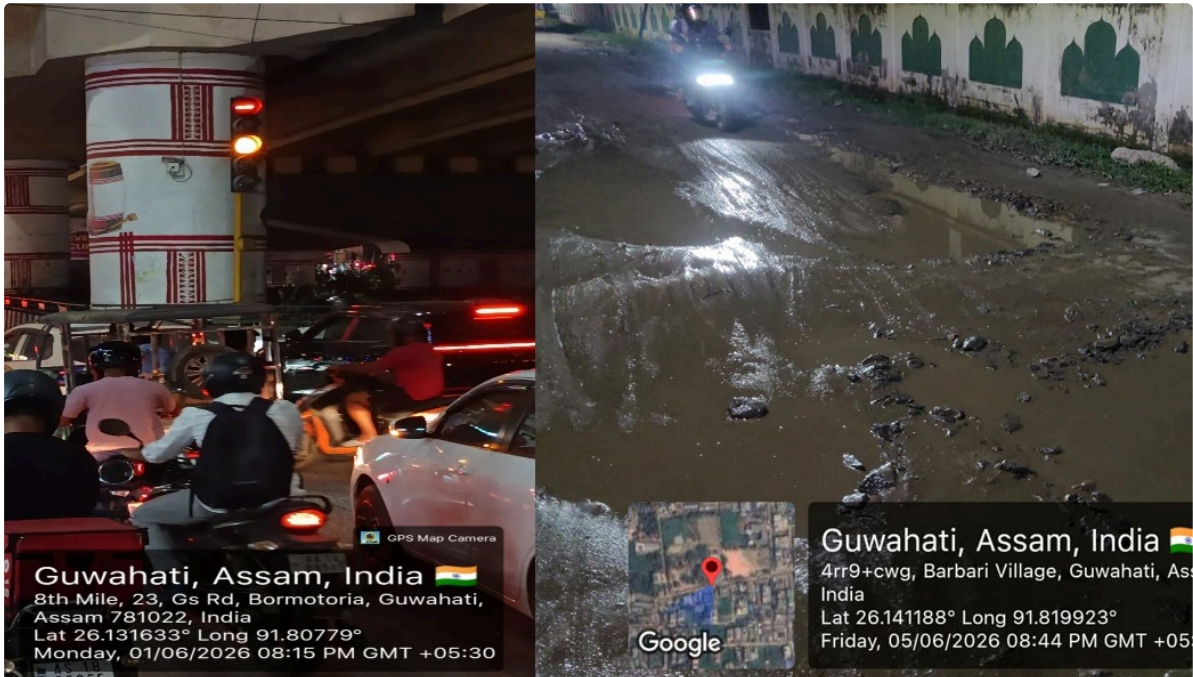


Flyovers Above, Frustration Below: The Daily Struggle of Guwahati's Roads



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Kritika Bordoloi 7 June 2026 Updated 22 Jun 7543 views

Every day in Guwahati feels like a race against time. Before the day even begins properly, thousands of people are already stuck in traffic — surrounded by endless horns, polluted air, damaged roads and growing frustration. A journey that should take 20 minutes often stretches beyond an hour, leaving people mentally exhausted before they even reach work or college.

As someone living in Bagharbari and travelling daily towards Lokhra for my private-sector job while also pursuing my Master's degree in Mass Communication from GUCDOE, I witness this struggle almost every single day. For many of us, traffic in Guwahati is no longer just an inconvenience. It has slowly become a source of daily stress, affecting our health, safety and peace of mind.

Over the past few years, the city has seen rapid flyover construction in the hope of reducing congestion. Flyovers like the Maharaja Prithu Flyover were meant to provide relief to commuters. But for many residents, the reality tells a different story. The traffic has not disappeared — it has only shifted from one place to another. Areas like Basistha, Jalukbari, Zoo Road, Chandmari, Maligaon and Fancy Bazar still witness massive traffic jams almost every day.

