

Locals protest over road safety neglect at Bethora junction

Point out that area has turned into accident prone zone; lash out at authorities for turning deaf ear to appeals for remedial measures

Team Herald

PONDA: Furious locals gathered at the main Bethora junction on Friday to protest against the authorities for taking road safety for granted and neglecting their demands for the past four years. They alleged that the widening of the Bethora-Borim road into a four-lane highway was completed without adequate provisions for their safety, such as flyovers, underpasses, a traffic signal system, or proper speed breakers. This, they claim, has led to an increase in accidents and chaos on the road.

The locals stated that the 4-km stretch of road on the Belagavi-Margao route was previously a two-lane bypass but was widened last year into a four-lane highway without the necessary infrastructure for pedestrian safety. They complained



PICS: SANTOSH NAIK

Locals address media during protest at Bethora junction over absence of flyover, signals, and speed breakers

There is ongoing follow-up with the authorities regarding the installation of a traffic signal system – Madu Khandepar, Sarpanch

Road widened, pedestrian safety compromised
Heavy rush of vehicles; risky to

PUBLIC GRIEVANCES
cross road
Accidents on the rise at junction
Industrial workers add to traffic congestion

Non-functional CCTV cameras on road
Immediate need for a flyover

that crossing the highway has become a struggle due to heavy vehicles travelling at high speeds, putting their lives at risk.

Expressing their frustration, the protesters criticised the local Panchayat, the state government, and the Public Works Department (PWD) National Highways

(NH) authority for ignoring their repeated appeals. They pointed out that several accidents have been reported at this junction, including the tragic death of a traffic official while chasing violators. Additionally, they raised concerns over non-functional CCTV cameras on the road, citing an incident last year

where a biker was shot at near the junction, but the defunct cameras failed to capture any footage.

The locals also reminded authorities of the assurance given by the Bethora Sarpanch, who had promised to install a traffic signal system at the junction by the end of February. However,

they claimed that no action has been taken, despite assurances since 2019 that the highway authorities would erect the signals.

Fearing that the prevailing chaotic situation could lead to further accidents, the residents have demanded the construction of a flyover at the junction. They

argued that the widened road has led to increased traffic, particularly heavy vehicles speeding towards Margao and Belagavi.

Commuters, including industrial estate workers, have also added to the congestion at Bethora Junction, especially during peak working hours.

A local stated that he has been raising this issue for the past two years at the gram sabha meetings and had even written to the PWD NH department two years ago requesting a flyover. He stressed that the Panchayat's priority should be the construction of a flyover. Until then, a traffic signal system should be installed as an immediate solution.

According to Bethora Nirankal Conshem Codar Sarpanch, Madu Khandepar, "there is ongoing follow-up with the authorities regarding the installation of a traffic signal system."

Advocates urge CM to probe marriage registry frauds in Margao

Team Herald

MARGAO: The Managing Committee of the South Goa Advocates Association, led by its President Adv Prasad Naik, along with Adv Narendra Sawaikar, called on Chief Minister Pramod Sawant to demand an inquiry into the fraudulent registration of marriage certificates at the Sub-Registrar's Office in Margao using forged documents.

In their petition submitted to the Chief Minister, the advocates alleged that numerous forged residence certificates were being used to register marriages, compromising the integrity of the marriage registration process.

They claimed that such fraudulent residence certificates were being issued by agents or touts, some of whom falsely presented themselves as advocates, thereby tarnishing the reputation of the legal fraternity.

Furthermore, they raised concerns that fraudulent, bogus, doctored, or modified documents were being submitted to various government departments as proof for obtaining res-

idence certificates, marriage registrations, name changes, sale deeds, and other official records. They warned that if this malpractice was not immediately curbed, the credibility of the entire system would be at risk.

To prevent such fraud, the association recommended that the government establish a mechanism for electronic submission of documents, with a verification system to detect fraudulent or doctored documents at the time of processing applications. This, they argued, would empower issuing authorities to verify the authenticity of submitted documents.

In his petition, Adv Narendra Sawaikar further recommended that photographs of both applicants or declarants should be affixed to the final marriage registration certificate to establish the identity of the married couple.

In response, the Chief Minister assured the delegation of lawyers that the government would take the matter seriously and directed the State Registrar to investigate their concerns without delay.

