

WRD issues notices to 70 illegal borewell owners in Chimbhel

Team Herald

PANJIM: The Water Resources Department (WRD) has issued notices to the owners of 70 illegal borewells found to have been dug unlawfully in Chimbhel.

Environmental activist Ana Gracias reported noticing individuals carrying out digging work in the area. Despite her requests for them to stop, they continued their activities. "I called the police, and when the Old Goa Police personnel arrived, they took written assurance from those doing the digging that they would cease. However, to my surprise, the work resumed the following day, which compelled me to file another complaint with the police," she said.

Gracias explained that although she had initially lodged a complaint about

Ana Gracias explained that although she had initially lodged a complaint about one borewell, the WRD notice revealed that around 70 borewells had been illegally dug in the area

one borewell, the WRD notice revealed that around 70 borewells had been illegally dug in the area. She has appealed to Health Minister Vishwajit Rane to intervene, as she believes borewell water could pose health risks.

In response, Water Resources Minister Subhash Shirodkar addressed reporters on Monday, stating that stern warnings had been issued, and fines ranging from Rs 5 lakh to Rs 10 lakh will be imposed on anyone found guilty. "Some individuals have dug illegal borewells in Chimbhel.

UNDERWATER PIPELINE FROM TILLARI TO PANJIM

The State government is considering an ambitious project to bring raw water from the Tillari irrigation dam to Panjim via an underwater pipeline in the Mandovi River, Water Resources Minister Subhash Shirodkar said. Speaking about the proposal, Shirodkar stated that the WRD is working on a scheme to implement the project within the next two years. "Water from the Tillari dam currently reaches Porvorim. We are exploring the possibility of laying an underwater pipeline to bring the raw water to Panjim," he said.

Based on the information, there are about 60 to 70 such borewells. The Assistant Engineer and Junior Engineer from WRD will conduct inspections, and, with police assistance, they will ensure these wells are disconnected," Shirodkar said. He added that under the Goa Ground Water Act 2002, fines of Rs 5 lakh to Rs 10 lakh can be imposed for illegal borewells.

The WRD Minister emphasised that anyone wishing to sink borewells or open wells must first obtain the necessary permissions.

Meanwhile, the WRD Executive Engineer-I, who also serves as the Ground Water Officer, has issued show-cause notices to some of the individuals who have sunk borewells. The officer has also contacted the Electricity Department to disconnect the power supply to these illegal borewells.

Government to celebrate Opinion Poll day at State level

Team Herald

PANJIM: The State government has assured that it will celebrate Opinion Poll Day at the State-level in Panjim and Margao.

ASMITAI DIS

On July 19, 2024, Leader of the Opposition Yuri Alemo moved a Private Member's resolution in the Legislative Assembly, recommending that the government officially celebrate January 16, as 'Asmitai Dis' (Opinion Poll Day) as a State function.

As there was no positive action from the government, the Leader of the Opposition during the recently held session of the Goa Legislative Assembly reminded Chief Minister Pramod Sawant, who assured him in the House that the Opinion Poll Day would be celebrated at the State level in Panjim and Margao.

"Asmitai Dis holds great significance. It is our identity. Hence, we need to celebrate it at the State level. However, the BJP government has failed to do so. I hope there will be no need to remind the Chief Minister again," Yuri said.

NGO demands inquiry into beef exports to Iraq

Team Herald

PANJIM: The United Goans Foundation (UGF), a registered society from Margao, has urged the Public Undertakings Committee (PUC) to investigate the export of 28.5 tonnes of frozen beef to Iraq through a partnership between the government-run Goa Meat Complex and Karnataka-based Sunface Agro-foods Pvt Ltd.

In a letter to the PUC, UGF executive committee member Dominic Noronha stated that the export of meat raises serious questions about whether the Goa Meat Complex is fulfilling its primary objective of catering to the local population or if it has been repurposed to serve private export interests. He pointed out that there are multiple concerns that require the PUC's attention.

According to Noronha, the beef export had impacted local availability, with many consumers and traders reporting significant shortages of meat, particularly during the festive season. If the State's only authorised

According to the NGO, the beef export had impacted local availability, with many consumers and traders reporting significant shortages of meat, particularly during the festive season

meat-processing facility is prioritising exports, it is crucial to assess whether this is causing an artificial scarcity in Goa.

Noronha also raised doubts about the claim that the Goa Meat Complex earns only Rs 500 per animal slaughtered, given the scale of operations and export revenues. He called for an audit of financial transactions related to these exports to determine whether public resources are being misused for private gain.

The UGF has urged the PUC to examine whether the Goa Meat Complex is being misused for international trade at the expense of Goan consumers. Noronha highlighted that this issue affects not only ordinary people but also the State's tourism and hospitality industry, which relies on a stable meat supply.

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