declined, yet timely support is still lacking. Hybrid seeds like Sahyadri Sindura and Sahyadri Kempumukti—both with 120-130 day cycles—were distrib-



uted by the Agriculture Department only after June 18, when the sowing season was already halfway through. Why aren't these seeds provided by May, allowing farmers to plan in time?

The approach of the Agriculture Department is no better than that of the Mapusa Municipality, which only desilts gutters after homes are flooded. Are the officials truly serious about agriculture? Instead of making decisions from air-conditioned offices, they need to step onto the fields and work directly

with farmers. Even the mechanisation of farming has been outsourced to private service providers who reportedly exploit debt-ridden farmers. From land tilling to harvesting, farmers are forced to pay exorbitant fees—surely not without the knowledge of those at the top. It appears we are on a path to turning Green Goa into grey. We must preserve our fields for future generations and stop playing with the sentiments of the poor and hardworking farmers. Let wiser decisions prevail.