Raia p'yat joins villagers in opposing mobile tower

Team Herald

MARGAO: The Raia Village panchayat along with locals has voiced their opposition to the proposed location of the mobile tower in a residential area.

Sarpanch Mario D'Souza stated that the current location of the tower is in a residential area, with a school situated nearby, raising concerns over its potential impact on the community.

D'Souza spoke to reporters, confirming that the panchayat stands with the residents in opposing the tower's location. "The site in question is a residential area, and there is a school close by. As Sarpanch, I share the concerns of the local people," he said.

This comes after a strong objection from the local residents, who had raised concerns over the installation of the mobile tower behind the Maina-Curtorim police station at Manora. They fear that the tower could lead to a host of problems in the area.

A common complaint from locals is the lack of consultation with the community before the installation, along with their concerns about the potential harmful effects of electromagnetic radiation, especially on children and the public at large.

CELEBRATING HERITAGE

VINCENT BRAGANZA



The Potekar Fest in Divar is celebrated for three days (March 2 to 4) before Lent, which brings together communities to celebrate heritage, nostalgia and sustainability. With cultural performances, traditional crafts and a spirit of inclusivity, the festival showcased the essence of togetherness and eco-consciousness

Swayampurna Goa SARAS 2025 in Panjim from March 6-16

Team Herald

PANJIM: The Goa State Rural Livelihood Mission (GSRLM), in collaboration with Swayampurna Goa - CSR Authority of Goa, will be organising Swayampurna Goa SARAS 2025 from March 6 to 16 at the Kala Academy and Dayanand Bandodkar Football Ground, Panjim. Addressing a press conference, Rural Development Minister Govind Gaude announced that this year's edition will be held on a much larger scale, with an expanded setup aligning with the vision of Swayampurna Goa SARAS 2025.

The fair, which will be inaugurated by Chief Minister Pramod Sawant, will feature

500 stalls, offering a diverse range of hand-crafted products, food items, and traditional arts.

"Out of these, 120 stalls will be allocated to Self-Help Groups (SHGs) from other states, providing them with an opportunity to showcase their unique crafts and traditional goods. Additionally, 205 stalls will be allotted to SHGs from within Goa, giving local artisans and entrepreneurs a strong platform to reach a larger audience. The remaining 149 stalls will be designated for artisans, departmental stalls, and other exhibitors, while 26 stalls will be exclusively set up as food stalls, providing visitors with a delightful culinary experience," Gaude said.

Marcaim farmers in distress after breach in bandhara

Team Herald

PONDA: Farmers in Marcaim have complained that due to a breach in bandhara, saline water has entered their fields and destroyed their crops.

Pulses, vegetables besides onion and chilli plantations have been submerged in the saline water putting them into losses, stated the farmers. According to the farmers, the riverside bandhara at Bar Amre khazan fields has weakened over the years. The Cumarjua canal, which flows through the area towards Marcaim and Cortalim before merging into the Zuari River, is lined with bandharas that are



several centuries old and in need of urgent repairs.

Farmers recalled facing similar losses in the past

due to breaches in the bandhara, leading to crop destruction. They have urged the government to

provide a permanent solution by constructing a new bandhara to prevent further damage.

Kundaim field submerged for illegal fishing activities

Team Herald

PONDA: A farmer from Kundaim, Dinesh Gaude, has lodged a complaint with the Ponda Mamlatdar, alleging that his paddy field has been illegally submerged with river water to facilitate fishing activities.

According to his complaint, the traditional manas (sluice gate) method is being misused for unauthorised fishing, preventing him from cultivating his crops.

Gaude has made a formal request to the Ponda Mamlatdar, urging immediate action against those responsible and has also demanded that the saline water be drained from his khazan field so that he can resume paddy cul-



tivation. However, despite his repeated appeals, no action has been taken so far.

Speaking to the media, Gaude expressed his frustration over the situation. "Since my field has been filled with saline water, I am unable to begin vaigan (rabi) cultivation. To start farming, the field needs to be dried by releasing the water, but this has not

been done yet," he said.

He further stated that instead of supporting farmers in their agricultural activities, certain individuals are promoting fishing for personal gain. "Farmers should be encouraged to undertake farming, but some people are encouraging fishing for their vested interests at the cost of traditional agriculture," he added.

Meanwhile, in response to Gaude's complaint, the Ponda Mamlatdar has issued notices to the concerned parties. The authorities have also directed them to take precautionary measures to prevent the illegal diversion of river water into the field for fishing purposes.

