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FROM WARDS & VADDOS

Ground Reports Telling Stories That Matter



O HERALDO

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 Herald'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 Herald'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.

Dairy farmer Teotonio Afonso's lifelong commitment to herding livestock

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ALDONA: Teotonio Tomas Afonso, a 64-year-old resident of Nachinola, has dedicated his life to rearing livestock, a profession he has been engaged in since childhood. Afonso takes care of goats, pigs, and hens, earning a steady livelihood through this traditional occupation. Despite modern preferences for packaged and processed dairy products, he continues to



Afonso sells milk and livestock directly from his home and ensures his animals are well cared for. His day begins with feeding them before attending to his own needs. He personally tends to sick animals, providing them with proper medication and care. Each morning, he takes his goats for grazing and brings them back in the afternoon, careful to avoid busy roads to prevent conflicts with passersby

supply fresh goat's milk, a practice he believes has significant health benefits.

"In the past, when a child was born, families would bring home a goat, and its milk would be given to the newborn. It was pure, without preservatives, and those who consumed it lived long, healthy lives," he recalls. He laments that today's generation, dependent on packaged food, faces declining health, with

some passing away as early as their mid-thirties.

Afonso sells milk and livestock directly from his home and ensures his animals are well cared for. His day begins with feeding them before attending to his own needs. "I don't eat until I'm sure my cattle are fed," he says. He personally tends to sick animals, providing them with proper medication and care. Each morning, he takes his goats for grazing and brings them back in the afternoon, careful to avoid busy roads to prevent conflicts with passersby. While he sells male goats (bucks) for slaughter, he never allows female goats (does) to be slaughtered.

Beyond livestock rearing, Afonso has also worked in the fields, growing crops such as chillies and onions, which he sells in the market. However, challenges such as shrinking grazing land and increasing urbanisation



have made farming and cattle rearing more difficult. "There is a forest nearby, but I don't take my goats there because mosquitoes trouble them," he explains.

Afonso expresses concern over the lack of interest among younger generations in traditional occupations. "Today's children are glued to their phones, watching television, or playing video games. Only a few show any interest in taking care of livestock," he observes. He believes that educated individuals who engage in farming or animal husbandry often feel ashamed of

their work, a stark contrast to earlier generations who spent their days in the fields and grazing lands.

Raising livestock, he points out, is a demanding job. "We can't leave them unattended. They need to be fed, taken for grazing, and protected from stray dog attacks. Unlike pets such as dogs and cats, livestock provides sustenance and livelihood."

Afonso also criticises the prevailing mindset among youth, who prioritise government jobs or opportunities abroad while disregarding traditional Goan occupations. "If they don't continue these practices, future generations will never witness or understand this way of life," he warns. He urges parents to introduce their children to traditional work, such as farming and livestock rearing, so they develop an appreciation for their roots.

Despite the challenges, Afonso remains committed to his livelihood. "I have never regretted my work. I will continue as long as my

Raising livestock is a demanding job. We can't leave them unattended. They need to be fed, taken for grazing, and protected from traffic, mosquitoes and stray dog attacks. Unlike pets such as dogs and cats, livestock provides sustenance and livelihood

- Teotonio Tomas Afonso

health permits," he says, adding that people in his village recognise his dedication. For him, hard work is the only way forward in today's challenging world.

He hopes more children will take an interest in preserving Goa's traditional ways of life. "Some youngsters still help their families in their ancestral occupations without any shame. I want to see more of them stepping forward."

FROM FULL MOON PARTIES TO FULL HARVESTS

Musician-farmer Tony D'Souza champions sustainable living

ERWIN FONSECA

PARRA: Anthony D'Souza, or 'Tony' as he is popularly known, owns approximately 8,000 square metres of land in Parra. He fondly recalls visiting this land with his parents as a child, when he was barely 8 or 10 years old. It was during these early years that the seeds of his love for Mother Earth and nature were sown—laying the foundation for his eventual career in farming.

