

GRAVE THREAT: ST CRUZ WETLAND DRYING UP?

Bondvol Lake is in danger, claim Greens; allege deforestation carried out in the lake's buffer zone for construction purposes

Team Herald

PANJIM: Declared as a wetland in 2022, Goa State Wetland Authority (GSWA), the Bondvol Lake, St Cruz's crowning glory is under threat with environmentalists and social activists on Thursday expressing concerns over the alleged deforestation carried out in the lake's buffer zone for construction purposes.

They pointed out that the deforestation is taking place despite the declaration made under the 2017 Central Government Wetlands (Conservation and Management) Rules.

Speaking to reporters, environmentalist Elsa Fernandes said, "Bondvol is a freshwater lake. It is in danger. It is a lake and a lake is not created just due to its location, but areas surrounding it also play an important role. We have something called a catchment area and any lake cannot survive without the catchment. Bondvol has to survive with its catchment area. It is unimaginable that some human being is interfering with this catchment area of the lake without realising that the catchment area can catch water only if there are trees."

"If we disturb the net-

CALLS TO SAVE ST CRUZ'S CROWNING GLORY



Bondvol is a freshwater lake. It is in danger. It is a lake and a lake is not created just due to its location, but areas surrounding it also play an important role. We have something called a catchment area and any lake cannot survive without the catchment.

-Elsa Fernandes, Environmentalist

We have demanded a 200-metre buffer zone. If construction takes place then we will not receive water. Water from this lake is used for irrigation. If this lake dries then agriculture will be finished

-Vincent Fernandes, President of Calapur

work of water soaking then the springs in the lake bed will dry. There is a need to understand that construction is becoming like cancer which has reached the doors of Bondvol. I request the people of St Cruz to protect the lake as they have done in the past," she said.

Vincent Fernandes, President of Calapur Communi-

dade, said, "We have demanded a 200-metre buffer zone. If construction takes place then we will not receive water. Water from this lake is used for irrigation. If this lake dries then agriculture will be finished."

Activist Rama Kankonkar said the builders from outside the state are hell bent on destroying the lake. He

It really pains that the properties nearby have been sold. The catchment area is like a sponge which absorbs water. If it is destroyed then how will the biodiversity be saved? I urge the people of St Cruz to rise and set an example by saving it.

If the people of St Cruz do not come forward to save the lake now, then those days are not far when the situation of St Cruz will be like that of Sancoale

-Xencor Polgi, another activist

said it is surprising that the local panchayat is not aware of the development while the same panchayat issues notices if someone wishes to carry out some construction work in their house. Another activist, Anna Gracious said, "It really pains that the properties nearby have been sold. The catchment area is like a

sponge which absorbs water. If it is destroyed then how will the biodiversity be saved? I urge the people of St Cruz to rise and set an example by saving it."

Activist Xencor Polgi said if the people of St Cruz do not come forward to save the lake now, then those days are not far when the situation of St Cruz will be like that of Sancoale.

"Dhargal, Pernem and Mandrem have been destroyed. Mhadei has been sold. Now the government is trying to snatch sources of drinking water from us. It is the responsibility of the government to save the environment," he said.

However, it is not for the first time that the activists have raised concern over the deterioration of the catchment area of the lake. Earlier, the people of Santa Cruz had tried every avenue to save their village's crowning glory, Bondvol Lake, a 110-year-old natural reservoir that collects rain and spring water over a 9.365-hectare submergence basin.

Rider killed, pillion injured at Bogmalo

Team Herald

VASCO: A rider was killed and the pillion rider injured after their two-wheeler skidded and fell into a deep low-lying area on Chicola-Bogmalo road.

The police gave the name

of the deceased as Rounak Kumar, 26 and pillion rider as Neeraj Kumar Shah, 32, both natives of Bihar and presently residing at Verana. Both the injured were rushed to the Sub-District Hospital, Chicalim where Rounak was declared

brought dead by the doctors. Shah who received severe injuries has been admitted to the GMC, Bambolim for treatment.

The police have preserved the body at the SDH Margao morgue for medico-legal formalities.

5 months after market demolition, Panjim's meat traders still stranded

New Year brings no cheer, only tears for city meat vendors who lament that they've lost 60% of their business

Team Herald

PANJIM: The tourism season, usually a boon for local meat vendors has turned into a nightmare for Panjim's meat traders who find themselves displaced and struggling to survive after the demolition of the Panjim Municipal Fish market building.

Vendors say their livelihoods have been shattered as they wait endlessly for promised rehabilitation. Speaking to O Herald, Manna Bepari, president, Quraishi Meat Traders' Association of Goa (QMTAG), said, "All the vendors are suffering due to the demolition of the Panjim Municipal Fish Market building. The business of the 12 vendors who had shops in the building has come to a standstill. The building has been demolished but vendors are on the street, without any business. This has affected people who

It has been five months since the building was demolished but there is no sign of rehabilitation. We have been making requests to the Corporation of the City of Panaji (CCP) to rehabilitate us but the corporation is not bothered at all. In fact there is a direction from the High Court that we have to be rehabilitated

Manna Bepari, President, QMTAG

come to purchase mutton, chicken, beef. They were forced to visit Mapusa and Margao markets to purchase them," he said.

"It has been five months since the building was demolished but there is no sign of rehabilitation. We have been making requests to the Corporation of the City of Panaji (CCP) to rehabilitate us but the corporation is not bothered at all. In fact there is a direction from the High Court that we have to be rehabilitated," he said.

