

## Goa Foundation Creating Bottlenecks to Resume Mining Activities in the State: Dependents Raise Voice against NGO at a GMPF Corner Meeting

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- **Since past 3 years mining dependents have been knocking doors of the judiciaries, Central government and the State government with no solution in hands**
- **On March 16, 2021 mining dependents to protest with trucks and machineries in front of Goa CM's official residence to register their dissatisfaction, if solution is not devised.**
- **Sarpanches of Village panchayats from mining areas and people representatives unanimously put forward demand for Mining resumption while accusing Goa foundation for sufferings of people.**

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Mining dependents along with Goa Mining People's Front (GMPF) who represent the livelihood cause of over 3 lakhs people dependent on mining industry in the state of Goa, blamed Goa Foundation NGO for hindering resumption of mining in Goa. They also accused Goa foundation for misguiding the Supreme Court & public against the real situation of mining sector in Goa. The NGO in order to fulfil its agenda has put 3 lakh Goans through the present misery.

In the GMPF corner meeting, held today at Sanvordem, people dependent on mining discussed way forward and plan of action to seek attention of the Central government towards the wrenching condition of mining dependents in the state. The dependents also strongly alleged Goa foundation for the sufferings of over 3 lakh mining dependents. In past 3 years, mining dependents have met and written letters/representations/ memorandums to the ministries at both Central and State level, Policy makers & judiciaries to end the Goa Mining stalemate through legislative amendments. Mining dependents have been urging the Union Government to consider amendment in 'The Goa Daman and Diu Mining Concessions (Abolition and Declaration of Mining Leases Act, 1987).

Mr. Puti Gaonkar, President, GMPF, said, "All mining dependents present in the meeting today, expressed their concerns over no positive response or result coming from the Central and State government. The mining stalemate in Goa has completed its third year due to the legal interpretation and legal flaws done in the past in the Goa The Goa Daman and Diu Mining Concessions (Abolition and Declaration of Mining Leases Act, 1987), which converted the mining Concession into mining Leases. There is an utter need to create awareness towards the disparity meted out to Goa mining has not only brought economic instability in the state. We the mining dependents strongly condemns the repetitive actions of Goa foundation for making the lives miserable of 3 lakh Mining dependents. In the response to inability of State & central government to resolve the issue, we have planned a protest on 16 March with machineries and trucks in front of the official residence of Chief Minister Dr. Pramod Sawant. We have also decided to handover keys of trucks and machineries to Dr. Sawant as these are lying idle from past 3 years and the debt against the loan taken are increasing manifold."

"We have now understood that is we have to win the fight against a single cause, we must raise the voice for livelihood rights with more aggression. Today Village Sarpanchs, Workers' Associations and representatives of various Truck Associations and other ancillary bodies have come together to discuss the gravity of the situation. We are now going to question the Central government and state government in full force. The morbid condition of the people and business owners post the ban was imposed again has painted a scary example in front of Goans. Goa foundation is creating the hurdles for resumption of mining and we once again urge the NGO not to play with our livelihoods. People have become reluctant to start a business of their own. The picture of AatmaNirbhar Bharat painted by the Prime Minister looks like being defeated here in Goa. Decade old occupation opportunities have been stolen away from Goans, tourism sector to creep slowly for one year at least, Goans no longer want to invest in any business and youth of the state is planning migration due to lack of job opportunities." Surya Naik, Sarpanch of Cavrem Village Panchayat added.

"Over 3 Lakh mining dependents are suffering due to irresponsible actions of Goa foundation. We the panchayat representatives from Goa's mining belt are aware of the harsh sufferings of the people and drastic slowdown in development works particularly in mining areas. In view of the inconsistency in opportunity to do business ever since last 3 years, the govt should extend the debt relief scheme of trucks and Barges and if central government is unable to start mining in Goa in next 3 months, the state Govt should take package from central Govt for compensation to the mining dependent on monthly basis till mining restarts in Goa or alternate job is provided." Sandeep Prabhu Pauskar, Sarpanch of Sanvordem village panchayat added.

Mining has played and continues to play a vital role in the economic development of Goa and has been one of the biggest earners of foreign exchange to the state exchequer, with the loss of revenue to the State Exchequer estimated at more than Rs. 10,000 Crores during the last 3 years.

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