

Anjunkars stand up to Lobos over road work

PWD, Panchayat say no work order yet; residents claim Michael Lobo gave them personal orders on demolition

AUGUSTO RODRIGUES

ANJUNA: Just two days after Calangute MLA Michael Lobo and his wife and Siolim MLA Delilah Lobo were confronted by residents in Anjuna's St Sebastian ward over what locals allege is an unauthorised road-widening project, both Public Works Department (PWD) and Panchayat officials have distanced themselves from the contentious demolitions.



“People from outside the constituency are coming and trying to create confusion. Come tomorrow when the work starts again and you will not find a single resident along the road protesting. I will be there from 11 am till 5 pm — Michael Lobo, Calangute MLA

“My house is a heritage house and I was told by Michael (Lobo) that my wall and balcony needed to be demolished. I was convinced that he is out trying to cheat me because the land acquisition process has not started. He came and told me that I had to submit a letter at his wife's office in Siolim and that she would make arrangements for one architect Edgar Afonso to build a new balcony for me. Do you believe the government operates this way?

— Janice Plavinkal, a resident whose heritage home lies on Survey No 1395/1 (in photo above)

panch Laxmidas Chimulkar stated that the Panchayat had no involvement in the demolition activities, asserting that letters issued to residents were only to ensure compliance with a High Court directive.

“The letters sent to the people was to follow certain criteria based on a High Court order. It has nothing to do with the demolition. The letter is not regarding any demolition,” said Chimulkar.

While both officials have denied any role in

the current demolitions, the situation has placed MLA Michael Lobo under scrutiny. Despite Sequeira's statement, Lobo maintained that some construction is underway as part of his Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) contribution.

“I am building the wall for a resident as my CSR contribution from my company. There is no intention to demolish any wall in the constituency. Work was going on to remove stones kept along the wall to ena-

ble us to widen the road on Thursday,” Lobo said.

He also claimed that the protests were being incited by outsiders. “People from outside the constituency are coming and trying to create confusion. Come tomorrow when the work starts again and you will not find a single resident along the road protesting. I will be there from 11 am till 5 pm,” he asserted.

However, local residents are not convinced.

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Theft at CM's office in Sankhali

Team Herald

PANJIM: In an embarrassing development that has left both citizens and officials stunned, a theft has been reported from the office of Chief Minister Dr Pramod Sawant — located in Sankhali, his very own constituency. The irony is that it occurred under the watch of the Chief Minister, who also holds the Home portfolio and has been at the helm of the State's police force for nearly eight years.

According to highly placed police sources, a First Information Report (FIR) was lodged last week at Bicholim Police Station after an employee at the CM's local office reported the theft of two mobile phones, a sum of cash and other undisclosed valuables.

What's raising eyebrows further is the silence from senior police officials in Bicholim, none of whom have gone on record to confirm or comment on the incident. This lack of transparency has only deepened public scepticism about the seriousness with which the matter is being handled.

“The case is being investigated thoroughly,” said one source, speaking on condition of anonymity. “Two to three individuals have been detained for questioning.”

A security breach at the office of the State's top elected official — who is also responsible for maintaining law and order — has shaken confidence in the system.

PEACE IS PRICELESS

PTI



Students arrive at a school as educational institutions reopen in non-border districts of Jammu and Kashmir after remaining closed for nearly a week due to India-Pakistan tensions in Srinagar, on Tuesday

Fact-finding panel blames temple committee, officials for Shirgao Zatra stampede

Report cites poor planning, ignored warnings, and crowd mismanagement; recommends disciplinary measures, dissolution of temple body

LAPSES Failure to implement preventive measures by temple committee, district administration, police, and panchayat

- No proper crowd management was in place
- Organisers ignored directives from police and revenue authorities
- Known risks and past incidents were not addressed
- Stalls were allowed along narrow pathways, reducing road width
- Critical surveillance and monitoring measures were not implemented



KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

- Hold specific individuals accountable through show-cause notices
- Dissolve the temple committee and appoint an administrator
- Appoint nodal officers to oversee future zatra planning and safety
- Implement detailed crowd control plans using alternate routes
- Restrict stalls along key movement pathways
- Ensure full surveillance coverage and proper deployment of watch towers and drones

Team Herald

PANJIM: The fact-finding committee investigating the tragic stampede during the annual zatra at the Shree Lairai Devi temple, in which six devotees lost their lives and over 70 were injured, has held the temple committee, district administration, police, and panchayat collectively responsible. The committee, which also observed that the tragedy was entirely preventable, has recommended a detailed inquiry and the establishment of accountability.

In its 26-page report, the four-member committee emphasised the need to fix individual responsibility and implement corrective and disciplinary measures to prevent future tragedies.

DAMNING INDICTMENT

It found that the temple committee, district administration, police, and panchayat failed to learn from past incidents or take adequate precautions to avoid such mishaps.

Making the report public on Tuesday, Chief Minister

Pramod Sawant stated that the government has issued show-cause notices to eight officers concerned for the lapses — the then North Goa Collector Sneha Gitte, the then SP North Akshat Kaushal, the then Bicholim Deputy Collector and SDM Bhimnath Khorjuvankar, the then Bicholim DySP Jiba Dalvi, the then Bicholim PI Dinesh Gadekar, the then Mopa PI Naryan Chimulkar, the then Bicholim Mamlatdar Abhijit Gaonkar and Shirgao panchayat secretary Sanjay Parab.

