

# Govt determined to see speed governors installed in rent-a-cabs: Minister

Officials instructed to verify installation and proper operation of speed governors; directed to submit action taken report by March 11

Team Herald

PANJIM: Transport Minister Mauvin Godinho has said that the government is determined to ensure that rent-a-cab operators install speed governors in their vehicles.

Speaking to reporters, he said, "There is a complete ban on rent-a-cabs. We have not given permission to anybody during the last two years. There is so much pressure for at least rent-a-bike as some areas are not covered."

He said for the last two years, there is a complete ban on the permission of rent-a-cab and not a single permission has been given

**There is a complete ban on rent-a-cabs. We have not given permission to anybody during the last two years. There is so much pressure for at least rent-a-bike as some areas are not covered.**

— Mauvin Godinho, Transport Minister

during the period.

"We are not giving permission to anybody. There is so much of pressure for rent-a-bike as some areas are not covered. Now we are studying which areas are not there. We can have some relaxation for them but that is also not sure. There has to be an audit. Whether it is taxi or motorbike taxi. Then we will take a decision," he said.

He said there is no question of subsidy for rent-a-

cab. We gave subsidy during the Covid period but in future we will incentivise only those who are enrolled with App. For them, it will be costly if they are not on App," he said.

The minister pointed out that very few taxi operators are using digital meters which were installed on the directives of the high court.

"Following high court order, we installed digital meters in taxis but how

many people are using them? But we are not going to stay like this only. We are contemplating action in a different way. Rent-a-cab taxis are also supposed to install speed governors but while some have installed but are not using, some have not installed at all," he said.

In the wake of escalating number of accidents, the State Transport Department recently stepped up efforts to address the issue of transport vehicles, particularly rent-a-cabs, operating without speed governors.

The department instructed its officials to conduct thorough inspection

to ensure the presence and functionality of speed governors, with a specific focus on 'Rent-a-Cab' transport vehicles, in accordance with the Motor Vehicles Act.

It mandated Assistant Directors of Transport (ADTs) to carry out comprehensive examinations during the renewal or issuance of fitness certificates for transport vehicles, verifying the installation and proper operation of speed governors.

A deadline of March 11 has been set for ADTs to submit a detailed action taken report, which will be reviewed on March 12, 2024.

## Bethora villagers blame beverage unit for polluting nullah

Lifeline of groundwater clogged, contaminated with untreated waste water; rendered unfit for bathing, agriculture

Team Herald

PONDA: The main nullah of Bethora-Ponda situated in the heart of the town and once considered to be the lifeline of groundwater is today clogged and contaminated with untreated waste water released by a beverage unit from the Bethora industrial estate.

The nullah originates from various springs from Bethora and later flows downstream at Curti Khandepar, Ponda, Kavlem and then finally merges into the River Zuari.

"The perennial source of water nourished paddy fields, had children playing, people bathing and washing their clothes besides irrigating Bagayats. But reckless discharge of effluents by a beverage unit from the Beth-



SANTOSH NAIK

infections the moment you step in," said the villager. With rapid urbanisation, people residing on the banks of the nullah also discharge waste water into it. Farmers too have now abandoned their fields here as they claim that the polluted nullah water is a health hazard to them.

Curti-Khandepar Sarpanch Harish Naik said that he was aware of the issue and had conducted a site inspection of the rivulet basin at Bethora and Curti and had even written to the Goa Pollution Control Board and was waiting for their report.

Ponda MLA and Agriculture Minister said he had already directed to the Pollution Control Board officials to take action against polluting unit at Bethora Industrial Estate...

ora Industrial Estate has contaminated it today," lamented a villager.

"Today the water is highly contaminated and one develops skin

## Sacorda pisciculture plant operating without trade licence: VP Secretary

Panchayat saw no evil as polluting unit in its jurisdiction functioned without trade licence for last three years; villagers drink from polluted Ragada river for last three weeks

Team Herald

PONDA: Uproarious scenes were witnessed at the special gramsabha of the Sacorda village panchayat on Sunday when documents revealed that the pisciculture plant was operating illegally for the last three years without a trade license. Furious villagers demanded

### HAR GHAR HAAL

that the panchayat take immediate action against the plant for discharging waste water into the Ragada river thus polluting their only source of drinking water. They took potshots at the village panchayat for maintaining a stoic silence as the unit continued to pollute their water source.

It may be recalled that the



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gram sabha was convened even after authorities had clarified that the Ragada river was not polluted and with villagers refusing to buy the 'clean' chit theory dished out by the PWD. Over 317 signatories then demanded strict action against polluters and bring the matter to its logical conclusion. Bowing to the demands of the villagers, a

special gram sabha was convened yesterday.

