

Whether pigs have wings

It is unfortunate that family members of the patient recently isolated at the Chicalim Cottage Hospital on account of Swine Flu say they are being shunned by people around them.

In the case of this particular patient, his wife has tested negative. She never had Swine Flu. Yet, this woman, who is in an advanced state of pregnancy, says people avoid her out of fear, and she is having problems getting the medical attention she needs.

Swine Flu has the same symptoms - fever, cold, cough, headache, body ache, sore throat, and sometimes vomiting and diarrhoea - as ordinary flu. Most people feel ill for a few days and recover at home.

But why is everyone so worried? That's because Swine Flu - more correctly 'Influenza A (H1N1)' - is a new virus. People have little or no immunity; it has caused a number of deaths in Mexico and the USA, and a few in Europe and elsewhere. India has had a few cases, but not a single death.

The World Health Organisation (WHO) is worried because in 1918, a similar flu pandemic called 'Spanish Flu' killed around 50 million people worldwide, including 16 million in India alone. It started among soldiers in Portugal in France as a fever. Most people recovered soon, but a minuscule number died. Many months later, the virus mutated and became a deadly killer disease.

It's just flu. It spreads from human to human, by contact with infected droplets from coughing or sneezing. These can be inhaled or spread by touch - from table tops, door handles, lift and bell buttons that infected people have sneezed or coughed on.

The vast majority of people who get Swine Flu recover without any specialised treatment, just as in normal flu. Of the more severe cases, the majority of those who have died already had other illnesses that had weakened them.

People who are ill should cover their mouth and nose with a surgical mask and stay at home. Those who have a cold and cough should use a handkerchief to cover their nose and mouth while sneezing and coughing. The rest of us need to wash our hands regularly, and make sure people don't sneeze or cough on us.

It's only words...?

A remark made by Congress Uttar Pradesh President Rita Bahuguna Joshi against UP Chief Minister Mayawati has snowballed into a gigantic controversy. Ms Joshi is under arrest, charged with making casteist insults. In what seems to be a state-sponsored act of vandalism, her house was burnt down by a masked gang.

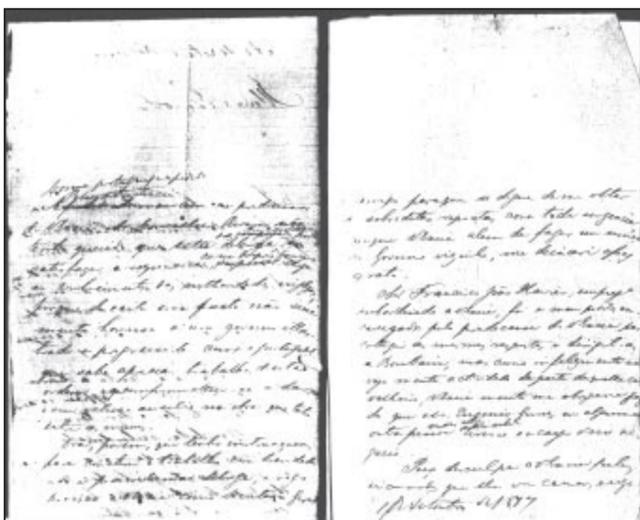
What was the issue? The UPCC President wanted to chide Mayawati for the insecurity of dalit women in the state. But what did she actually say? She pointed out that Mayawati spent much more on the helicopter ride to give the rape victims compensation, of just Rs25,000 each.

A casteist insult? Not really, except that the entire topic was about the rape of dalit women, but certainly a perverse choice of words. Now that the Congress has distanced itself from her words, she is paying for what she was saying.

Goan Ethnography and Colonial Anthropology

Continuing his survey of Goan ethnography, TEOTONIO R DE SOUZA takes a look at the development of colonial anthropology

The Introduction of the Ethnography of Goa, Daman and Diu refers to the earlier publication of J N da Fonseca's Historical and Archaeological Sketch of the City of Goa (1878) as part of the British Imperial Gazetteers. Curiously, there is no reference in Bragança Pereira's Etnografia to this classic work in the field.



Letter of J N Fonseca to Secretary of the Goa Government, to obtain responses to his inquiry.

Very deafening is also the absence of any reference to his widely recognized colleagues and scholars Pandurang Pissurlencar and Germano da Silva Correia, both of whom produced scholarly research about the Maratha castes, including Chardós and Ranes in particular.

