



WHEN KING COBRAS LEAVE THE FOREST.

Suraj Nandrekar

The reopening of a public toilet at the Mapusa market after nearly a decade should have been a moment of relief. Instead, it exposes a deeper failure, how something as basic as sanitation can be ignored for years in one of Goa's busiest commercial hubs.

But let's be honest, one toilet in a market of this scale is not a solution; it is a formality. The Mapusa market is vast. It sees heavy footfall every day, with peak crowds during weekly market days. People spend hours there, shopkeepers from morning till evening, customers navigating crowded lanes, transport workers moving in and out. In such a space, the need is not for one facility, but for multiple, well-planned and accessible sanitation points.

The absence of adequate toilets inevitably leads to a harsh reality: people are forced to find alternatives. Open defecation in surrounding areas, including fields behind the bus stand, becomes an unavoidable consequence. This is not just an inconvenience; it is a serious public health concern and a blow to basic human dignity. The question that naturally arises is simple: Are we in 2026 or still functioning like it's the 1990s? What is even more troubling is that this issue was never unknown. Complaints have been raised repeatedly over the years. Vendors have spoken, citizens have protested, and yet the response has been painfully slow. When action finally comes, it is minimal, barely addressing the scale of the problem.

This reflects a larger issue in civic governance, a tendency to act late and do the least required. Planning appears reactive rather than proactive. Instead of assessing needs based on usage and population, decisions seem to be driven by convenience and optics.

A market of this size demands at least three to four toilet blocks, strategically located and maintained around the clock. It must account for women, elderly visitors, and workers who cannot simply leave their stalls. Sanitation is not a luxury; it is a necessity. Equally important is maintenance. Goa has seen too many public facilities deteriorate soon after inauguration. Without strict monitoring, accountability, and regular upkeep, even the existing toilet risks becoming unusable in a matter of time.

A non-functional toilet is as good as no toilet. What is worrying is the culture of celebrating delayed basics as achievements. A toilet after ten years is not progress; it is a correction of prolonged neglect. Governance cannot be reduced to ribbon-cutting ceremonies for overdue essentials. Mapusa is not just another town. It is a commercial lifeline and a key destination for locals and visitors alike. If such a central space cannot provide adequate sanitation, it sends a troubling message about priorities. This is not about criticism for the sake of it. It is about demanding what should have been in place long ago.

The people using this market every day deserve dignity. They deserve hygiene.

KING COBRAS ON THE MOVE

Over 300 rescued in 12 years as habitat shifts bring danger closer to home

KEY POINTS

- More than 300 king cobras rescued in Sattari and Bicholim over the past 12 years.
- Once found in dense forests, they are now being spotted in cashew plantations and villages.
- Local wildlifers risk their lives to rescue and release them back into the wild.
- No species-specific anti-venom for king cobra bites in India; a bite can be fatal within minutes.
- Recent research confirms four species of king cobras, including *Ophiophagus kaalinga*, endemic to the Western Ghats.



From deep inside the Mhadeli Wildlife Sanctuary to cashew plantations and water canals, king cobras are appearing in places they were never seen before. Habitat loss, food chain shifts and human encroachment are forcing the world's longest venomous snake closer to people—and raising alarms for both conservationists and communities.

Respect them. Protect their home.



Goa Tourism Development Corporation Ltd. PRESENTS

Mormugao Summer Fest 2026

5 pm onwards
 Venue: Rose Circle Ground, Headland Sada, Mormugao

25 APRIL PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS **26 APRIL**

- A prayer to The Lord - **Ganesh Vandana** performance by Dancehoard
- A devotional **Dhindi Utsav** – a bhajan procession from Mormugao
- 9-times **SHIGMO** winners Shree Mandaleshwar Managuru Group
- Vibrant **Gondhal folk dance** by Nrithyanjali Dance Academy
- Shiv Tandav, Krishna, Dashavtar & India Flag Act** by Prince Dance Troupe - ORISSA - **Winner of India Got Talent**
- Live performance by **Renowned Playback singer HEMA SARDESAI** with **Rockers Band**
- High-energy traditional performance by **Jagdamb Dhol Tasha Pathak**
- A vibrant dance by Siddhant Gadekar Dance Academy, bringing **Vitthal-Rakhumai to life**
- Stand-up comedy by the **Goan Vhani Show**
- A soulful Goan harmony of **'Geet & Kantar'** by Sidhart Yaji & band
- Stylish **Summer Fashion Show** by Renowned designer Verma Dmello
- Electrifying **LED Light Show** with flow artist Vajra Aigal
- Voice of Amitabh: SUDESH BHOSLE** live in Concert with **Band Lehre**

Watch the sky come alive with a spectacular **DRONE SHOW** – for the first time in Mormugao

Sunday Thought

A Toilet After 10 Years... Yet Not Enough

The reopening of a public toilet at the Mapusa market after nearly a decade should have been a moment of relief. Instead, it exposes a deeper failure, how something as basic as sanitation can be ignored for years in one of Goa's busiest commercial hubs. But let's be honest, one toilet in a market of this scale is not a solution; it is a formality.