The Panchayat Secretary revealed that the pisciculture plant was conducting activities without obtaining a trade licence.

"The party has obtained permission to construct a bio-frog pond in 2021 but had constructed seven ponds (tanks) for pisciculture without obtain-

ing trade licence for past three years and therefore panchayat has now revoked it's NOC and also decided to complain with authorities for further action," said the Secretary.

Irate villagers then blamed the panchayat for turning a Nelson's eye to the illegalities and squarely blamed the civic body for the water crisis and therefore demanded that the government supply them with clean water until the Ragada river water turns crystal clear. Sacorda locals complained that they had been consuming the polluted river water for the last three weeks and now demanded that the authorities clamp down heavily on the polluting unit for releasing waste water into the river leading to water pollution. Deputy Sarpanch Shirish Desai chaired the meeting.

## Sao Jose de Areal villagers threaten to drag polluting units to NGT

Say carbon factories detrimental to public health

Team Herald

MARGAO: Sao Jose de Areal villagers decided to knock the doors of the National Green Tribunal (NGT) due to the alarming pollution levels attributed to carbon factories operating within the village.

At the gram sabha meeting yesterday, members resolved to take seek legal remedies with the pollution issue plaguing the village in their quest for environmental justice.

This bold step highlights their unwavering commitment to safeguarding their community's well-being and the surrounding environment.

Despite raising the issue of carbon pollution with government authorities and subsequent inspections, villagers of Sao Jose de Areal remain disheartened by the lack of action taken to address their concerns. Expressing their frustration during the gram

**They highlighted the severe impact it has had on the health and well-being of senior citizens and other residents, making it difficult for them to even breathe**

sabha, villagers emphasized the growing magnitude of the pollution problem.

They highlighted the severe impact it has had on the health and well-being of senior citizens and other residents, making it difficult for them to even breathe.

"The absence of effective measures to curb pollution has only intensified frustration, underscoring the urgent need for concrete action to mitigate the harmful effects of carbon factories operating in the village," stressed villagers at the meeting.

Local MLA Cruz Silva has pledged support to the villagers of Sao Jose de Areal in

their fight against pollution and their endeavour to seek intervention from the National Green Tribunal.

Silva's assurance comes as a welcome sign for the villagers, offering them additional backing in their quest for environmental justice.

MLAs commitment underscores the importance of collaborative action between elected representatives and grassroots movements in tackling environmental challenges and safeguarding the well-being of local populations.

"I will extend my full support to the villagers in seeking a solution on the issue", he told reporters.

Gathering in large numbers, the villagers of Sao Jose de Areal made it clear that their opposition is not directed against Shivaji, but rather against the illegal activities taking place in their community.

## Guirdolim villagers object to TCP amendment, EVMs for elections

Team Herald

CHANDOR: Fast disappearing agricultural land, mushrooming illegal constructions and use of Electronic Voting Machines (EVMs) dominated the Guirdolim gram sabha on Sunday.

The villagers argued that Section 39-A of the Town and Country Planning Act was ultra vires of the 73rd Constitutional Amendment, denounced its hurried introduction and charged it is a ploy to allow backdoor entry for conversion of Goa's lands for private and business interests and hence demanded its abrogation. Villagers argued that TCP Department has to compulsorily consult the panchayat with regards to any proposed or sought changes in the zoning pattern already notified.

Section 39-A gives the right to change zoning pattern only to TCP officials without consulting the local body and that is what the villagers objected to demanding that the panchayat has to be informed.

Illegal constructions particularly on Comunidade land was also dis-

cussed as at the last gram sabha and the villagers had asked Comunidade not to sell agricultural lands to migrants.

Sarpanch Sonia Fernandes read the reply from Guirdolim Comunidade advising that objections could be filed under Article 330 of the Code of Comunidades as such it was decided that the panchayat inspect these constructions at Gainall and accordingly lodge a complaint.

Panchayat was also asked to inspect the area where houses are constructed under the 20 Point programme as there were complaints of illegal constructions and extensions there too.

The villagers very vociferously demanded that all future elections including the ensuing Lok Sabha polls, be conducted using ballot papers.

Various villagers alleged that the ruling BJP was manipulating the EVMs and pointed out that various countries have rejected their use as they can be manipulated.

Lack of football ground in the village which has been pending for the last nearly 15 years was also dis-

cussed at the Gram Sabha with the panchayat asked to expedite the process of preparing the ground at Molla where 7,500 sq mts is earmarked for a ground.

This ground development is pending due to some problems with the developers who developed the land keeping this area for the ground and panchayat was asked to clear the problem as soon as possible.

The gram sabha also asked the panchayat to pursue with the concerned authorities to enable the police outpost in the village to accept complaints from people as currently they have to travel all the way to Manora, Raia.