We are told in the new Ethnography that no Portuguese scholar studied Goan society before Orlando Ribeiro and his team. If so, who was the Fonseca Cardoso, mentioned on p 56, confirming the Rajput origin of the Ranes by anthropometric research?

The Expedition to India in 1895 (Lisboa, ICS, 2001) helps to appreciate the pioneering place of Fonseca Cardoso's O indígena de Satari in the evolution of Portuguese anthropology. One thing he learned from the experience: no one in Portugal was interested in his 'native of Satari' or in orientalist research before he died!

HISTORICAL EXPLORATIONS

secretary and president of the Portuguese Society of Anthropology and Ethnology at Oporto. Mendes Correia occupied important offices during the Estado Novo under the Salazar regime and convinced the government about promoting research in overseas colonies.

The Expedition of Oporto was part of the First National Congress of Colonial Anthropology. The 'native of Satari' by Fonseca Cardoso figured prominently in the proceedings of this Congress and Fonseca Cardoso was named the pioneer of Portuguese colonial anthropology. Germano Correia also took active part in the national and international congresses of anthropology and sought to develop a theory of 'selective anthropology' of colonial acclimatization.

Bragança Pereira did not take part in the much publicised First Imperial Exposition of Oporto in 1934, nor in the international exposition 'O Mundo Português' (The Portuguese World) in 1940. His son believes that his father sought to avoid expressing publicly any view that could run counter to his judicial functions.

Intellectual production within the colonial system meant self-censorship for Goan scholars at all times, and this became a more pressing requirement during the Salazar regime. Filipe Neri Xavier was a pioneer who left a series of documentary collections of great value and indispensable reference for any modern researcher on Goan traditional social institutions.

P S S Pissurlencar presented a paper at the Congress on the Portuguese World (1940) on 'The Hindu collaborators of Afonso de Albuquerque'. He also compiled a massive volume on Agentes da Diplomacia Portuguesa na Índia (Bastorá, 1952), seeking discreetly to prove that the Hindu community had served the colonial masters with unremitting constancy and zeal.

Tongue in Cheek

It isn't enough to talk about peace. One must believe in it. And it isn't enough to believe in it. One must work at it," wrote Eleanor Roosevelt. While many books have been written, several lectures delivered and sermons preached on the topic of peace, it won't be wrong to say that human beings have a soft corner for violence.

If people do not fight among themselves, they prefer to watch others fight, especially fights between animals. Hence we have bullfights - dhario, as they are popularly known in Goa. People take sadistic pleasure in watching animals fight it out, sometimes till one of the animals succumbs to its injuries.

But then there are not just the bullfights that attract crowds in our villages; we also have cockfights. Now this is no cock-and-bull story. Cockfighting is quite a popular sport (if one may call it that), involving a lot of money.

It's a Violent World

By Adelmo Fernandes

bet on ultimately wins, you could be laughing all the way to the bank. Cocks happen to be good fighters. They peck each other with their sharp beaks till one of them can take no more and collapses.

In some countries people also enjoy fights between reptiles and insects. In Thailand fights are arranged even between grasshoppers. One of the most popular television shows among the young and the old is the WWF wrestling on the sports channels. Even a little boy is familiar with the names of the wrestlers fighting it out in the ring.

While peace, like charity, begins at home, fights and violence also begin at home. It is said that in violence we forget who we are. Many times extreme steps have been taken in the heat of the moment. Everyday we hear of domestic violence. Wife beating has become a common occurrence. There is violence on the streets. But street brawls may not be as common in our country as they are in the West.

change of abuses could even end up in a brawl.

In foreign countries there is violence even on school campuses. We have heard about stories of schoolchildren carrying firearms to school and pumping bullets into their schoolmates. Then there are fights between countries which can lead into full-fledged wars.

"God hates violence. He has ordained that all men fairly possess their property, not seize it," wrote Euripides. The epitome of love, peace and non-violence was our own Father of the Nation Mahatma Gandhi. Violence leads us nowhere. As it is said in the scriptures, those who live by the sword die by the sword.