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And most importantly, they should not have to wait another ten years for something as basic as a toilet.

Masterstroke

Goa Has an Image Problem

Irfan Iqbal Gheta

GThe menace of the recent "viral videos" has once again come back to haunt Goa. Instead of promoting the State, these clips have done more harm than good to its image as a holiday destination. One such video, uploaded on Instagram by a foreigner, portrays Goa's coastal belt as being overrun with drug peddlers. The narrative suggests that dealers appear out of nowhere, openly approaching tourists—even within close proximity of police stations. The less said about the second viral video, the better.

It shows a group of local youths engaging in questionable behaviour with a "fake blonde" at a well-known party hotspot. For many parents, especially those from outside Goa, such visuals can be deeply concerning. They may think twice before allowing their children to travel to Goa for what is meant to be a simple beach holiday. Tourism—the backbone of Goa's economy—faces repeated blows whenever such content goes viral. Stakeholders are left grappling with the damage, as these portrayals cast the State in a negative light. The harm to "Brand Goa" is real and immediate. There is also a visible contradiction. On one hand, the tourism department spends significant resources promoting Goa as a safe and welcoming destination. On the other, such videos surface with alarming regularity, undermining these efforts almost instantly. This raises a pressing question: do



the custodians of Brand Goa have a strong counter-narrative, beyond routine assurances that investigations are underway and the police are doing their job? It is time to address the issue of misleading and damaging viral content decisively. Before Goa's image is unfairly tarnished, a more proactive and credible response is needed. To those watching from outside the State, it is important to remember—Goa is not defined by what circulates on social media. Goa is not merely about sun-kissed beaches, free-flowing alcohol, or late-night party scenes.

Nor is it defined by illegal activities or exaggerated portrayals of vice. While isolated incidents may occur—as they do anywhere—they do not represent the essence of Goa. The State is far more than the often-highlighted stretches of Anjuna, Baga, Calangute, Candolim, or Colva.

Goa is deeply rooted in spirituality and tradition. Its people celebrate festivals with devotion and pride. The landscape is dotted with places of worship that reflect its rich cultural fabric—from the Kamakshi Temple and Tambdi Surla Mahadev Temple to Shree Mangueshi Temple, Shantadurga Temple, the Basilica of Bom Jesus, Our Lady of the Immaculate Conception Church, and Safa Masjid.

Goa's natural beauty and spiritual heritage remain its true identity. Viral content driven by sensationalism or vested interests may cause temporary dents. But Goa has weathered such challenges before—and it will do so again. Viva Goa!



From Reels to Real Talk:

The Journey of Prathmesh & Roshani

In a digital space overflowing with trends, filters, and fleeting fame, some creators manage to stand out—not by being perfect, but by being real. That's exactly what makes Prathmesh and Roshani, the duo behind "Maar Zai Tuka," so relatable and widely loved. Their content doesn't try too hard to impress; instead, it reflects everyday life, relationships, and the small moments people instantly connect with.

Interestingly, they are not a couple—something many of their followers often assume. What they share is a strong friendship, built on trust, understanding, and a shared creative vision. And that's precisely what gives their content an authentic edge.

Their journey didn't begin with a grand plan. Like many young creators, it started with an idea—one that almost didn't take off. Before this collaboration, there were attempts that didn't work out. But things changed when they met online. A simple conversation turned into friendship, and soon, into a creative partnership.

The idea was simple: create content that people see themselves in. From funny roasts to light-hearted relationship moments and everyday scenarios, their videos are rooted in reality. In the early days, there was no heavy scripting or production. They would just pick up the camera



and shoot, experimenting as they went along. The learning came with time—and so did the audience.

Of course, the journey wasn't without its challenges. Like most creators, they faced doubts—not just from themselves, but from people around them. Family reactions, especially, played a big role. While Roshani's mother supported her from the beginning, her father took time to understand what content creation really meant. Initially seen as "just drama," it gradually gained acceptance as their videos started reaching more people and earning appreciation.

Friends, on the other hand, became a pillar of support. Encouragement from their circle helped them push through the early phase when results were uncertain and growth was slow.

One of the key lessons they emphasize is consistency. Social media doesn't reward hesitation. Posting regularly, engaging with followers, and staying active are all part of the process. But consistency comes with its own pressures—balancing college, shoots, and personal life is no easy task. There are days when they shoot multiple videos back-to-back just to keep up.

