

Bhomkars continue to oppose highway expansion through village

Reiterate demand for bypass to avoid destruction of homes and temples

Team Herald

PONDA: Bhomkars, who have been protesting for years against the proposed highway expansion through the middle of their village, once again strongly opposed the plan during Sunday's gram sabha. They reiterated their demand for a bypass to avoid the destruction of their homes and temples.

Fearing the loss of their properties, the Bhomkars also called for the submission of the alignment plan for the highway expansion, which would include a fly-over and affect their traditional houses and temples, stretching from Kali Mati-Bhoma to Corlim.



The meeting, chaired by Sarpanch Damodar Naik, saw Sanjay Naik, the leader of the Bhomkars, raising the issue. Locals expressed their dissatisfaction with a meeting held by local MLA and Minister Govind Gaude a few months ago, claiming it was illegal. They urged the panchayat not to engage with the Public Works Department (PWD) regarding this meeting.

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the villagers that a memorandum would be submitted to the PWD, as per their collective decision on the Highway Expansion issue.

The villagers also voiced their anger over attempts by industries at the Kundaim Industrial Estate to create new plots by filling natural water bodies with waste material. They

warned that this would disrupt the nullah basin and could potentially lead to flooding in the village.

The sarpanch pledged a joint inspection to address these concerns. Additionally, villagers complained about sewage flowing into the local water bodies and nullahs.

Regarding the issue of the Banastarim market shops, locals demanded that the money paid by shop owners be refunded. The sarpanch clarified that the Court had issued a stay on the auctioned shops. A hearing is scheduled for February 27, after which the Panchayat will make an appropriate decision on the matter.

Navelim residents demand justice for road accident victim

Fume at cops for delay in taking accused for medical

Team Herald

MARGAO: Following the tragic death of Filip Pereira from Navelim, residents of Mandopa-Navelim have voiced their strong demand for justice. The incident, which took place at Dando-Navelim, resulted in Pereira's death after a car collided with his two-wheeler.

FATAL ACCIDENT

Local residents have expressed anger over the delay in conducting medical examinations on the accused driver, citing that the police lacked vehicles to carry out the necessary procedures.

Filip Pereira, worked as a painter to make his living. His untimely death

The accused driver was kept at the police station for two-and-a-half hours without any medical examination and the reason provided was the lack of vehicles. This is a shameful statement coming from the police

— Adv Pratima Coutinho, activist

has left the community in shock and mourning. Speaking to reporters, Adv Pratima Coutinho condemned the delay in the medical examination of the accused driver.

She said, "The accused driver was kept at the police station for two-and-a-half hours without any medical examination and the reason provided was the lack of vehicles. This is a shameful statement com-

ing from the police." Residents also highlighted that the accident could have been prevented if their previous suggestions regarding traffic management had been taken into account.

Rodney Fernandes, a local citizen, stated, "We have repeatedly urged the authorities to restore the defunct traffic signal in Navelim and deploy police personnel at major junctions. Navelim is an educational hub with several institutions, and the absence of proper traffic management has led to frequent accidents and congestion."

Adv Coutinho, along with the residents, continues to demand justice for the family of Filip Pereira, calling for immediate action from the authorities to prevent further tragedies.

Chinchinim-Deussua VP demands to upgrade PHC

Team Herald

MARGAO: The Village Panchayat of Chinchinim-Deussua, led by Sarpanch Frank Viegas, has emphasized the urgent need to upgrade the existing Public Health Centre (PHC) in the village. Currently housed in a load-bearing structure, the facility is proving insufficient to accommodate the growing health needs of the community.

In response to this, the Village Panchayat, in partnership with Victor Hospital, successfully organized a free health camp for the local residents. This initiative aimed to provide accessible healthcare services to the villagers, enabling them to consult with medical specialists at no charge.

Sarpanch Frank Viegas has requested the Directorate of Health Services to consider expanding

the existing structure, proposing an upgrade to a ground-plus-two-floors model. "This upgrade will not only increase the available space but also improve accessibility and services for the villagers. It will significantly enhance healthcare delivery for our village and neighbouring areas," he stated.

The health camp featured a diverse range of medical professionals, including orthopaedic specialists, dermatologists, ophthalmologists, physiotherapists, and general physicians. The event saw a strong turnout, with numerous villagers taking the opportunity to receive expert medical advice and treatment.

Both the Panchayat and Victor Hospital expressed their gratitude to the community for their active participation and highlighted the importance of such initiatives for the overall well-being of the villagers.

SAND, SUN & SIXES

UPENDRA NAIK



A group of kids enjoy a spirited match of cricket on Bambolim beach, on Sunday evening

Calangute sabha raises concerns over proposed new market complex

Team Herald

CALANGUTE: The proposed new market project at Calangute has caught in controversy, as the villagers during the gram sabha held on Sunday, questioned the process of the proposed market.