But then like everything else there is also a good side to fighting. Politicians fight elections. But unfortunately in today's elections there is also a lot of muscle power involved. And then we have to fight for our rights. Someone rightly said, "Better that we should die fighting than be outraged and dishonoured ... better to die than to live in slavery." I am reminded of the lines of a popular reggae song: "Stand up, stand up for your rights ... Stand up, stand up, don't give up the fight!"

Letters to the Editor

Creating more slums?

Zino Carvalho, Davorlim

The Railway Minister has announced that Margao Station would be developed as a model station. But as one comes out from Margao Railway Station, one faces the ugly site of the large Azad Nagar slum area, which gives a very bad impression on Goa.

Knowing this well, our government wants to open yet another slum by rehabilitating displaced people of Rawnafond junction owing to road-widening. SUDA acquired about 28000 sq m of prime paddy cultivable land at throwaway prices to build a transportation centre for a bus stand.

I hope that good sense prevails and the government reverts the said land back to the farmers.

Elite migrants

Freddy Agnelo Fernandes, Dubai

I am shocked at the statement made by Dharendra Singh (Herald, 15 Jul), the former Union Home Secretary and the member of the Commission on the State-Centre Relations New Delhi, that the migrant issue in Goa was not very serious. The only problem Mr. Singh sees, is that, the migrants are snatching low-paying jobs and the higher-level jobs are not taken up by them.

Does Mr Singh know the realities prevailing in Goa? How many of the engineers in the PWD, Electricity and Agriculture Departments are migrants? It's not just the low paying jobs that are taken up by the migrants but a chunk of the elite jobs as well. Employment is one facility that's been affected by migrants in a big way, but that is nothing compared to the burden they are putting on our natural resources and our ecology.

Let readers decide

Anal Bhale, Fatorda

With reference to the letter 'Profit at what cost?' (Herald, 13 Jul) by Ashley Fernandes, I would like to draw his attention to the fact that profit, if any, made by these unaided schools is ploughed back into the institutions themselves. These schools, built on the wonderful dreams of their founders and started in little rented houses, have now become pillars of our society with sprawling campuses.

There are always two sides of an argument. Ashley and myself are at opposite poles. He is quite obsessed with the so-called profit making of these schools, and shows little concern about the high educational standards and infrastructure they offer. I, on the other hand, believe that for those who admit their children in these schools, quality of education and ambience should be of prime importance, regardless of the cost. The jury is out among your readers. Now let them decide.

Where there is a Bill...

Vishnu Joshi, Panjim

Never mind the High Court setting aside the appointment of Parliament Secretaries in re-

Letter of the Day

Police Bill denies justice

Orlando S A Da Silva, Carmona

The report 'Police Bill waters down Supreme Court directive' (Herald, 13 Jul) is a matter of great concern to all law-abiding citizens of Goa. It appears that our elected representative in Goa always have something up their sleeves to undermine the Apex Court of this country.

First it was the case of Cidade de Goa, where laws were amended to nullify a Supreme Court judgement, and now the Police Bill 2008 is being tabled by diluting the directives of the Supreme Court on constituting a State Security Commission.

The State Police Complaint Authority in Goa, under the chairmanship of retired High Court judge Eurico Da Silva, is doing a splendid job to render faster justice to the aam aadmi. Whenever justice is being denied due to political interference by presurising diligent police officers not to act as per laws in force, this independent authority headed by the retired High Court Judge has come as the only recourse available to attain justice.

I had the opportunity to knock at the doors of this authority very recently when the Colva police played the vanishing act at the Carmona Gram Sabha meeting on 30 March 2008, and allowed the meeting to be vandalised by some goons. In spite of evidence provided on a VCD, the Colva police was refusing to register the FIR for assaults on Gram Sabha members and a Panchayat member, but was finally forced to file chargesheets against the offenders by invoking Sections 324, 353 and 506 of IPC only due to the intervention of this impartial authority.

The Home Secretary, being a bureaucrat of the government, will always be a pawn in the hands of corrupt politicians, who will exert pressure to bend and twist laws and rules for their khaas aadmis. Any attempt to do away with the independent authority which functions so efficiently will only be an act to deny justice to the aam aadmi, on whose support the Congress has won votes.

sponse to a PIL, holding they were arbitrary, unjustifiable and unconstitutional. Never mind the severe financial recession at present. Never mind tiny Goa burdened with 40 MLAs and more bureaucrats per citizen than any other state. Never mind we cannot afford the 6th Pay Commission award. The Cabinet has okayed the legislation for two Parliament Secretaries!

