

Ponda hospital lifts restored after public outcry, but medical shortages persist

Repairs were fast-tracked following O Heraldo report highlighting struggles of vulnerable patients

SANTOSH NAIK

PANJIM: The patients of the Ponda Sub District Hospital heaved a sigh of relief after six of the eight lifts were repaired, following persistent issues highlighted by the locals.



The authorities fast-tracked the repair work after O Heraldo in its February 2 edition, highlighted the hardship faced by patients, including pregnant women, dialysis patients, disabled individuals, and senior citizens, who were forced to climb stairs as seven of the eight lifts were non-functional since January 16.

Expressing gratitude to O



FEBRUARY 2
12 yrs after opening, Ponda hospital's facilities still not up to the mark
In the absence of essential services, patients are forced to go to GMC for treatment

Heraldo for highlighting the plight of the patients, Raghuveer Naik, a local said, "We thank O Heraldo for highlighting the issue of the non-functional lifts at Sub District Hospital, which led to the lift repairs."

Echoing similar sentiments, Viraj Sapre, another local said, "It's a massive relief

to see the lifts working again. Now, patients, relatives, and even pregnant women can smile again."

The repairs were deemed essential, as all outpatient departments (OPDs), wards, and other medical facilities are located on the first, second and third floors of the

casualty department, which is on the ground floor.

The Assistant Engineer (AE) at the Public Works Department (PWD) in South Goa confirmed that six lifts have now been repaired, but two lifts are still out of order due to major defects, and their repairs are still underway.

Meanwhile, locals have

urged the hospital authorities to provide additional medical facilities, including a surgeon, skin specialist, CT scan, blood bank, and MRI services.

When asked about these concerns, Dr Jayshree Madkaikar, the Medical Superintendent (MS) of Sub District Hospital, said, "All correspondence has been made with the health authorities regarding the demand for the additional medical facilities and doctors."

She said that around 500 to 600 patients receive medical check-ups at the OPDs each day. However, locals maintain that the hospital still lacks major medical facilities despite its inauguration in 2013.

Raghuveer Naik remarked, "Patients are facing tremendous hardship as there has been no surgeon at the hospital for the past two years.

Additionally, there is no skin specialist, and many residents who cannot afford private hospitals are left struggling."

Sharing her concerns about the lack of CT scan and MRI services, Nayan Naik, another resident of Ponda, said, "In the absence of these services, patients have to travel long distances to the GMC. I even had to pay Rs 10,000 to conduct a CT scan for my daughter at a private facility."

She added, "The government should fill the vacant surgeon's position and provide the necessary medical equipment, such as a CT scan. In cases of accidents, the first hour, the 'golden hour', is crucial for treatment. By the time an accident victim is referred to the GMC, his/her condition worsens, and, in some cases, they pass away before reaching the hospital."

Hoax bomb threat halts conference at BITS Pilani

Team Herald

VASCO: A bomb scare at the BITS Pilani Goa campus in Zuarinagar caused panic among students and staff on Friday morning. The institute received an email bomb threat stating that RDX had been planted in the campus auditorium, where a three-day all-India conference of engineering students was underway.

Upon receiving the threat, the BITS Pilani management immediately informed the Verna police, the Anti-Terrorism Squad (ATS), the Bomb Detection and Disposal Squad, as well as the Vasco fire and police departments, who rushed to the site.

The engineering conference was temporarily suspended, students were evacuated, and the premises were

thoroughly searched by security forces. The teams conducted exhaustive searches across the auditorium and other areas of the campus. However, nothing suspicious was found, and the threat was confirmed to be a hoax, the police stated.

The police have launched an investigation to trace the origin of the hoax email. BITS Pilani students and staff have been advised to remain vigilant and report any suspicious activity to the authorities. The police are trying to identify the culprits and take strict action against those responsible for such malicious activities.

In the past, the Dabolim International Airport has also received several bomb threats, which were later determined to be hoaxes.

Man gored by buffalo, Cuncolkars blame authorities of negligence

Team Herald

MARGAO: The death of a 42-year-old man after being gored by a stray buffalo has sparked anger among Cuncolim residents, who blame the authorities for failing to address the stray cattle menace.

The tragic incident occurred on Thursday when Ratnakar Gaonkar was fatally attacked by a stray buffalo in Cuncolim. Local leader Elvis Gomes said the Gaonkar community in Panzorconi, which has deep knowledge of cattle behaviour, had warned the authorities about the buffalo's erratic nature well in advance, but no action was taken.

"It is not the rogue buffalo,



but a non-responsive system that led to this young man's death," Gomes said, adding that while no amount of compensation can replace a life, the government must provide immediate relief to the bereaved family.

Prasad Dessai, another resident, criticised the Cuncolim Municipal Council and other authorities for ignoring repeated complaints.

"Due to their negligence, a man has lost his life. This is not the first such incident—there have been multiple accidents involving stray cattle along the National Highway, many of them fatal," he said.

The Green Goa Foundation, an environmental organisation, has filed multiple petitions urging action, but locals say no concrete measures have been taken to resolve the issue.

12 duped of cash for jobs abroad, one accused arrested

Team Herald

PANJIM: The Crime Branch has detained a woman for allegedly cheating 12 individuals of nearly Rs 27 lakh under the guise of providing jobs abroad.

The case came to light after complainant Sanjana Mahesh Bhicholkar, from Guirim, Bardez, accused Dr Meena Pooja Gop and Arvind Gop, both from Mapusa, of acting as recruitment agents and enticing her with a job offer in the sales department of a company in New Zealand. The accused allegedly induced Bhicholkar to transfer

Rs 8.5 lakh in multiple transactions via Google Pay as processing fees. When the promised job was not provided, the victim filed a complaint of cheating, after discovering that Meena had prepared a forged visa document.

Further investigation revealed that the accused had similarly assured jobs in New Zealand to 12 other victims, collecting Rs 27.73 lakh using the same fraudulent methods.

The first accused, Dr Meena, a skin specialist, has been arrested, while efforts are ongoing to locate the second accused, Arvind Gop.

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