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BIG DISCOUNT SHOPPING FESTIVAL
SGPDA GROUND MARGAO
9th To 18th MAY
Time: 10.30 am to 9.00 pm

Assistant Engineer (Roads), PWD, Vitorino Sequeira, speaking to O Herald, clarified that there is no official approval for road widening in the area. “There is no work order for widening of any road in Anjuna,” he said. Sequeira further clarified that the only sanctioned activity is the “reinstatement of tarmac” in the area where electricity poles had been excavated.

Echoing this, Anjuna Sar-

Kashmir a bilateral issue between India, Pakistan: MEA

PTI, NEW DELHI: India on Tuesday said its long-standing position on Kashmir has been that it is a bilateral issue between New Delhi and Islamabad and there is no change of this stand.

The assertion came against the backdrop of US President Donald Trump's renewed offer to mediate on the Kashmir issue.

“We have a longstanding national position that any issues pertaining to the Indian Union territory of Jammu and Kashmir have to be addressed by India and Pakistan bilaterally,” external affairs ministry spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal said.

“That stated policy has not changed. As you are aware, the outstanding matter is the vacation of illegally occupied Indian territory by Pakistan,” he said.

Jaiswal was responding to a question on Trump's offer.

On speculation on nuclear war by Trump, Jaiswal said the military action was entirely in the conventional domain.

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Truth deficit in legal profession bothers me: Outgoing CJI Khanna

PTI, NEW DELHI: Outgoing Chief Justice of India Sanjiv Khanna on Tuesday voiced concern over “truth deficit” in the legal profession and emphasised the role of the Bar and the Bench in earning public trust.

Justice Khanna made these remarks on his last day in office while presiding over the ceremonial bench in the apex court and at a farewell function. The job of the judge is neither to dominate the courtroom nor to surrender, he said.

At an informal media interaction, Justice Khanna also said though he wasn't going to accept any post-retirement official assignments, he would continue his innings in the legal profession.

“I will like to speak

“A judge above all is the seeker of truth. Mahatma Gandhi believed that truth is God and an ideal to strive for. Yet, we come across cases of concealment and deliberate misstatement of facts. I believe, this stems from a mistaken belief that unless some padding is done in evidence a case would not succeed. This mind-set is not only wrong it does not work. It makes the job of court harder — Sanjiv Khanna, Chief Justice of India



about something that bothers me. Truth deficit in our profession. As a judge above all is the seeker of truth. Mahatma Gandhi believed that truth is God and an ideal to strive for. Yet, we come across cases of concealment and deliberate misstatement of facts. I believe, this stems from a mistaken

belief that unless some padding is done in evidence a case would not succeed. This mind-set is not only wrong it does not work. It makes the job of court harder,” Justice Khanna said while speaking at a farewell function organised by the Supreme Court Bar Association (SCBA).

Justice Khanna, whose career as a lawyer and judge spanned 42 years after he enrolled as an advocate with the Bar Council of Delhi in 1983, said the day is not far when mediation will be chosen over litigation as a default mode of dispute resolution.

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MAX. TEMP 35.5 °C
MIN. TEMP 27.2 °C

idharudhar



I'm not on the road — the road is through my house!

13 days on, no end to Taleigao water crisis

Team Herald

PANJIM: It's been two weeks since their water supply stopped, but there is no respite for the residents of Vodlem Bhat and Borbhat in Taleigao as the Public Works Department (PWD) has still not managed to locate the point where the piped water is getting contaminated. This has left households dependent on expensive private water tankers, with no resolution in sight.

After residents reported receiving contaminated water and complained, the PWD initiated an investigation to trace the source of contamination. Segments of the old pipeline were cut and replaced to stop the contamination, but water supply to large parts of the affected areas remains disrupted.



(Left) A potable water pipeline submerged in contaminated water and (right) ongoing PWD work, in Taleigao



Speaking to O Herald, Felix Almeida, a resident of Vodlem Bhat, expressed his frustration: “For the last 10 days I have been purchasing tanker water. One tanker costs about Rs 800 and lasts for around three to four days. I have already used up water from three tankers after the water supply was stopped. Initially, we were getting contami-

“For the last 10 days I have been purchasing tanker water. One tanker costs about Rs 800 and lasts for around three to four days. I have already used up water from three tankers after the water supply was stopped

— Felix Almeida, Vodlem Bhat resident

nated water but now the water supply has been stopped completely. We do not know when this issue will be resolved.”

Another resident, who requested anonymity, highlighted the residents' growing anxiety. “After the incident of contamina-

tion we are in fear now. We have already changed our water filter. Earlier we were getting water for around 30-45 minutes, but now that too has stopped. We have not got water from tankers sent by PWD. What is worse is that the elected representatives from the area do not bother to visit us. We are without water for around 13 days now,” the resident said.

Some locals have also questioned the cause of the contamination, suggesting damaged pipelines as the likely culprit. “The pipeline has been changed, but connections have not been given to us. I've heard that it will take more time before we start getting water,” said Victor Cardinho, another affected resident.

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21 die after drinking spurious liquor in Punjab

PTI, CHANDIGARH/AMRITSAR: At least 21 people, mostly daily wagers, died and 10 others were hospitalised after allegedly drinking spurious liquor in Punjab's Amritsar district, officials said on Tuesday.

Ten people, including the alleged kingpin, were arrested while Deputy Superintendent of Police (Majitha) Amolak Singh and Station House Officer of Majitha police station Avtar Singh were suspended for negligence, police said.

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