Kala Academy announces tiatr contest from Mar 10

Team Herald

MARGAO: The 50th Tiatr 'A' Group Competition will be held from March 10 to 28 at the Dinanath Mangeshkar Kala Mandir, Kala Academy, Panjim. The competition will take place daily at 7 pm, featuring the participation of 14 Tiatr groups.

The opening show, Rest In Peace, will be presented by Pacheco's Dramatic and Cultural Association from Curtorim on March 10 at 7 pm, following the inauguration of the competition. On March 11, the Vaytoll will be presented by the Taleigao Dramatic Troupe, Taleigao.

On March 13, Drishti Entertainments, Curchorem, will stage Kelolem Urta. On March 14, the Odruxtta Fattlean Odruxtt will be presented by the Sao Bartolomeu Sports Club and Cultural Association, Choraao.

On March 15, Machi Mogi Morjim, Cultural Sanskrutic Saunsta, Morjim-Pernem, will present their Vearar Ubtolo Kapus. On

March 17, Kala Mogi, Candolim, will stage Oh Goa!

On March 18, the St Dominic Dramatic Troupe, Mercers, will present Bognaar. On March 19, Advarlolim Follam will be presented by Kala Machi Mogi, Santa-Cruz-Goa.

On March 20, Matias Creative Group, Calangute, will stage Aiz Mhaka, Faleam Tuka. On March 21, the Barebhat Social and Cultural Association, Raia, Salcete, will present Zagronnachi Rat.

On March 24, Goan.Com Socio and Cultural Association, Candolim, will present The Healing House. On March 25, the Dramatic Troupe of Ribandar will stage Dusrem Jivit. On March 26, Sant Mat-evachim Noketram, Azossim, will present Amkam Nit Konn Ditolo?.

The concluding show, Tum Mhaka Zai, will be staged by J J Productions, St Cruz, on March 28.

Tickets, priced at Rs 100, and season passes, available for Rs 1400, will be available at the ticket counter of Kala Academy from March 7 onwards.



This matter was before the High Court of Bombay at Goa and the Court issued an order that the Banyan tree could be translocated. It cannot be said that they did not follow procedure and that order was not challenged either. The second part of the story is why the statue of the deity had to be touched. That is not in the order. One side of the argument is that while uprooting the Banyan tree, the shrine could have collapsed and it could have been in a very bad state. Hence the government decided to follow and perform the necessary rituals. There are some other terms also, such as consent terms. What is it, we just don't know. But definitely whether the Banyan tree will survive, won't survive, is another story. But there is a court order that the Banyan tree can be translocated

– Trajano D'Mello, Political Commentator

WAS PORVORIM BANYAN TREE AND SHRINE TRANSLOCATION DONE WITHOUT FOLLOWING OFFICIAL PROCEDURES AND PEOPLE'S CONSENT?

There were animated protests at Porvorim over the pruning and uprooting of the sacred Banyan tree, at the place known as Vadakade, on Sunday night. The deity of Lord Khapreshwar and the shrine too have been removed. Herald Media asked the public as to why people and devotees were not taken into confidence and whether proper procedures were followed to shift the deity?

When politicians become selfish and greedy, they even put their hands on God. They just don't get scared. Yesterday we have seen this in Porvorim, the manner in which mockery was made of Khapreshwar. They have moved the idol of the deity on Brahma-murth. If you get up early and perform the pooja on Brahma-murth, then God helps us. At that time, they moved the deity, there is no greater sin than that and there is no way of cleansing yourself from such a sin. This government is destroying our rivers, springs, forests and mountains and is out to finish birds and animals. They are out to destroy Goa in the name of development. Wake up Goenkara, wake up. We need to save Goa for the next generation

– Xencor Polgi, Social Activist

There is only one thing to like about this government - construction of Highways. They finish the trees, temples and people's houses and claim that development has been done. What kind of development? Khapreshwar guards and protects people. Even if you go to Lord Mahadev's temple, God says first you have to pay obeisance to Khapreshwar who is outside and then come before me. But without a care, they just lifted Khapreshwar himself? In doing so, they have invited curses on themselves and will have to pay a heavy price for these acts. There are five Khapreshwars, who have protected Goa. If we get to roam in Goa safely, it is because of these Gods

– Tara Kerkar, Social Activist

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