While many local residents had hoped flyovers would be the answer, the roads and traffic systems surrounding them were never properly designed to handle the growing volume of vehicles. Narrow connecting roads, poor lane management and sudden bottlenecks around flyovers often make the situation worse rather than better.

What is more worrying is how commonplace road accidents have become in the city. Hardly a week passes without news of another tragic crash somewhere in Guwahati. According to recent news reports, Assam recorded more than 4,200 road accidents and over 1,000 deaths between January and March 2026 alone. Behind every statistic lies a family that lost someone forever.

Recently, separate accidents in Basistha and Garchuk claimed the lives of three youths. In another heartbreaking incident, three young women lost their lives after their vehicle crashed into a stationary truck near Mathgharia while returning from an event in Lokhra. Such incidents are no longer shocking because people have sadly become used to hearing them.

Overspeeding during night hours remains one of the biggest reasons behind these accidents. Many roads and flyovers almost turn into racing tracks after evening. Drunk driving, reckless overtaking and underage driving continue despite strict laws. Another issue people often discuss quietly is how easy it still is for some individuals to obtain driving licences without proper driving skills or road safety awareness.

The behaviour of public transport vehicles also adds heavily to the chaos. City buses stopping in the middle of roads, sudden lane cuts and careless parking create unnecessary traffic blocks every day. Even VIP convoy movements sometimes force ordinary commuters to remain stranded for long periods.

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Open Drainage Near Baghabari Road

The situation becomes even worse during the monsoon season. A single heavy rainfall is enough to paralyse large parts of the city. In places like Maligaon, Adabari and Garchuk, waterlogging is a recurring problem that turns roads into hazardous terrain for both drivers and pedestrians. Guwahati's recurring floods are increasingly being described by urban planners and environmental experts as “**artificial floods**” — not merely caused by rainfall, but by blocked drainage networks, encroached wetlands, shrinking water bodies and construction over natural water channels. As a result, even a few hours of heavy rain can bring large parts of the city to a standstill. Open drains, potholes and uncovered manholes have become a serious public safety concern. For the daily commuter, and particularly two-wheeler riders like me, these perils are often hidden under floodwater and turn otherwise normal roads into death traps.

The tragic death of Payel Nath on April 19, 2026, painfully underscored this reality. The woman, who was in her thirties, was swept into an open drain while attempting to navigate a waterlogged road during flash flooding in Maligaon. Her death shocked the city and sparked public outrage, but it also reflected a deeper problem that residents have been warning about for years.

Unfortunately, this was not an isolated incident. In September 2025, three-year-old Sunit Kumar lost his life after falling into a drain near a flyover construction site in Arya Nagar. These tragedies reveal a disturbing pattern. Whether a child or an adult, poor drainage management and unsafe civic infrastructure continue to put lives at risk across different parts of Guwahati.

Apart from traffic and accidents, pollution is silently becoming another major problem. Long traffic jams mean vehicles continue burning fuel for hours, filling the air with smoke and dust. People travelling daily through GS Road, Beltola, Jalukbari and Basistha constantly breathe polluted air while construction work adds even more dust to the environment.

However, solving Guwahati's traffic problem is not only the responsibility of the government or traffic police. Citizens must also become more responsible. Wrong-side driving, breaking traffic signals, illegal parking and triple riding have become extremely common in the city. Everyone wants better roads, but road discipline is still missing in many places.

Guwahati now needs long-term urban planning instead of temporary solutions. Better drainage systems, wider connecting roads, stricter driving licence verification, proper parking management and improved public transport are urgently needed. Traffic awareness should also begin from school and college levels so that road discipline becomes part of everyday civic behaviour.

Guwahati is growing rapidly, and development is important. But development should make life easier for people, not more stressful. Roads are meant to connect lives, not become daily sources of fear, exhaustion and tragedy.

“At the end of the day, the people of Guwahati are not asking for a perfect city. They simply want roads where reaching home safely does not feel like a daily struggle.”

Kritika Bordoloi

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