

ANDAMAN DAILY

News & Views from Andaman and Nicobar Islands

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MP Leads Delegation of Baratang Villagers to Meet Chief Secretary, Highlighting Long-Standing Development Demands



Rohit Kumar

Sri Vijaya Puram,
18 October 2024

A delegation of villagers from Baratang, led by Member of Parliament Mr. Bishnu Pada Ray, met with the Chief Secretary on 17 Oct to present a series of long-standing demands crucial to the development and welfare of their community. Baratang, known for its scenic beauty and potential as a tourist destination, has faced years of neglect, particularly impacting its majority Ranchi population.

Mr. Ray, during a visit to Baratang on October 11, engaged with the local residents, listening to their concerns about critical issues affecting the region. Acknowledging the severity of the situation, he invited a delegation of 12 villagers to Sri Vijaya Puram, where they were accompanied by him to meet the Chief Secretary and formally submit their demands.

One of the primary concerns raised was the pending disposal of IA No. 133290 of 2020 in W.P (Civil) 202 of 1995, related to the de-reservation of forest land for the regularization of nine villages in Baratang Island. This issue had been initially agreed upon during a Forest Advisory Committee meeting in January 2013, but progress has since stalled.

Additionally, the delegation demanded the de-reservation of 29.380 hectares of forest land for the regularization of Katta Khari village in Nilambur, which, despite being

settled under the 1962 colonization scheme, has yet to be notified as a revenue village. This issue has left the villagers without proper land rights or access to essential services.

Another pressing concern was the reclamation of 29.080 hectares of revenue land in Nilambur. The Baratang Forest Division currently occupies 85.080 hectares of land under Survey No. 1, but villagers are pushing for a portion of it to be released for community development and use by government departments, as it is one of the few areas suitable for establishing a proper revenue village in Nilambur.

The reopening of the Tagore Quarry under Survey No. 41 in Kanchangarh village was also a significant demand. Both the public and government departments currently face high costs sourcing materials from South Andaman, and reopening the quarry would help alleviate this burden.

Tourism development was another focal point, with the villagers urging the authorities to prioritize the development of the Baludera sea beach, a pristine and untapped tourist destination.

Fishermen in the delegation highlighted their need for improved facilities, including fish landing infrastructure, a floating jetty, a fish net mending shed, and an ice plant at Khadi Basti and Oralkatcha. These facilities would help enhance their livelihoods and support the local fishing industry.

Water supply issues were also raised, with a request for the construction of an additional water dam at Lorogig or Shankar Nalla to ensure reliable access to clean water for the residents.

The villagers further pressed for the early inauguration of the newly constructed helipad in the area, which would significantly improve connectivity for both locals and tourists.

Other demands included the renovation of the unsafe Nilambur and Middle Strait jetties, the construction of a multipurpose community hall for the Nilambur residents, and the creation of a burning ghat/burial ground for the Hindu community at Oralkatcha.

The delegation also emphasized the need to replace damaged electric poles along the rural road from Baratang Police Station to Roglachang, repair the buildings of the Government Middle School in Jarawa Creek and the Government Senior Secondary School in Oralkatcha, and construct a playground for students. The suspended STS bus service from Baratang to Rangat, which was discontinued a month ago, was also a key concern, with villagers requesting its resumption.

The meeting between the Chief Secretary and the delegation has sparked hope for the neglected villagers of Baratang. As they await the next steps, their long-standing demands remain at the forefront, signalling a need for swift action to address the developmental challenges in this potential tourist hotspot.

Anti-Poaching Operation Launched in Kamorta Following Sighting of Poachers; First Captain Express Safety Concerns



Tarun Karthick

Sri Vijaya Puram,
18 October 2024

In a swift response to credible information from local fishermen, police launched an anti-poaching operation on 14 October following sightings of poachers in three dinghies off the coast between Vikash Nagar and Kakana. The operation was led by Sub-Inspector Calvin, the Station House Officer (SHO) of Police Station Nancowrie, and included officers HC/420 YBK Murthy, PC/2998 Sunder Johnson, PC/2882 Paul Kristopher, PC/2831 S.M. Krishna, and PC/1008 Sartaz Khan, with support from local fishermen.

Upon reaching the creek, the police team located the three suspicious dinghies, which are believed to belong to Burmese poachers. A thorough search was conducted in the surrounding seashore and jungle areas. However, due to inclement weather and the onset of darkness, the poachers were not apprehended.

The inspection of the dinghies revealed a significant haul of sea cucumbers, weighing approximately 1,295 kg, stored in various containers. The dinghies were subsequently towed back to Kamorta jetty with the assistance of Indian Coast Guard vessels, and efforts are

ongoing to locate the fleeing poachers. Currently, the seized dinghies are secured under police supervision at the Kamorta jetty.

The operation was conducted under the supervision of Mr. Solomon Samuel, Sub-Divisional Police Officer (SDPO) of Car Nicobar, with overall oversight by Mr. Manjeet, IPS, SP District Nicobar.