"We have been trying to meet Chief Minister Pramod Sawant and Panjim MLA

Atanasio 'Babush' Monserrate but we are unable to get their appointment. We are requesting them to intervene in this matter and rehabilitate us," he said.

Mushtak Khatib, another vendor, said, "This year, we lost more than 60 percent of business. Whatever business is with us because of some of the regular customers who visit our shops. However, this is not enough to sustain the business as we were not provided with sufficient quantities of meat from the Goa Meat Complex either."

CCP hit by revenue crunch as vendors fail to sign up for city feast fair

Team Herald

PANJIM: The Corporation of the City of Panaji (CCP) is most likely to see a dip in revenue for this year's annual Panjim feast fair as it has managed to sell only 50 per cent of its forms to vendors.

Normally, vendors who set up stalls during the feast of St Francis Xavier at Old Goa return to the capital city feast to sell their wares, but this year, it was not so because of the ongoing Exposition of the relics of St Francis Xavier which will conclude on January 5.

"The vendors stay for five days at Old Goa and then they move to Panjim. They come every year. This year we could not monetise around half of the space which is given for setting up the stalls but we were still able to collect Rs 25 lakh this year," he said.

SC disposes MHA's plea over Adv Aires's OCI

Team Herald

PANJIM: A bench of the Supreme Court comprising of Justice J B Pardiwala and Justice R Mahadevan on Thursday disposed of the special leave petition (SLP) filed by the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA), New Delhi challenging the High Court order on the OCI application filed by Adv Rodrigues with liberty to the MHA to file a fresh petition after its review petition is heard by the High Court.

On July 25 last year, the High Court had directed the MHA to consider and decide within 30 days the application filed by Adv Rodrigues for an Overseas Citizen of India (OCI) card.

The High Court has already issued notices to MHA officials on a contempt of court petition filed by Adv Rodrigues over the failure by MHA to comply with the High Court order and the next hearing is scheduled on 8th January.

On May 15, 2023, Adv Rodrigues obtained his Portuguese passport in Lisbon and on his return to Goa in the first week of June immediately surrendered his Indian Passport at the Goa Passport Office as was required by law.

After surrendering his Indian passport and obtaining a Surrender Certificate and all the other required documents, he applied for his OCI card only to be told by the FRRO at Mumbai that the new rule required six months' residence in Goa before filing an OCI application.

Karnataka native dies in Dhavalim accident

Team Herald

PONDA: A 50-year-old Karnataka native died after losing control over his vehicle and rammed into a retaining wall of a culvert at Dhavalim.

According to the police, Ashok Ningappa Mirgi, currently residing at Corlim,

while driving his vehicle, lost control of it following a suspected heart attack while negotiating the underpass near Satyanarayan Temple, Dhavalim and later rammed into a retaining wall of a culvert. Ashok was rushed to Ponda Sub District Hospital where he was declared dead.

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DR. V. CANDAVELU, IAS Chief Secretary Government of Goa	SHRI SANJEEV AHUJA, IAS Secretary Tourism, Government of Goa	SHRI SUNEEL ANCHIPAKA, IAS Director Department of Tourism, Government of Goa
SHRI DAMODAR SHIRODKAR Chairperson, Margao Municipal Council (MMC) Government of Goa		

HIGHLIGHTS

03rd January CULTURAL DANCE BY KANTA GAUDE, DIVYA NAIK, LYNX, PURE MAGIC	04th January SAMRUDDH CHODANKAR & VIBHA ALGUNDAGE, SAIDUTT KAMAT - COMEDIAN, LACE	05th January RAJESH MADGAONKAR & GAUTAMI HEDE, MANOHAR BHINGI MIMICRY ACT, NISHI SINGH, PURPLE RAIN
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"For a Progressive & Model Curtorim Constituency"

Invitation

The office of the MLA Curtorim,
Shri. Aleixo Reginaldo Lourenco

cordially invite you
on the **3rd of January 2025**
at **5:00pm onwards**
at **'ALEGRIA' Open Air Hall,**
Maina, Curtorim for the

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of the following projects

- ▶ New Upgraded Primary Health Center at Curtorim,
- ▶ Maina-Curtorim Police Station at Sonsdo, Raia,
- ▶ Underground power cabling and installation of new power transformers,
- ▶ Replacement of old water pipelines with new pipes,
- ▶ Inauguration of upgraded Gym at DYSA Ground Curtorim,
- ▶ Hotmixing and repairs of roads,
- ▶ WRD works & Soil Conservation works(Camorlim Bund),
- ▶ Up gradation of the Curtorim and Maina Football grounds,
- ▶ Proposed High Mast lights across the Constituency,
- ▶ Agriculture machinery, Physiotherapy Clinic, CSC Center's, etc.

The function will be graced by

Dr. Pramod Sawant
(Hon'ble Chief Minister of Goa,)

SHRI. RAMESH TAWADKAR (Hon'ble Speaker, Goa Legislative Assembly)
SHRI. VISHWAJIT RANE (Hon'ble Minister for Health)
SHRI. MAUVIN GODINHO (Hon'ble Minister for Panchayats)
SHRI. RAVI NAIK (Hon'ble Minister for Agriculture)
SHRI. SUBHASH SHIRODKAR (Hon'ble Minister for WRD)
SHRI. ROHAN KHAUNTE (Hon'ble Minister for Tourism)
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SHRI. SUBHASH PHAL DESSAI (Hon'ble Minister for Social Welfare)
SHRI. ALEXO SEQUEIRA (Hon'ble Minister for Law & Judiciary)

And Members of Goa Legislative Assembly