It was pointed out that a panchayat member who was recently assaulted was kept sitting at the police out post for nearly 45 minutes without even given first aid as his complaint was not being accepted there.

The Chandor police outpost is headed by a head constable who is not authorised to accept any complaint from the public and hence people have to go to the Maina Curtorim Police Station at Raia.

## Raia villagers object to outsourcing of waste management services

Team Herald

MARGAO: Raia villagers objected to the proposal of inviting contractors for door-to-door waste collection, saying that it would impose a financial burden on the community.

Following deliberations, the villagers collectively resolved to maintain the current system of garbage collection through the panchayat.

This decision reflects the villagers' preference for continuity and their desire to avoid additional fees associated with outsourcing waste management services.

By reaffirming their commitment to the existing arrangement, the villagers aim to ensure the

sustainability of waste disposal practices while prioritizing the financial well-being of the community.

The gram sabha chaired by Sarpanch Peter Quadros which went off peacefully and the budget for the next financial year was passed.

It's important to highlight that the village panchayat of Raia currently manages the collection of dry waste three times a month within its jurisdiction. However, there was a proposal put forward to engage a contractor specifically for the collection of waste, including wet waste, from the area covered by the panchayat.

This distinction underscores the scope of the discussion during the gram

sabha meeting, focusing solely on the potential involvement of contractors for door-to-door waste collection services.

Sarpanch confirmed that the proposal to engage contractors for waste collection was met with objections from both the villagers and the Village Development Committee.

He cited concerns raised during a presentation on the potential financial burden that such a system could impose on the community.

"Consequently, it was resolved to maintain the current system of dry waste collection through the village panchayat", he stated.

Several villagers participated in the discussion on the budget at the meeting.

## Stormy Xeldem gram sabha castigates panchayat, demands EVM cancellation

Team Herald

QUEPEM: At a very stormy gram sabha on Sunday, Xeldem villagers while castigating the panchayat of not taking gram sabha seriously also demanded cancellation of voting through EVMs.

The villagers lamented that the same issues are being raised at the gram sabha time and again and that the panchayat does not even discuss the gram sabha resolutions at its body meeting.

Villagers were agitated that failure to collect tax from Atlantic Mill, no progress on Tilamol ground, mega project near the church, not regularising houses in Ghane-mard ward and illegal business in the village were coming up at the gram sabha time and again.

Prashant Gawas Desai sought to know why the panchayat has still not collected taxes from Atlantic Mill even though it has to pay around Rs 5 lakhs to the panchayat.

MAX. TEMP 32.6 °C  
MIN. TEMP 23.6 °C

idharudhar



Sir! It's actually 24 seconds a day, 7 days a week

## 91,237 children administered polio doses

Team Herald

PANJIM: The State Family Bureau conducted the Intensified Pulse Polio Immunisation Programme (IPPI) 2024 in the entire State on Sunday March 3 from 8 am to 5 pm in the designated booths throughout the State.

According to DHS, a total of 91,237 children between the age group of 0-5 years were administered the pulse polio dosage at 660 polio booths setup across the state.

The programme will be followed by house-to-house survey and coverage activity from March 4 to 6.

Out of the 660 booths, 491 were fixed booths, 107 mobile booths and 62 transit booths. The arrangement was made to ensure smooth vaccination process in

the entire State.

The DHS has set a target of covering approximately one lakh and above children in the age group of 0-5 years during the campaign.

Although India became polio-free in March 2014, polio cases still occur in India's neighboring countries, such as Pakistan and Afghanistan.

According to the World Health Organization, if even one child remains infected with polio, within ten years there may be 2 lakh cases of polio worldwide. Therefore, as a precautionary measure, March 3 is also observed as Polio Vaccination Day in India every year. The last case of polio in India was found in Kerala in 2000. However, since 2011, not a single case of polio has been reported in India.

## UP native held for stealing bag containing Rs 10 lakh

Team Herald

PANJIM: The Anjuna Police arrested a 31-year-old man hailing from Uttar Pradesh and are on the look out for his accomplice for stealing Rs 10 lakh belonging to a Bicholim resident and his friend.

According to the police, Vishal Velgekar 31, resident of Gavwada, Velguem, Bicholim, lodged a complaint stating that at Rashtri Temple Chivar, Vagator, Bardez, the accused along with his associate and two others stole his bag containing Rs 10 lakh.

The incident occurred on February 29 and the police booked Yograj B Salve and Mohammed Shamshere 31, resident of Haridwar, Uttar Pradesh for theft. While Mohammed Shamshere has been arrested, the cops are on the look out for Yograj said.

The Anjuna Police have booked a case under section 379 of IPC and the same

is being investigated by PSI Ashish Parab.

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