

## A BRIDGE TOO FAR: The bridge of people's sentiments is far from being crossed at Borim

### A fight against land acquisition for the new Borim bridge at Loutolim has taken over all other major concerns

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**LOUTOLIM:** The villagers of Loutolim haven't forgotten the sleepless nights spent grappling with ways to protect their ancestral agricultural land and the decision to take away this land without considering stakeholders' viewpoints, resulting in hundreds of farmers taking to the streets, weighing heavily on their minds.

#### ISSUES THAT MATTER

THE NEW BORIM BRIDGE LAND ACQUISITION CONFLICT

The land acquisition process for the proposed new Borim bridge has left a lasting impact, highlighting the need for fair and inclusive decision-making that respects the heritage and livelihoods of those affected. The revelation that the decision on who to vote for will hinge on this issue in Loutolim reflects a deep concern at the loss of identity and livelihoods.

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#### NEW BORIM BRIDGE: TIMELINE OF DISCONTENT

- ▶ **Project:** Construction of a new, high-level Borim Bridge, along with approaches across River Zuari and a Bypass on NH 566. The length of the proposed bypass: 5.73 km
- ▶ **Construction Co:** Technogem Constructions Pvt Ltd, a Thane/ Maharashtra-based consultant company since 2016
- ▶ **Imp:** In 2017, Technogem Constructions conducted a geostatistical study for the bridge suggesting three different routes over River Zuari. The Union Road Transport Ministry had finalised the route between Loutolim and Borim.
- ▶ **Route:** Will connect Borim in Ponda taluka to Angadi, Loutolim in Salcete via Murme ward of Borim
- ▶ **Rs 306 cr:** Sanctioned funds to acquire land for approach roads to the proposed new Borim bridge over the Zuari river
- ▶ **Oct 23:** The Union Ministry of Road Transport and Highways (MoRTH) issued notification for the acquisition of 39.3184 hectares (3,93,184 sq mtrs)
- ▶ **Objections and suggestions** sought from citizens interested in the land to be acquired, within 21 days, to the Special Land Acquisition Officer, PWD-National Highways (NH), Altinho, Panjim
- ▶ **Nov 23:** Ramiro Mascarenhas, representing the Loutolim residents reiterated their demand that the land acquisition notification for the bridge be withdrawn immediately
- ▶ **Villagers** have been critical of the govt for not involving the panchayat or villagers in project discussions

#### THE MAIN CONCERN

The plan is to build the bridge on stilts and columns. This will need the construction of an approach road for transporting materials. This would lead to the filling of Khazan lands and the destruction of agricultural fields.

There is no justification for pursuing development at the cost of environmental destruction. While bridges and roads can be rebuilt, the same cannot be said for agricultural land and the broader environment once they are destroyed  
—Joana Fernandes, Sarpanch of Loutolim Village Panchayat

The decision to acquire land for a new bridge will destroy our livelihood and the fertility of land. The land currently without chemical fertilizers cannot be simply replaced. Using agricultural land for infrastructure projects like the new Borim bridge will destroy farming  
—Pascoal Costa, a farmer from Loutolim

#### HEAT IS ON



A child pours water on her face on a hot summer day, in Meerut, Uttar Pradesh, on Wednesday. According to the India Meteorological Department, heat wave condition has persisted over the last few days in areas like Gangetic West Bengal, Odisha, and Bihar

#### Delhi hoax bomb emails traced

**AGENCIES, NEW DELHI:** The national capital's Lieutenant Governor VK Saxena today said the police have traced the origin of the hoax bomb emails sent to nearly 100 schools in Delhi and the National Capital Region (NCR). He had gone to DAV School in north Delhi's Model Town after the schools received the bomb threat. "The Delhi Police have traced the origin of the emails. I am assuring citizens of Delhi that the police are alert, getting leads, and will take strict action," Saxena said.

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## Hit by sexual abuse allegations, Revanna finds 'remedy' in rituals

### Revanna says no clue about the notice pasted by SIT on his door

**PTI, HOLENARASIPURA (KARNATAKA):** Smoke billowed as 'Havan' (fire rituals) flames raged in

#### REVANNA SEX SCANDAL

the scorching summer at JD(S) MLA and former Karnataka Minister H D Revanna's residence here on Wednesday. Conspicuous was a piece of paper pasted on the wall of his house.

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#### THESE ARE 'SMALL SMALL THINGS': BJP GOA PRESIDENT Asked by reporters, BJs Rajya Sabha MP says Revanna case 'won't impact BJP in Goa'

**BJP State President Sadanand Shet Tanavade** said, "I will not go into details but I am sure that it will not have any impact on our prospects in Goa. "He (Revanna) is not from my party. He is from the alliance party. There are different issues in elections. This election is for the future of the nation. It is focused on developed India." "I am not neglecting this issue. This may have an impact on that (Hassan) constituency. But I do not think it will impact other parts of the country. Anyway, the concerned party has taken action against him (Prajwal)," he added.

