

A JOURNEY INTO THE HEART OF GOA

In our continuous efforts to put people at the center of our journalism, we bring to you a weekly collection of stories, specially curated from our ground-level reportage which celebrates the joys, and shares the sorrows of people in their grassroots. These are, at heart, very simple stories, simply told. Interesting initiatives, out-of-the-box thinking, dogged persistence on any issue, and the struggles of people over the years as they try and put their disrupted lives back together are not just news stories.

Each is a document from the wards and vaddos of Goa, a postcard, a letter, a share. This collection is brought to you from O Heraldo's team of reporters who have been given one simple mandate - go out, travel, and speak to people about their lives.

From Wards and Vaddos is as much your project as O Heraldo's and we welcome all of you on this journey into the heart of Goa. Pls email editor@herald-go.com or reach us on Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram.

Plumber, farmer, son of the soil: Prakash Karapurkar champions Goa's agricultural heritage

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ALDONA: We learned about the life of a farmer through school lessons—simple yet deeply impactful tales of resilience and labour. For retired plumber Prakash Pandurang Karapurkar, a resident of Santarxete in Aldona, farming was not just a lesson, it has become a way of life. A plumber by profession for over 25 years, Prakash turned to farming full-time upon retirement, dedicating his days to nurturing the land and promoting locally grown Goan produce. Prakash's day starts at 6 am, tending to his crops. Despite growing up in modest circumstances and balancing school with farming, he completed his education up to Std X. Working in the fields not only kept him fit and active but also instilled a lifelong love for agriculture.



seeds from his previous crops, carefully preserved and protected against moisture, to ensure continuity and sustainability.

"Our ganvtti (local) vegetables are fresh, natural, and free from chemicals," he says, emphasising the contrast with imported produce from Belagavi and other regions. "We pluck our vegetables in the morning and sell them directly in the market." His dedication extends to using organic manure and avoiding chemical sprays to maintain the purity and taste of his crops. "People see me working in the fields and often stop to purchase freshly-harvested vegetables," he says proudly. In the monsoon, Prakash grows paddy, transitioning to vegetables as the rains recede. Preparing the fields is a meticulous process, involving clearing land, sowing seeds, watering, and constant vigilance to protect crops from birds and pests. "When I see the plants grow day by day, it fills me with pride and motivates me to work harder for the next season," he says.

Prakash sells most of his vegetables through local dealers in Mapusa and urges Goans to support local farmers by choosing ganvtti produce over imported vegetables. "Our vegetables are nutritious and better for health. Parents must encourage children to eat fresh vegetables instead of processed or fast food," he advises.

He also highlights the need to involve the younger generation in farming. "Children rarely visit the fields today. It's not easy at first, but we need to introduce them gradually, teaching them the importance of hard work and respect for nature."

To Prakash, farming is not merely a profession but a way of life that preserves traditions and ensures food security. "Farming doesn't require interviews or bribes—just passion. If the younger generation doesn't carry this forward, our traditions will vanish, and we will become dependent on imported vegetables."

Prakash emphasises the role of education in promoting agriculture. He believes farming should be made a compulsory subject in schools to instill an appreciation for the land and its bounty. "With advancements in technology, farming today offers many opportunities. It's time to adapt and make the younger generation aware of this potential."

Despite the challenges, Prakash remains hopeful. "Farming is about feeding ourselves and others. No matter where we work, we ultimately work to sustain life. Farming is our foundation, and it's our responsibility to preserve it for future generations."

As Prakash continues his efforts to keep Goa's farming traditions alive, his story is a reminder that the fruits of hard work are always worth the toil.

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-Prakash Pandurang Karapurkar

Rain or shine, his focus remained on the fields, a passion he continues to pursue. Prakash's farm boasts a variety of Goan vegetables—radish, red spinach, ladyfingers, chillies, long beans, and more. These are grown using

Through zagor, Assunção 'Pidulo' Fernandes keeps community spirit alive

North Goa's answer to South Goa's 'khell' tiatr popular during Carnival, 'zagor' has something for everyone - drama, humour, cross-dressers, social messages. Pidulo uncle, who has been writing and performing this art form for the past 50 years, is considered the grand old man of the Anjuna zagor



ALL THE WORLD'S A STAGE

► The zagor in Anjuna starts a day before the church feast, at a small chapel cross at Piqueno Pedem

► The next evening, there is litany, after which the locals go in a procession and take the stage, acting and singing into the wee hours of the morning

► Preparations and practice begin over a month before

the performance

► The performers are all local residents and the entire village raises funds and covers all expenses themselves

► Original compositions rule the roost, though performers and writers today must take efforts to steer clear of potentially offensive topics

ERWIN FONSECA

ANJUNA: Goa's vibrant culture is deeply rooted in its traditional art forms. While modern entertainment gadgets dominate today's lifestyle, earlier generations sought solace in local performances, marking the birth of art forms like Konkani plays and tiatros. A lesser-known but equally significant tradition in North Goa is the zagor. Unique to villages like Anjuna, Siolim, and Calangute, this centuries-old art form is a beloved tradition being kept alive despite migration of many in these villages.

Among the foremost cham-

Music has been a key element of zagor, with traditional instruments like the ghumot, maddein, and kasaim setting the rhythm

pions of the Anjuna zagor is Assunção Piedade Fernandes, fondly known as 'Pidulo' uncle. Now in his late seventies, he is a treasure trove of knowledge about the art form and its evolution. Despite physical challenges—he is handicapped in one leg—Pidulo uncle continues to play a pivotal role in the zagor. He recalls participating in it immediately after Goa's liberation, when he was

in his early teens, and insists the tradition existed long before, with his ancestors performing with great zeal.