Then there's the challenge of negativity. Trolls and critical comments are part of the journey, but instead of letting it affect them, they've learned to use it as motivation. Not every comment needs a reaction, and not every opinion needs validation.

As their content gained traction, brand collaborations followed. What started as barter deals slowly turned into

professional partnerships. Today, they work closely with brands—understanding their requirements, integrating products into their storytelling, and ensuring the content still feels natural. But this too comes with its own hurdles, especially when revisions and edits pile up.

Behind every short reel is a long process—setting up shots, using a tripod, delivering dialogues, retakes, and hours of editing. It may look effortless on screen, but it takes patience and teamwork to bring it all together.

Adding another dimension to their content was the inclusion of Roshani on screen. Initially, there were concerns about how people—especially relatives—would react. But those fears faded as confidence grew. Today, not just friends but even family members have become

comfortable with their online presence.

Despite the growing popularity, they remain clear about one thing—their focus. While many expect their friendship to turn into a relationship, they prefer to keep things simple and concentrate on their work and future goals. Alongside content creation, they have also ventured into business, aiming to expand their presence both online and offline. Their story is a reminder that success on social media isn't always about perfection or overnight fame. Sometimes, it's about starting small, staying consistent, and most importantly—staying real.

For anyone who enjoys relatable content filled with humor, honesty, and a glimpse into everyday life, their journey is both inspiring and refreshing.

Goa's Living Heritage: The Struggle and Spirit of Chitari Art

Goenchi Asmita | By Kajal

By Kajal

In Goa, where modern lifestyles are rapidly evolving, there are still pockets of tradition that continue



to breathe through the hands of skilled artisans. Among them is the centuries-old Chitari art—a vibrant and intricate craft preserved by families like that of Damodar Chitari. Their story is not just about art; it is about resilience, identity, and the fight to keep tradition alive.

For over 140 to 150 years, the Chitari craft has been passed down through generations in Damodar's family. What was once a thriving traditional occupation has now become limited to just a few households. Today, only four families in their area continue to practice this art, making it both rare and

invaluable.

The craft itself is a



meticulous process. It begins with wood—cut,

shaped, and prepared either manually or through machines. Earlier, artisans relied entirely on hand-cutting techniques, but today, machines are used for precision and speed. However, this shift has also increased costs. Wood procurement alone can run into lakhs of rupees, making it a significant financial burden.

Once the base is ready, the real artistry begins. The wooden pieces are



smoothed, and coated with putty to achieve a fine finish. After that, layers of paint are applied—starting with a base coat, often yellow, followed by colors like red, green, and black. Each color requires time to dry before the next is applied. Finally, detailed designs are drawn, bringing the piece to life. A batch of 50 to 70 items can take up to two days to complete, reflecting the patience and effort involved.

The artisans create a wide range of traditional items, including palanquins, cradles, carved panels, and festival decorations. These are especially in demand during festive seasons such as Ganesh Chaturthi and local temple fairs (jattras). However, while the demand spikes seasonally, it has declined within Goa over the years. Many of their products now find markets outside the state, particularly in Karnataka.

The entire family contributes to the craft. Women play a vital role by preparing decorative components and assisting in production, while skilled workers handle carving and painting. Labour, however, has become a growing concern. Wages have increased, and finding reliable

workers is difficult. Some labourers come from outside Goa, adding to operational challenges.

Competition from machine-made and cheaper alternatives has further complicated matters. Without standardized pricing, artisans often struggle to compete in the market. Many are forced to lower prices or rely on wholesale buyers, reducing their profit margins. Despite the hard work, financial stability remains uncertain.

One of the biggest challenges highlighted by Damodar Chitari is the lack of institutional support. While there are discussions about government schemes and subsidies, artisans rarely benefit from them in reality. Most investments—from raw materials to production—are self-funded. Access to affordable loans or financial assistance could significantly ease their burden, but such support

remains limited.

Yet, despite these hardships, the spirit to continue remains strong. For Damodar and his family, Chitari art is more than a livelihood—it is a legacy. It represents their roots, their identity, and their contribution to Goa's cultural heritage.

They believe that the future of this art lies in the hands of the younger generation. Encouraging youth to learn and adopt this craft is essential for its survival. Without new artisans stepping in, there is a real risk of this tradition fading away.

Their message is simple but powerful: Goa's traditional arts need recognition, support, and appreciation. Preserving them is not just the responsibility of artisans, but of society as a whole.

As Goa continues to modernize, stories like that of the Chitari artisans remind us of the importance of holding on to our cultural roots.