Raising concerns over the minutes of the previous meeting, particularly regarding the resolutions for the proposed new bus stand and market complex, villagers pointed out that, according to a 2004 VP resolution, the land for the complex must first be acquired before any new proposals can be considered. Additionally, it was noted that the new

budget made no provision for land acquisition.

Responding to these concerns, Sarpanch Joseph Sequeira assured the villagers that "the process is ongoing" for the construction of the new market complex, which will be developed in collaboration with the help of a corporate company. He confirmed that all issues would be addressed.

During the discussions, some Gram Sabha members requested a reduction in taxes collected from households and small guesthouses owned by locals. Sarpanch Sequeira clarified that no garbage tax is levied on local residents.

Hydrological survey of village, kayaking on River Sal debated at Nuvem gram sabha

Team Herald

MARGAO: The Nuvem gram sabha on Sunday saw several important discussions and resolutions, including resolution for a hydrological survey of the village.

The members resolved to conduct a hydrological survey of Nuvem, which will include an assessment of groundwater levels and the identification of all water bodies in the village. This resolution was passed during the meeting, which was chaired by Sarpanch Freda D'Sa.

The issue of kayaking on River Sal was brought up by Betty Mendes. She mentioned that after inquiring with the Captain of Ports, they were not aware of any such activity.

The Sarpanch confirmed that the Panchayat has not granted permission for kayaking. Mendes further requested the Sarpanch to remove a photo of the GPDP (Gram Panchayat Development Plan) from the booklet, as kayaking is an illegal activity and the sarpanch agreed to do so.

Gram sabha member Indira suggested allocating a budget for the maintenance and cleaning of the pavements that were recently constructed alongside the road as part of the beautification projects. This proposal was well-received by the members.

Concerns were raised by gram sabha member Carmelito Andrade regarding the fines collected for plastic usage, which were reported to be less than Rs

5,000. The Sarpanch clarified that the fines collected pertained only to the Sunday market and that fines for garbage-related offenses amounted to Rs 2 lakhs. This clarification was appreciated by the members.

As part of the discussion, the Sarpanch proposed introducing a garbage tax of Rs 35 per month per household, similar to neighbouring panchayats and the members were encouraged to consider this proposal.

Carmelito Andrade reminded the Sarpanch of previous discussions where members had suggested a survey of households to account for the growing number of migrants in Nuvem. This influx of migrants is believed to be a significant factor in the village's garbage problem.

Villagers want Curtorim declared as heritage site

Team Herald

MARGAO: The village heritage site plan was discussed at length at the Curtorim gram sabha on Sunday.

The meeting, chaired by Sarpanch Alshno D'Silva, resulted in a resolution to create a new plan to designate Curtorim as a heritage site, in collaboration with neighbouring villages and relevant authorities.

The meeting began with the approval of the budget for the upcoming financial year of 2025-26. Various developmental works within the panchayat jurisdiction were also discussed.

During the session, a clarification was sought from the Sarpanch regarding a press conference, where Curtorim MLA Alexio Reginaldo had accused gram sabha member More-

no Rebelo of painting the Sarpanch in a negative light and humiliating him.

Rebelo had questioned the Sarpanch about the new facilities at the upcoming Curtorim Primary Health Center and had raised concerns about the conversion of 67,000 square meters of NDS land into settlement zones—an issue that had been opposed by both the MLA and the Panchayat, with a written objection submitted to the South Goa Collector.

In response, Sarpanch D'Silva acknowledged that it was not wrong for a member to seek information about the healthcare center, especially since the gram sabha had passed a resolution stating that as the head of the village, the Sarpanch should have been aware of the facilities being introduced.

Chimbel sarpanch refutes allegations of 70 illegal borewells

Team Herald

PANJIM: Chimbel Sarpanch Sandesh Shirodkar, on Sunday dismissed reports of 70 illegal borewells in Ward No 7, stating that the area does not even have 70 houses.

This came after concerns were raised by Chimbel residents about the presence of 70 allegedly unauthorised borewells in the area during the gram sabha meeting.

"The panchayat has not issued any permissions for any borewells," Shirodkar clarified. "I am saying that if there are not even 70 houses, how could there be 70 borewells? To the best of my knowledge, there are no 70 illegal borewells in the area," he asserted.

However, when pressed further, he admitted that he was unaware of the exact



number of illegal borewells in the locality.

Later, speaking to reporters, activist Anna Gracias said, "The Water Resources Department (WRD) has done a good job by carrying out the inspection. During the inspection, many people were inside their homes but had locked them from the outside. I believe further inspections are needed, as I am confident there are more than 100 illegal borewells in the area." Earlier this week, the

WRD issued notices to the owners of 70 illegal borewells discovered to have been dug without authorisation in Chimbel.