During a conversation with Nicobar Times, Mr. Aslam Majeed, First Captain of Kamorta, raised concerns from residents of nearby villages regarding potential threats from poachers. He urged the police to increase their deployment to capture the poachers, who are currently in hiding. Additionally, he called for heightened police presence in the villages to improve security and safeguard local communities until the poachers are apprehended.

The police are also appealing to the public, particularly local fishermen, to report any credible information regarding the presence of foreign or suspicious individuals to facilitate immediate checks and possible apprehension. The successful collaboration between local law enforcement and civilians highlights a shared commitment to combat illegal activities in the region and protect the ecological balance of the emerald islands.



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Block-Level Training on Substance Abuse Prevention Organized in Little Andaman



Tarun Karthick

Sri Vijaya Puram, 18 October 2024

Little Andaman recently hosted a Block-Level Training Program aimed at combating substance abuse, with a focus on narcotic drugs, harmful alcohol use, and tobacco.

The event, organized under the Rashtriya Gram Swaraj Abhiyan (RGSA), took place at the Panchayat Samiti Hall and brought together key community members to address substance abuse challenges in the region. The program was inaugurated by Mr.

S. Paramanathan, Pramukh of the Panchayat Samiti, who served as the chief guest. He was joined by Mr. Raja, Up-Pramukh, Mr. Belthazer, Block Development Officer, and Dr. Vishal Mandal, Extension Officer, who lent their support to the initiative. Experts in the field, including Ms. Namita Gopal, a specialist in Health & Sanitation, and Ms. C. Vijya, an advocate for Women Empowerment, provided valuable insights during the

sessions. Participants included Pradhans, Panchayat Secretaries, Auxiliary Nurse Midwives (ANM), ASHA workers, and Anganwadi workers from across Little Andaman. The training equipped them with the skills needed to address substance abuse issues in their communities. With the theme of creating both a 'Healthy Panchayat' and 'Child-Friendly Panchayat,' the program aligns with

the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), empowering local leaders and healthcare workers to promote healthier, safer environments for all residents. The initiative is expected to make a significant impact in fostering a community-wide approach to preventing and treating substance abuse in Little Andaman, ensuring long-term well-being for its residents.

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Congress Campaign Committee Chairman Criticises Persistent Power Outages in Sri Vijaya Puram



potential damage of household appliances."

The Congress leader pointed out the underutilization of the 20 MW solar power plant installed by Neyveli Lignite Corporation (NLC). He questioned why the A&N Administration is not making full use of this facility, especially when the island's peak load demand reaches 35 MW during the day and 45 MW at night.

While Mr. Bhasker acknowledged the Administration's policy of not purchasing large generators, he criticized the contradictory decision to procure power from private players using small generators. "This goes against the policy of the Government of India. On one hand, the Administration refuses to invest in large generators, yet on the other hand, they rely on power from private operators running small generators to meet the demand," he added.

Mr. Bhasker called on the Superintending Engineer to prioritize this issue and urged for a concrete plan to address the ongoing power crisis. He emphasized the need for swift action to bring an end to the disruptions that have plagued the Islands for years.

The power situation has remained a pressing concern for the residents of the Andaman and Nicobar Islands, and local leaders continue to seek a permanent solution.

Tarun Karthick

Sri Vijaya Puram,
18 October 2024

The Chairman of the Congress Campaign Committee, Mr. TSG Bhasker, has voiced serious concerns over the ongoing power cuts that have affected

Sri Vijaya Puram for several years. In a letter addressed to the Superintending Engineer of the Electricity Department, Mr. Bhasker highlighted the detrimental impact these power outages have on residents and essential services across the region.

Mr. Bhasker stressed that the prolonged power cuts are disrupting daily life, affecting businesses, educational institutions, hospitals, and other vital services. Despite repeated complaints and assurances from the administration, he

noted that the situation remains largely unresolved. "These outages have caused significant distress and disruption to daily activities," Mr. Bhasker said in his statement. "Islanders are also grappling with frequent power fluctuations and inconsistent voltage levels, leading to the



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Territory-Wide Protests by ASNVMs Over Workers' Demands



Tarun Karthick
Sri Vijaya Puram, 18 October 2024

The Andaman Sarvajanic Nirman Vibhag Mazdoor Sangh (ASNVMs), affiliated with the Centre of Indian Trade Unions (CITU), organized a territory-wide mass demonstration on 17 Oct in front of various offices of the Andaman Public Works Department (APWD) and the A & N

Administration. The protests, which took place across multiple locations, were held to demand the regularization of services for Daily Rated Mazdoors (DRMs), oppose the outsourcing of workers in the APWD, and call for the implementation of the Chief Engineer's order regarding 30-day wages for DRMs.

In Port Blair, hundreds of workers gathered outside the office of the Chief Engineer,

APWD, voicing their concerns. Addressing the demonstrators, B. Chandrachoodan, President of ASNVMs and General Secretary of CITU's State Committee, emphasized that today's protest marks the first phase of a larger agitation. He warned that ASNVMs, alongside other CITU-affiliated unions, will continue to escalate their protests until their demands for the regularization of DRMs are met. Chandrachoodan further criticized the BJP-

led central government, which oversees the A & N Administration, accusing it of pursuing anti-worker policies over the past decade.

