

Gram sabhas erupt over corrupt builders and broken promises

Curtorim villagers accuse panchayat of corruption, being builder-friendly

Team Herald

MARGAO: Tempers flared at the Curtorim village panchayat gram sabha on Sunday, as angry villagers accused the Panchayat of favouring builders, bypassing procedures, and taking decisions without consulting the gram sabha.

Allegations of corruption were also made, with several villagers demanding the resignation of Sarpanch Alcino D'Silva.

The meeting began with the reading of the previous gram sabha minutes, where the long-pending Material Recovery Facility (MRF) issue resurfaced. While the Sarpanch claimed that land had been identified and the surveyor had been informed, villagers were shocked when the surveyor present denied any knowledge of such instructions.

A key flashpoint came when five of the six proposals submitted by gram sabha members were rejected without clear reasons. Among these was a proposal from ex-Zilla Panchayat member Moreno Rebelo, demanding discussion on how mega projects are approved without consulting the gram sabha. Villagers alleged that a 2024 resolution requiring all housing project proposals to be presented before the gram sabha was ignored.

Tensions peaked when the controversial Maina housing project was brought up. Villagers alleged that the Panchayat granted permission without informing the gram sabha or all panch members.

Accusations were made that money exchanged hands to clear the project, further intensified by the playing of an audio-video

clip allegedly showing the Sarpanch, Secretary, and a panch member involved in a financial deal. The Panchayat body refused to comment on the video, fuelling public anger.

Another Panch member alleged that the Sarpanch bypasses pre-body meetings, failing to inform the Panchayat body about key projects. The revelation led to loud demands for the Sarpanch's resignation on grounds of corruption and non-transparency.

Adding to the controversy, ex-ZP Moreno Rebelo questioned the sale of 67,000 sq metres of industrial land in Survey No. 280/0, demanding clarity on its future use.

Despite the Sarpanch denying wrongdoing and calling the accusations politically motivated, villagers remained unconvinced, and tensions remained unresolved.

Concern over migrant influx at Raia

Team Herald

MARGAO: Serious concern was expressed by villagers of Raia during the gram sabha held on Saturday, with a strong demand for strict verification of migrants residing in rented accommodations.

According to the Sarpanch, Mario D'Souza, several residents raised alarm over the rising number of migrants in the village. Villagers alleged that the influx is increasing by the day, and emphasised the urgent need for close monitoring. They urged the Panchayat to take immediate steps to initiate proper verification and documentation of those residing in rented premises.

"We need to ensure that all tenants are registered, and proper police verification is done," said one of the villagers, echoing the sentiments of many others who expressed concern over the lack of oversight.

Birthday Greetings

Dr. Rajesh T. Patil
MBBS, MS, FMAS.
Medical Superintendent Professor,
Department of Surgery Incharge,
Emergency Medicine & Trauma (GMC)

May you have good health & happiness and may you carry on the good work towards the State of Goa.

Best wishes from: **GIRISH PILLAI**
EX-SARPANCH & PANCH,
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Happy Birthday

To **Dr. Rajesh T. Patil**
MBBS, MS, FMAS.
(Medical Superintendent Professor,
Department of Surgery Incharge,
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GOA MEDICAL COLLEGE, Bambolim)

"Happy Birthday to a truly dedicated doctor!
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Road widening opposed at Assagao

PANJIM: The Assagao gram sabha, which convened on Sunday, witnessed heated discussions over the issue of road widening, with villagers expressing concern that the village's identity was at stake. Residents claimed the wide roads were being constructed solely to benefit developers of mega projects and to accommodate an increasing vehicular population.

Villagers argued that broader roads would not ease congestion, as the core problem lay in the lack of basic driving discipline. "This has to be rectified first," they insisted.

Ranjit Parsekar called for the scrapping of the regional plan that mandates 25-metre-wide roads, asserting that any widening should be based on the will of the people and genuine necessity. He was supported by other villagers who referred to the situations in Siolim and Anjuna, where compound walls belonging to locals were allegedly demolished without proper orders. They stated they were satisfied with the existing roads



and, if needed, widening should be done only after taking all stakeholders into confidence.

Another major concern raised was the fraudulent change of zoning of property bearing survey number 101/1, a Comunidade land parcel measuring approximately 2 lakh square metres. The transaction was suspected to involve a scam running into several crores of rupees.

Surendra Gaad urged the panchayat to preserve the village's green cover, stating that doing so would help maintain groundwater levels. He further warned against construction projects on the hills, which he said could lead to flooding and

water scarcity in the villages.

The incomplete water treatment plant and recurring pipe bursts were also discussed. Villagers pointed out that the newly hot-mixed road was being repeatedly dug up due to faulty water supply infrastructure. Einstein Barretto called for a vigilance inquiry against the concerned officials of the Public Works Department (PWD) Water Supply division, alleging that substandard work had been carried out and that no one in the village had benefited from it.