Discussions also centred around a proposed project near the Hindu crematorium, the issue of garbage, and a potential utility mall. A resolution was passed calling for a joint inspection of the crematorium with officials from the Town and Country Planning (TCP) Department and the complainant.

Siolim-Sodiem gram sabha bats for education, government jobs for youth

Team Herald

SIOLIM: The gram sabha of the Siolim-Sodiem village panchayat commenced on a stormy note, with villagers criticising the administrative setup that has rendered gram sabhas ineffective and likened them to a "toothless tiger". The voices of rural residents appeared to be stifled and suppressed, argued the members.

However, as tensions eased, the villagers focused on pressing issues such as agriculture, drug abuse among youth, and the need for educational improvements.

The villagers urged the sarpanch Deepa Pednekar to present every resolution submitted to the relevant departments at the next gram sabha and to provide updates on the follow-up actions taken by the panchayat. The discussion



on the non-implementation of gram sabha resolutions arose during talks about banning swimming pools in the village for the benefit of local residents. The villagers expressed that they had received enough verbal assurances and now required written commitments.

Criticism was directed at the Parra model of development, alongside the government's inconsistent promises regarding a continuous water supply. "We have enough natural water bodies in our village; there

are numerous options to ensure water is readily available to us. It is shameful that while we discuss flyovers and major roads for the next 25 years, we cannot guarantee a regular water supply at present," stated Bio diversity Chairperson Peter De Sousa.

The community unanimously agreed that swimming pools should be opposed, asserting that they are unnecessary in Sodiem and that authorities must heed to this message.

The Secretary informed

the members that the panchayat had issued a demolition order the builder for sinking a bore well for construction purpose at Chuna vaddo. The villagers were cynical of the WRD for turning a Nelson's eye to illegalities in command area.

The villagers also raised concerns about the mandatory contribution of Rs 10 lakhs from each builder towards the Corporate Social Responsibility fund, advocating for this amount to be allocated for the education of girls and marginalised children. They noted that while the govt speaks of student loans, accessing these loans has become prohibitively expensive and laden with bureaucratic hurdles.

De Sousa told the members to lay more stress on youth and called on them to use their good offices to educate youth and provide jobs to them.

Assagao echoes against forest destruction

Team Herald

ASSAGAO: The first Gram Sabha of 2025 in Assagao saw strong opposition to large-scale violations of green cover rules, alongside discussions on pressing development issues. While the annual budget was initially on the agenda, it was decided that a special Gram Sabha would be convened to review it, ensuring it was not rushed through with other matters.

A senior resident, Alex Rodrigues, raised concerns about the extensive destruction of the forest cover by builders in the area. He warned that rapid deforestation could lead to soil erosion and a drying underground water table, leaving Assagao parched. Rodrigues urged locals to oppose the builders, highlighting the environmental risks of such unrestrained development.

He criticised the Forest

Former Panchayat member, Einstein Barretto, argued that the Panchayat should take responsibility for ensuring builders comply with the green cover rules, even without external expertise. He insisted that the Panchayat had the power to stop projects if these regulations were violated

Department for approving tree-cutting with inadequate conditions. "When the forest department allows tree-cutting, they demand that three times more trees be planted. But where will these trees be planted? On whose property?" he questioned. Rodrigues also expressed frustration at the lack of accountability, pointing out the passing of responsibility between the Panchayat, the local biodiversity committee, and the State Biodiversity Department.

Rodrigues threatened to take legal action against the Forest Department, accusing it of being ineffective in halting the ongoing deforestation. Former Panchayat member, Einstein Barretto, argued that

the Panchayat should take responsibility for ensuring builders comply with the green cover rules, even without external expertise. He insisted that the Panchayat had the power to stop projects if these regulations were violated.

Sarpanch Hanumant Naik discussed ongoing development projects, including a sports ground and a water pipeline, but noted that many of these were delayed due to lack of cooperation from relevant departments. Villagers called for more transparency, requesting that the Sarpanch provide detailed information about public welfare projects before the gram sabha, so they could hold authorities accountable. The Public Works De-

partment also faced criticism for the unfinished state of Assagao's main road, with villagers demanding action to address the dust and delays. Sarpanch Naik promised to arrange a meeting with engineers to resolve the issue.

On the topic of swimming pool constructions, Naik explained that although the Panchayat had objections, higher authorities often overruled these decisions. He stressed the need for collective action from villagers to prevent such projects.

UNITED BOYS OF AMBAULIM QUEPEM - GOA

LOTTERY DRAW

1st Prize - 2420
 2nd Prize - 5891
 3rd Prize - 3225

CONSOLATIONS PRIZES

1st - 3201; 2nd - 3973;
 3rd - 2452; 4th - 0786;
 5th - 4687