

Ancient dam found in Ibrampur

By Paul Fernandes

PANAJI: Deep in the countryside, wonders never cease. But an 'engineering marvel', used perhaps during the pre-Portuguese period, for water harvesting in Ibrampur, had remained in the shadows till recently.

Showing damages of the hoary past and clandestine quarrying recently, this structure, a mini-dam, barely seven-metres high and 250-metres long, appears to be a work of careful planning in terms of its engineering aspects and brilliantly executed.

Located close to Goa's border with

Maharashtra, both roads, either via Dodamarg or Hassapur, leading to this extremely insular village, have to pass through stretches of the neighbouring state.

PAST FORWARD



DAMAGED BEYOND REPAIR: A view of the quarrying for basaltic material which has shorn off the right side of the ancient dam. Photo: Paul Fernandes

An assistant geologist of mines department, Hector Fernandes stumbled upon it during an inspection of a site in the vicinity sought to be operated for extracting basaltic/granitic material.

That it was a man-made structure and a sort of a *bund*, Fernandes needed no telling. After a survey, he realised that the structure could be an ancient dam spanning through the proposed

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Ancient dam

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lease area and rejected it. But over a period of time, illegal quarrying, which went unnoticed, has partly damaged the right side of the dam.

From its strategic positioning in the valley to its structural stability and from the tunnel for release of water to the cascading spillway, the project involved an astute assessment of the geological and engineering factors.

Says S T Nadkarni, managing director of Goa Tillari Irrigation Development Corporation, "Hats off to the man who planned and executed the project at that point of time, without any machinery at his disposal". Set strategically in a east-west direction to trap the run offs from the slopes of two hills merging to form a curve, it had a catchment area of about three square kms.

A striking feature of the small concave dam is a breach in the middle, which appears to have occurred, perhaps during the monsoon and which may have not been repaired. Or was the structure razed due to some political changes in the area?

Now unused and partly shrouded by an