#### 'Cancel diplomatic passport of Revanna'

**PTI, BENGALURU:** Karnataka chief minister Siddaramaiah on Wednesday wrote to Prime Minister Narendra Modi asking him to take necessary steps through the Ministry of External Affairs so that tainted BJP leader and sitting Hassan MP Prajwal Revanna can return to India to join the probe into the allegations of sex videos.

## Cries from Siolim: First, their trees were cut, now their throats are dry

### The worst hit ward is Bamon Vaddo, especially the area near the St Francis Xavier High School, where trees were illegally cut for road widening; water tankers called to supply water charge Rs 1,000 per tanker

ERWIN FONSECA

**ASSAGAO:** Siolkars reeling under the onslaught of unauthorised and illegal rampant tree felling, are fighting their local battles with parched throats as many areas in the village face severe water shortage in the peak summer season. However, ironically, PWD officials claim that all is well.



A water pipeline in Siolim damaged during the underground cabling work

We are elderly and have to depend on tap water fully. It is extremely unfortunate that at the peak of summer, we have no water. Some of our friends from other parts of the village bring water for us in cans. Despite complaints, no action has been taken  
—Alex Fernandes, senior citizen

#### HAR GHAR NAL BUT NO JAL

The worst hit ward is Bamon Vaddo, especially the area near the St Francis Xavier High School, where trees were recently illegally cut for road widening.

Residents claim that water from their wells cannot be used for drinking as it has been contaminated by septic tanks of the housing projects. Last month, while the underground cabling work was being done, like in most

All disruptions, particularly in Bamon Vaddo-Siolim have been rectified and normal water supply has been restored. The pipelines were damaged during the underground cabling work but were quickly attended to and water supply has been restored  
—Randhir Ashtekar, PWD Assistant Engineer (water supply)

The water problem should be actually solved from the root; providing water tankers is a temporary solution. Whenever I call for water tankers I have to pay Rs 1,000 per tanker. The government is failing in its duty to provide Har Ghar Jal  
—Fr Dilip Tete, Headmaster, St Francis Xavier High School

places, the water pipelines in Siolim were ruptured and people had to go without water for some days. Although the PWD officials claim that the pipelines are repaired, the situation has

not improved, with many consumers getting just a trickle of water while some not getting water at all. PWD Assistant Engineer (water supply) Randhir Ashtekar told O Her-

aldo that all disruptions, particularly in Bamon Vaddo-Siolim have been rectified and that normal water supply have been restored.

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## Workers call for greater labour rights

**AP, SEOUL:** Workers, activists and others in Asian capitals and European cities took to the streets on Wednesday to mark May Day with protests over rising prices and government labour policies and calls for greater labour rights.

Police in Istanbul detained dozens of people who tried to reach the central Taksim Square in defiance of a government ban on marking Labour Day at the landmark location.

Indonesia's parliament last year ratified a government regulation that replaces a controversial law on job creation, but critics said it still benefits businesses. The law was intended to cut bureaucracy as part of President Joko Widodo's efforts to attract more investment to the country, which is Southeast Asia's largest economy.

In Seoul, the South Korean capital, thousands of protesters sang, waved flags and shouted pro-labor slogans at the start of their rally on Wednesday. Organisers said their rally was primarily meant to step up their criticism of what they call anti-labour policies pursued by the conservative government led by President Yoon Suk Yeol.

## Congratulations

### on your Priestly Ordination



### Rev. Fr. Peter Tyson Gonsalves (Candolim)

May your path be illuminated with divine wisdom, and may your service be a source of inspiration to all. As you take your first steps into the priesthood may you find boundless joy in serving the Lord and may your journey be filled with grace.

Best wishes from:

### LAWRY and PEPPY FERNANDES

(CAMOTIM VADDO, CANDOLIM)

## At Voddant-Vasco, CM had to switch to Hindi - the language of the local masses

### CM Sawant had to oblige when a woman said she didn't understand Konkani

Team Herald

**VASCO:** Chief Minister Pramod Sawant had to speak in the language of the masses at Voddant-Vasco while campaigning there on Wednesday

On Wednesday, the people of Voddant, Vasco urged Chief Minister Pramod Sawant to

speak in Hindi even as the latter asked whether all those present understood Hindi.

A woman voter told the Chief Minister that she does not understand Konkani and requested him to speak in Hindi.

Sawant said, "Konkani nahi aati, wohi problem hai, baki logo ko Hindi

nahi aati. Hindi sabko aati hai, jyada log Konkani (speaking) hai mujhe lagta hai. Baad me ye log bolenge ki Goa ke bahar bhashan kar raha hu."

The Chief Minister then continued his speech in Konkani.

While the request had to be made to the Chief Minister to speak in Hin-

di, in March this year, Panchayat Minister Mauvin Godinho had advanced knowledge, "sensed the language of the crowd" and spoke in Hindi without anyone asking.

The Chief Minister stated that he had come here to appeal to all to vote and make Narendra Modi Prime Minister for

the third time. Only Modi can ensure development and provide water, roads, electricity and toilets to the people.

During his tour of the port town, Sawant addressed three corner meetings and a public meeting at Baina in support of party's South Goa candidate Pallavi Dempo.