"My father was a teacher in Parra and also engaged in farming on the side, mainly growing paddy. We would join him in the fields and were always excited to help," recalls Tony.

After completing his education, like many young people, Tony pursued various jobs, including music and talent management. His passion for music led him to perform at full moon night parties in Calangute, Baga, and Vagator during the hippie era. "Tourism back then was of a different kind—clean, decent, and we easily blended with the hippies, playing music and providing entertainment," he reminisces.

His musical journey took him to Radio Ceylon, allowing him to travel extensively, while his parents continued farming in Parra. They primarily grew rice, ragi, and watermelon—Parra being particularly famous for watermelons. However, Tony's connection to farming remained strong.

While working in Bangalore, he ventured into hydroponics, a modern farming method that intrigued him. "Hydroponics was quite advanced in Bangalore at the time, and I practiced it for a few years alongside my work until Goa called me back," he shares.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, Tony returned to Goa, partly to care for his parents, and fully immersed himself in farming at his Parra. Over the past few years, he has seen great success but believes there is still much to achieve.

"At present, we



Agriculture is often looked down upon as a less lucrative profession, leading many to sell their land, believing it to be of little value for cultivation. However, agriculture can be profitable, especially with larger land holdings and the integration of modern technology. When blended with other fields, it can become highly lucrative. Anthony D'Souza is one such innovative individual who has successfully combined agriculture with pisciculture on his thriving farm in Bardez's Parra village

grow a variety of vegetables and edible plants, including basil, spinach, radish, tapioca, papayas, bananas, brinjals, ladyfingers, sweet potatoes, and microgreens.

My farm also serves as a small picnic and educational spot where visitors, including students, come to learn about agriculture. During the monsoon, we cultivate rice in one section of the farm, providing a wide variety of fresh produce to our customers," says Tony.

We are currently doing aquaponics, and I plan to introduce hydroponics soon. My goal is to cultivate mushrooms, flowers, and even start beekeeping to make the farm as self-sufficient and educational as possible

-Anthony D'Souza

Constantly exploring new ideas, Tony noticed that his farm had a freshwater pond used for rainwater harvesting. With Parra's strong water table, he decided to put it to better use.

"I attended a three-day fisheries course a few months ago and realized I could cultivate fish.

They provided me with three types of freshwater fish—Rohu, Katla, and Carp—which I intro-

duced to my pond. Later, I also cultivated Tilapia for a brief period before harvesting it," he explains.

Today, Tony's farm is unique for its combination of vegetable cultivation and fish farming. "It's not just about money or fun; I believe in dedicating myself fully to what I do. I visit my farm regularly, spending time with both the plants and the fish—it's a source of immense joy," he says.

Tony highlights the benefits of using fish water as natural manure for plants, enriching the soil and supporting sustainable farming practices. He also expresses deep concern about ocean pollution, including microplastics, oil spills, and untreated sewage. "With increasing contamination in the seas, fish may no longer be safe for consumption. A time may come when each of us will have to grow fish in our own backyards," he warns.

Committed to maintaining an eco-friendly, chemical-free farm, Tony finds great satisfaction in providing fresh, organic food to the community. His future plans include expanding into hydroponics and transforming his farm into a fully organic, self-sustaining eco-farm. "We are currently doing aquaponics, and I plan to introduce hydroponics soon. My goal is to cultivate mushrooms, flowers, and even start beekeeping to make the farm as self-sufficient and educational as possible."

However, he laments the challenges posed by stray cattle, which often damage crops. "Cattle owners need to be more responsible. Farmers work tirelessly to build their farms, but when stray cattle destroy their efforts, it discourages agricultural progress. If farming is to prosper in Goa, all stakeholders must take equal responsibility. A few people working hard while others pull them down will not help agriculture grow," he concludes.