Reflecting on the journey of zagor, Pidulo uncle explains that the venue used to alternate between Grande Pedem and Pequeno Pedem in Anjuna until the latter became its permanent home. "We initially called it 'Abelachem Sopon' (Abel's Dream), named after Abel D'Souza, who

suggested moving it here," he recalls. Preparations for the event start a month in advance, involving local villagers who are determined to keep the tradition alive.

The zagor begins on the eve of the village church feast with a litany (ladainha) at the chapel cross in Pequeno Pedem, followed by a procession and an overnight stage performance. During earlier times, girls were prohibited from acting, so boys would don female attire. "There was always one lady responsible for dressing up the boys. The transformation was perfect, with people cheering them on," he says with a nostalgic smile.

Music has been a key element of zagor, with traditional instruments like the ghumot, maddein, and kasaim setting the rhythm. "The boys playing these instruments are often fishermen who take a day off to participate. It's a village feast—a celebration for

Our zagor is a platform for local talent, local unity and local entertainment. Many of the boys playing the instruments are fishermen and take a day off to take part in the zagor because it is a village feast and a time to celebrate for all irrespective of caste, creed or religion - we are all together as one people for zagor

-Assunção Piedade Fernandes

everyone," explains Pidulo uncle.

Over the years, professional artistes and women have joined the performances, adding a new dimension to the zagor, but the emphasis on local talent remains strong. Pidulo uncle notes that humour and original compositions continue to be crowd favourites, although they avoid potentially offensive topics.

"Support from parish priests has been instrumental. They motivate us, attend as chief guests, and enjoy our performances," he shares. The zagor at Anjuna also enjoys strong ties with Calangute, where artistes and writers historically contributed to its success.

For Pidulo uncle, zagor is more than just entertainment; it's a unifying force for the community, bridging divides of caste, creed, and religion. "It's satisfying to see this tradition thriving. It's all about local talent, unity, and keeping our culture alive," he affirms with pride. As long as the villagers' dedication endures, this timeless art form will continue to resonate with generations to come.



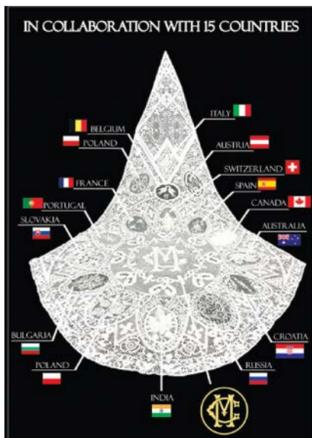
Meet the mother-daughter duo that 'spins incredible yarns' with global appeal

Nelinda and Carol D'Silva of Majorda breathe new life

into the ancient craft of bobbin lace, innovatively reimagining it for modern style. In their skilled hands, the dainty, elaborate lace gets crafted into jewellery, bags, shoes, hats, and apparel that are gracing runways in Europe and Australia

BLAISE FERNANDES

MAJORDA: The fruit of labour is sweet, and for Nelinda and Carol D'Silva, the sweetness is shared with those who admire, cherish, and purchase their exquisite creations in Bobbin Lace. Nelinda D'Silva from Majorda has been mastering sewing, lace-making, knitting, and embroidery since she was six. Today, she's not just an artist but an entrepreneur, trainer, and teacher, globally recognised for her skills in lace-making. Her journey to international acclaim began in



2002 when the Portuguese Consulate noticed her talent. Since then, Nelinda has proudly represented Goa and India nearly 20 times at international exhibitions and workshops, from Vila do Conde in Portugal to Novedrate, Italy, Sebourg in France, and Bobwa in Poland. A career highlight was participating in the 2015 Guinness World Record for the Biggest Bobbin Lace in the World in Portugal. Most recently, Nelinda and her daughter Carol showcased their creations at the XXXII Mostra Internazionale del PIZZO di Nove-

drate in Villa Casana, Italy. This April, they're set to charm audiences in Camariñas, Spain, a hub for bobbin lace artistry, from the 16th to the 20th.

The skill of bobbin lace was nurtured in Nelinda's family home, passed to her daughters Carol and Andrea, ensuring that this cherished tradition lives on. Nelinda hasn't confined her teaching to family alone—she actively campaigns to upskill Goans, organising training sessions and ensuring the tools of the trade are accessible to enthusiasts.

The creations of Nelinda and Carol reflect a nostalgic elegance of the Goa of old—pure, simple, yet impeccable. Through their work, they hope to inspire a deeper appreciation for the finer things in life, reviving Goa's cultural richness amid environmental and cultural changes. Bobbin lace, a European art introduced to Goa through its Portuguese connection, has also united global communities, connecting continents through its intricate threads.

In blending tradition with modernity, Nelinda and Carol have made bobbin lace adaptable for contemporary use in jewellery, bags, shoes, hats, and apparel. This synthesis of past and present highlights their

vision to make this once-arcaic art more accessible and versatile.

Carol, a mechatronics engineer, is poised to take Goan Torchon bobbin lace to new heights. Her wedding gown, a magnum opus, featured lace pieces handcrafted in 16 countries, each piece uniquely representing its origin. This extraordinary creation has garnered international attention, displayed at European exhibitions, and debuted in the haute couture scene under the 'Carol D'Silva' label at the Brisbane Fashion Festival in August 2024.

The D'Silvas' showroom and training centre in Majorda, is set to expand its activities. For those interested, training sessions can be arranged by contacting Andrea at 98505 36942. Plans are also underway to establish a museum dedicated to bobbin lace, adding another feather to Goa's cultural cap.

From preserving a centuries-old tradition to giving it a modern twist, Nelinda and Carol are ensuring that this fine art continues to captivate audiences and inspire future generations.