Other speakers at the demonstration in Port Blair included SP Kalairajan, General Secretary of ASNVMs; Anand Rajan, Treasurer of ASNVMs; M. Yugander, Secretary of CITU's State Committee; and K. Lakshman, General Secretary of

Nagarpalika Shramik Sangh. The protest was led by R. Surendran Pillai, President of ASNVMs, along with BC Bhattacharjee, Vice President of CITU's State Committee, and Venkat Rao and Srinu Babu from ASNVMs.

Similar demonstrations were held in other regions of the Andaman and Nicobar Islands:

- Mayabunder: A mass procession was organized through the town, culminating in a meeting where CITU Mayabunder Zonal Committee President Muralidharan Pillai and Secretary C. Murugan, along with ASNVMs leaders Mohd Javed and Ramesh, addressed the crowd.

- Rangat: Workers gathered in front of the office of the Assistant Commissioner, where Projit Kumar Sarkar, President of CITU's Rangat Zonal Committee, condemned the government for its failure to address the demands of DRMs. C. Karuppaiah, Secretary of ASNVMs's Rangat Branch, also spoke during the event.

- Kadamtala: A protest took place in front of the office of the Assistant Engineer, led by ASNVMs leaders Amresh, Subroto, and Manoj.

- Katchal: A large gathering of workers held a demonstration in front of the Assistant Engineer's office, led by Rajesh Khanna and K. Nagaraj of ASNVMs.

- Great Nicobar: At Campbell Bay, a sizeable protest, including participation from numerous women workers, was held in front of the Executive Engineer's office. The event was led by Dhandapani, a member of CITU's State Committee.

The demonstrations reflect growing dissatisfaction among DRMs across the islands, who continue to press for their demands to be addressed by the administration. With more protests planned in the days ahead, the ASNVMs and CITU have signalled that this is just the beginning of their movement to protect workers' rights in the territory.

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TSG Charitable Foundation Distributes Nutritional Kits to TB Patients to Support NTEP



patients to aid their recovery. He emphasised that nutritional support plays a vital role in enhancing the treatment process and ensuring a quicker recovery for patients.

“It’s heartening to see that several patients have already shown significant improvement,” said Mr. Bhasker, expressing his satisfaction with the positive outcomes of the TB Kit Distribution Programme.

The event was attended by several notable figures, including social workers Mr. Tejeswar Rao, Mr. Sebastian Tirkey, Mr. Eswar Rao, and Programme Coordinator Mr. Ameer Bux from the TSG Charitable Foundation. Their collective support continues to drive the foundation’s mission to contribute towards the elimination of tuberculosis in the region.

Tarun Karthick
Sri Vijaya Puram,
18 October 2024

In a continuing effort to support the National Tuberculosis Elimination

Programme (NTEP), the TSG Charitable Foundation distributed nutritional food kits to 15 patients currently undergoing treatment at various Urban Health Centres (UHCs) across the

city. The initiative, which took place at UHC Haddo, UHC Shadipur, and UHC Dairy Farm, aims to provide essential nutrition to those battling the disease.

The food kits were distributed by Mr. TSG Bhasker, Chairman of the TSG Charitable Foundation, who highlighted the importance of ensuring proper nutrition for TB

The initiative reflects the foundation's commitment to the community's health and well-being, aligning with national goals to eradicate tuberculosis by 2025 under the NTEP.



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Port Users Meeting Held to Address Infrastructure and Service Concerns



progress and will be expedited to meet the needs of the users.

In addition, issues surrounding the quality and availability of services at the ports were being taken up by the A&N Administration, with a commitment to resolving them swiftly. The Secretary emphasized the importance of enhancing efficiency by introducing the computerisation of processes, such as the issuance of passes and the collection of port and vessel-related charges, aiming to improve the overall ease of doing business.

The maintenance of cargo-handling equipment and the provision of dry dock facilities were also key points of discussion. Secretary Garg assured stakeholders that these matters would be reviewed regularly, and necessary follow-ups would be conducted to ensure timely resolution of all concerns raised by port users.

Looking ahead, it was decided that Port Users Meetings will now be held regularly in the third week of every month. This initiative is expected to create a more structured dialogue between stakeholders and the administration, ensuring a continuous improvement in port-related operations and services.

Tarun Karthick

**Sri Vijaya Puram,
18 October 2024**

A crucial meeting was held on 17th October 2024, at the Port Management Board's (PMB) Conference Hall, chaired by

Ms. Purva Garg, IAS, Secretary (Shipping), to discuss key issues faced by port users in the Andaman and Nicobar Islands. The meeting brought together stakeholders, including private players, the A&N Ship Owners Association, the Andaman and Nicobar Chamber of Commerce & Industry, and officials from PMB, DSS, and ALHW.

The primary focus of the meeting was on addressing the challenges related to infrastructure, equipment, and the services being provided by

the A&N Administration. During the discussions, Secretary (Shipping) Purva Garg reviewed the concerns raised by port users and stakeholders. She assured that all pending infrastructure projects across various ports in the Andaman and Nicobar Islands are in

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