THE EYE IN THE SKY: How Kiran Mayenkar became a professional drone pilot

With a bachelor's degree in commerce and a deep-seated curiosity about the working of remote-controlled gadgets, Kiran has turned his childhood fascination into a thriving career in drone technology

MANJALI NAIK

PANJIM: Growing up during the early 2000's, Kiran Mayenkar's interest in remote-controlled (RC) cars was the first spark that ignited his love for technology. He was fascinated by how these devices worked and spent hours exploring their mechanics. His inquisitive nature led him to experiment with various models, developing a keen understanding of control systems and motion dynamics. However, it was during the COVID-19 pandemic, while attending online college classes as a Commerce student, that he took a step closer to his dreams. With ample free time, he decided to purchase his first drone, setting the foundation for an exciting new chapter in his life.

What began as a hobby soon became a daily practice session on Divar Island, at a serene spot where Kiran would fly his drone every evening at sunset. These expeditions not only helped him refine his skills but also deepened his love for the art and technology of drone flying.

Determined to turn his passion into a profession, Kiran obtained his DGCA drone pilot licence. The certification process involved training, including simulator exercises and on-field flying assessments. Through hands-on experience and expert guidance, he mastered the technical and regulatory aspects of drone operations, earning his official credentials to explore diverse opportunities in the drone industry.

Kiran has carved a niche for himself in FPV (First Person View) drone operations. His expertise shines in destination weddings, where he captures breathtaking moments from unique angles, creating cinematic experiences for his clients. Beyond weddings, he has showcased his skills in real estate, offering one-take FPV videos that provide potential buyers with an immersive



Kiran Mayenkar's journey exemplifies how curiosity and determination can transform a childhood passion into a groundbreaking career. From experimenting with RC cars to mastering the skies with drones, he has proven that dedication and a willingness to learn can lead to extraordinary achievements. For Kiran, the sky is not the limit - it's just the beginning

property tour.

Kiran's work also extends to infrastructure projects. He has contributed to significant ventures like the Western Bypass in Salcete, the under-construction flyovers at Porvorim and near the Dabolim Airport, conducting surveys that aid construction companies in their development efforts. His versatility is further evident in his use of custom-built drones for specific purposes, such as navigating tight spaces in real estate projects or employing DJI drones for large-scale surveys.

Alongside his individual work, Kiran is also a co-founder of a content creation and post-production company. Through this venture, he collaborates with clients across industries, including hospitality, automotive, and personal branding. From creating promotional content for resorts to capturing intricate details of luxury cars, his brand 9Tales Creative has established itself as a versatile and innovative company under Kiran's leadership.

Kiran's exceptional talent has garnered recognition both nationally and internationally. He was awarded the prestigious GoPro Awards for his work with slackliners. His collaboration with celebrated Goan artist Subodh Kerkar has been featured in international magazines, further solidifying his reputation as an up-and-coming visionary in the ariel photography field.

Despite his suc-

cess, Kiran has faced his fair share of challenges. Navigating the complex and varied drone regulations across different Indian cities is a constant hurdle. Moreover, the absence of official DJI service centres in India means relying on third-party operators, often at inflated costs and without warranties. These obstacles, however, have only strengthened his resolve and adaptability.

For youngsters interested in building a career in drone flying—whether for photography or other applications—I urge them to practice every day, both on simulators and in real-world conditions. Build a diverse portfolio, experiment with creative ideas, and continuously upskill to stand out in this competitive field

-Kiran Mayenkar

To aspiring drone pilots, Kiran emphasises the importance of relentless practice, both on simulators and in real-world conditions. He advises building a diverse portfolio, continuously experimenting with creative ideas, and stacking skills to stand out in this competitive field.

Kiran envisions a future where drones play an even more significant role in industries such as agriculture, transportation, and filmmaking. He is excited about the endless possibilities this technology offers and remains committed to pushing the boundaries of what can be achieved with drones.

For Kiran, the journey is as fulfilling as the destination. Traveling across the globe, creating stunning drone content, and witnessing the beauty of different landscapes make his profession deeply rewarding.

