

Herald Cafe



Sonia Sirsat

RHYTHMS FOR PEACE: Sur Jahan brings world musicians to Goa

Sur Jahan, the two-day festival brought together musicians from Sweden, Iceland, Netherlands, Rajasthan and Goa making Goa a centre of folk music

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The annual World Peace Music Festival, Sur Jahan was held at the Kala Academy over the weekend. It was a celebration of musical styles from Iceland, Sweden, Netherlands and India. The audience was exposed to sacred and medieval tunes from Europe, the magic of the ghumat and the magical voice of Habib Khan, the talented artist of Langa music from Rajasthan.

The Goa Ghumat Project lead by Carlos Gonsalves was a performance that featured different indigenous instruments like the dhol, tasha, shamel, kasale, a western drum set, acoustic guitar and Goan traditional folk vocals. The fans in the audience kept applauding the interesting use of Goa's traditional percussion. He got the audience involved with a rhythm of claps to the percussive magic of the ghumat. It was a short set but it got the audience perked up for the magic that was to follow in the festival.

A traditional folk band from the Netherlands, with all four members being over 70 years old, Folkcorn it was their first visit to India. Their sense of humor and the interplay between the band members made it a delight. The fact that they sang in Old Dutch did not make it a barrier. The songs were about everyday life in the village, its complications and the challenges that arise when one falls in love. The band improvised and it was a very interesting experience. Jitze Kopinga who was the singer and who did most of the talking had the



Amitava Bhattacharya

PICS: SAGUN GAWADE



The second evening's program was started by the Fadista of Goa, Sonia Sirsat. Her powerful voice had the audience entranced. This was undoubtedly a master at work on her art. She sang various songs in her repertoire. It also included a Fado in Konkani called Sopon which was written in 1966 by Manohar Rai Sardesai.

audience laughing with his quirky observations about life and love. One of the songs was about a weaver. Jitze said there were songs about people in various occupations in Dutch folk music. It was a set that was enjoyed by the audience who connected with the emotions expressed in the songs.

Habib Khan Langa and team were the revelation of the first day. His strong voice filled the auditorium.

He sang songs about life cycle, seasons, festivals and folklore. This is the only folk music to follow ragas that is also dependent on the time they are performing, the direction they are facing at that point in time, the season they are performing in,

and finally the event they are performing for. It was a set that had the audience clapping at times and as Habib's voice washed over the audience there was a sense of awe at the magic he was able to create. He ended his set with the song that was once featured in a Bollywood hit, 'Mast Kalandar'.

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more as her set ended. It was a wonderful way to start the proceeding on the second day.

The all-female band from Iceland, Umbra Ensemble, coming from the coldest part of the world, their songs comprise not just folk songs but also original arrangements of medieval tunes but also contemporary songs composed by band members. They also sang songs about Vikings and of love lost. It was an interesting set by the first ever Icelandic group to ever come to India. The sounds were certainly new to Indian ears and it made for an interesting set.

The final set of the festival was by the big daddy of Nordic music, Ale Muller. He may be touching 70 but the verve of the man was certainly a sight to behold. His set contained a number that was a waltz and a blues inspired folk song to name just a few. His interaction with band members had a definite light touch which kept everything moving smoothly. Ale dedicated a song to his three and half year old granddaughter living in Stockholm. It was a set that had influences from Greece and Turkey which signified his interaction with people living in Stockholm.

The final performance of the event involved Habib Khan, Ale Muller, Folkcorn and Umbra ensemble. It was a jugabandi of various styles that started off in the cold of Nordic Europe and came through Rajasthan. It was a composition that aptly described the beauty in this world and to appreciate it there had to be peace and harmony.



The Goa Ghumat Project



STRAWBERRIES - THE
FRUIT OF LOVE?