Where there is a Bill, there is a way?

Imaginary rights

Averthanus L D'Souza, Dona Paula

Aureo Fernandes (Herald, 14 July) is quite right in pointing out that women are subjected to many abuses in regard to their sexual health, including female genital mutilation and infibulation. However, the crux of the matter is that these abuses are perpetrated against the "person" of the woman and constitute a gross violation of her rights as a human person.

Rights accrue to human persons and not to physiological functions. The main thrust of the article was to clarify that "human rights" cannot be equated with what is erroneously termed "reproductive" rights of women or the "homosexual rights" of sexual deviants.

The Constitution of India (and of any other democratic country in the world) does not list "reproductive" rights or "homosexual" rights in the enumeration of human rights; neither are these imaginary rights to be found in the International Declaration of Human Rights.

A little discomfort...

Joaquim Pacheco, Divar

The facts supporting the use of helmets are too substantial to be ignored. Not only can a helmet save a life, but it can prevent epilepsy, personality changes, intellectual and memory impairment, and other results of brain injury. Every year there is an increase in motorcycle riders

killed on our roads.

The main excuse for not wearing an approved helmet range include the words, "They don't look good." Well, you would not look so good in a hospital bed or in your coffin as a result of not wearing your helmet. A fall from 2 feet can cause permanent brain damage. A human skull can be shattered by an impact of 7-10 kmph.

If you think you are protecting yourself with a non-approved helmet, remember they are not in any sense protective headgear. They have not been designed properly or tested, and will afford no protection to the wearer against injury to the head.

ISI-approved helmets work if they fit correctly and have the chinstrap firmly applied. Even with an ISI-approved helmet, there is no guarantee that death or brain injury will not occur; however, there is a strong probability that the injury will be less or non-existent. Isn't that worth a little discomfort?

Re-creating Bollywood

Jonah Rodrigues, by email

After months of hibernation, Bollywood awoke from its summer slumber and gave us a fabulous movie, 'New York'. It was amazing to see John, Katrina and Neil take up such an adventurous script and produce mind-blowing performances. Kabir Khan needs an award for spectacularly carving the theme of 'Hope' and 'Re-Creation'. The movie concludes that even if love and faith fails, hope for a better future still lives on.

New York has also proved to broaden the concept of freedom and loyalty in friendship and relationships, which would inspire youngsters to leave behind their selfish lives. It also depicts a constant effort to recreate happiness in life even when events don't go your way or destiny holds its sway.

Letters should be 150 words or less in length, and should have the writer's name, address and telephone number. The editor reserves the right to edit letters for size and readability, and to delete any personal attacks or libellous/objectionable matter.

Paths of Wisdom

The Irrationality of War

When I saw workmen engaged with grave assiduity in fashioning weapons of death, I was struck with wonder at the shortsightedness, the caecae mentes of human beings, who were thus soberly preparing the instruments of destruction of their own species. I have since found upon a closer study of man, that my wonder might have been spared; because there are very few men whose minds are sufficiently enlarged to comprehend universal or even extensive good. The views of most individuals are limited to their own happiness; and the workmen whom I beheld so busy in the Arsenal of Venice saw nothing but what was good in the labour for which they received such wages as procured them the comforts of life. We must have the telescope of philosophy to make us perceive distant ills; nay, we know that there are individuals of our species to whom the immediate misery of others is nothing in comparison with their own advantage - for we know that in every age there have been found men very willing to perform the office of executioner even for a moderate hire.

The irrationality of war is, I suppose, admitted by almost all men; I almost say all; because I have met myself with men who attempted seriously to maintain that it is an agreeable occupation and one of the chief means of human happiness. I must own that although I use the plural number here, I should have used the dual, had I been writing in Greek; for I never met with but two men who supported such a paradox; and one of them was a tragic poet, and one a Scotch Highlander. The first had his imagination so in a blaze with heroic sentiments, with the "pride, pomp, and circumstance of glorious war," that he did not avert to its miseries, as one dazzled with the pageantry of a magnificent funeral thinks not of the pangs of dissolution and the dismal corpse. The second had his attention so eagerly fixed on the advantage which accrued to his clan from the "trade of war," that he could think of it only as a good.

-Joseph Boswell (1740-1795)