The Sarpanch disclosed that a meeting would soon be held involving various departments and villagers to address these issues collectively.

Happy Birthday

To our dearest **Dr. Rajesh T. Patil**
MBBS, MS, FMAS.
(Medical Superintendent Professor,
Department of Surgery Incharge, Emergency Medicine & Trauma -
GOA MEDICAL COLLEGE, Bambolim) & National awardee (2018)
for excellence in preventing alcoholism and drug abuse,
Friend of Alcoholic Anonymous.

Wishing you a truly wonderful birthday, Doctor. May your unwavering dedication to healing and your compassionate spirit continue to shine brightly, bringing fulfillment to your life and inspiration to all who know you.

JIM D'SOUZA Panch, V.P. Velsao-Pale-Issorchim, **Sr. ROSE PAITE**, **MSMHG**, **APARNA J SHAH**, Saligao, **Ar. RITA VAZ**, Macazana, **MOLETA MENEZES**, Sarzora, **FAUSTINA D'CRUZ**, Velim, **NOVERA CARVALHO**, Velsao-Pale, **NEVILLE F. MASCARENHAS**, Vasco, **ALISTON PINTO**, Velsao-Dando, **SHARAD D. NAIK**, Murdi-Kanttem, **HARISH K CHAVAN**, Murdi-Kanttem, **A. A. MEMBER'S OF CANSALIM GROUP**, **ROQUEZINHO D' SOUZA** (Social worker) & fly. Velsao-Pale.

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Santa Cruz, Cuzira, Ilhas Goa.

Seraulim calls for division of panchayat

Team Herald

MARGAO: Tensions flared at the Seraulim gram sabha on Sunday as villagers called for the division of the panchayat, citing deepening disputes over development priorities and administrative disconnect.

Residents accused the Panchayat of favouring developers over locals and demanded that the body be split to ensure better governance and equitable resource distribution. "One panchayat should be for the people, and another for the builders," remarked a visibly upset villager, highlighting the growing divide in the community over planning priorities.

The demand came in response to growing dissatisfaction over unequal

development across wards, the impact of the Western Bypass, and a perceived lack of grassroots consultation in planning decisions made by Town and Country Planning (TCP) and Block Development Office (BDO) officials.

Residents raised serious concerns about recurring water logging issues, especially in low-lying areas affected by ongoing infrastructure work related to the Western Bypass. Villagers alleged that planning was being carried out in a top-down manner, with no meaningful engagement of locals in decisions that directly affected their lives and livelihoods.

Several villagers argued that the current administrative setup of a single panchayat for the entire area

is no longer effective, with calls growing louder to bifurcate the panchayat for better governance and equitable distribution of resources.

"Development has become lopsided. Unless the panchayat is divided, certain areas will continue to suffer neglect," said another participant.

Criticism was also directed toward the TCP and BDO officials for approving projects and development plans without adequate consultation with the panchayat body or affected residents. Key developmental concerns were brought to the forefront at the Seraulim Village Panchayat Gram Sabha, with villagers voicing apprehensions regarding the South Western Railway land acquisition and the overall carrying capacity of the village.

Siolim Sodiem gram sabha slams power officials, opposes road widening

SIOLIM: The Siolim Sodiem gram sabha, held on Sunday, began on a stormy note as villagers launched a scathing attack on public departments accused of gross negligence and indifference towards local residents.

Villagers squarely blamed the Goa Electricity Department (GED) for leaving roads in a deplorable condition, particularly during the monsoon season, and for repeatedly failing to complete works within the stipulated timeframe. The Village Biodiversity Committee (BMC) Chairperson Peter de Souza, voicing strong condemnation, called for criminal cases to be filed against the contractors responsible,

citing the dug-up roads and incomplete projects as serious threats to public safety and health. The resolution was seconded by Zenobia Kamat.

Villagers also vehemently opposed any proposal to widen existing roads to 25 metres and declare them as Major District Roads (MDR). They argued that such widening was unnecessary and would severely impact numerous houses located along the roadside.

The Tillari Irrigation Canal project was also heavily criticised, with villagers accusing the officials of denuding farmland. The gram sabha demanded that the Tillari Corporation provide

adequate compensation to affected farmers, offer a government job to one member of each impacted family, and properly fence the canal.

Sarpanch Deepa Naik was urged to present data on the village's water supply and its carrying capacity, amid concerns that commercial developments were overburdening local infrastructure and threatening a future water crisis.

On a positive note, the Sarpanch informed the gram sabha that, owing to persistent efforts by the village BMC, a Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) fund amounting to Rs 9 lakh had been secured towards education of the girl child.

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