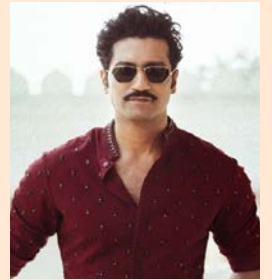


TEN HEALTHY WAYS
TO LOSE WEIGHT

SWIPE RIGHT

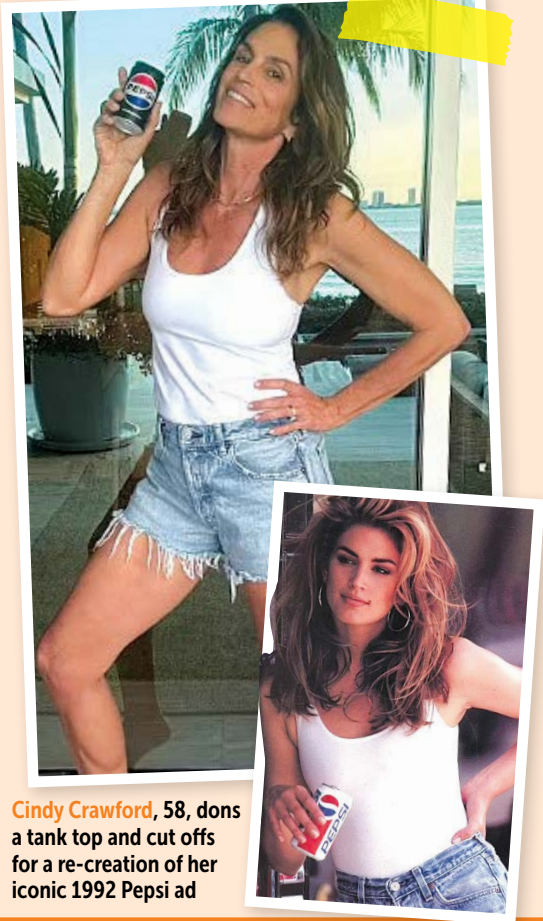
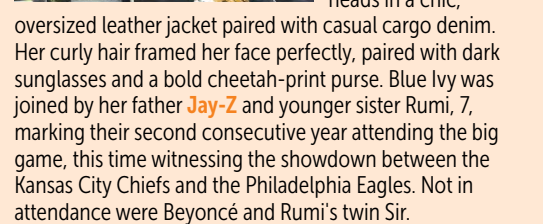
Vicky Kaushal calls Chhaava 'toughest' role

Vicky Kaushal is busy promoting his upcoming film 'Chhaava', where he portrays the courageous Maratha warrior king Chhatrapati Sambhaji Maharaj. Vicky shared that director Laxman Utekar was extremely meticulous about his look for the role and insisted that filming would not begin until he had completely transformed to embody the persona of a true warrior, adding that he wouldn't cheat and wouldn't use VFX. Vicky Kaushal revealed that Chhaava was the most physically demanding role of his career. He explained that gaining 25 kg of muscle was an extremely challenging process, taking him seven months to achieve.



Beyonce's daughters Blue Ivy and Rumi at Super Bowl

Blue Ivy, Beyoncé's stylish daughter, totally stole the show at Super Bowl 2025, rocking her mom's signature look like a pro. The 13-year-old, already a budding fashion icon in her own right, turned heads in a chic, oversized leather jacket paired with casual cargo denim. Her curly hair framed her face perfectly, paired with dark sunglasses and a bold cheetah-print purse. Blue Ivy was joined by her father Jay-Z and younger sister Rumi, 7, marking their second consecutive year attending the big game, this time witnessing the showdown between the Kansas City Chiefs and the Philadelphia Eagles. Not in attendance were Beyoncé and Rumi's twin Sir.



Cindy Crawford, 58, dons a tank top and cut offs for a re-creation of her iconic 1992 Pepsi ad

The Life of St Francis Xavier through the lens of philately

'Saint Francis Xavier his life journey through stamps, prayer cards and lithographs', a book meticulously put together focuses on the life of Saint Francis Xavier, with a separate section at the end covering a wide range of first-class relics spread around the world

Fraser Andrade

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The book 'Saint Francis Xavier his life journey through stamps, prayer cards and lithographs', is authored by João Paulo Cota, who was born in Angola to parents of Goan descent and relocated to Goa at the age of 14. After graduating from the Goa Engineering College with first-class honors in Civil Engineering, he subsequently moved to London. A lifetime member of the Goa Philatelic and Numismatic Society, João Paulo holds membership in the Royal Philatelic Society London, in addition to contributing to various other similar organizations.

"I collect everything and anything related to Portuguese India, pre 1961 period, be it stamps, coins, banknotes, postcards, photos, prayer cards, lithographs, militaria, books, etc. Over time, I have realized that holding these collectables on my hands were equivalent to me touching history that span

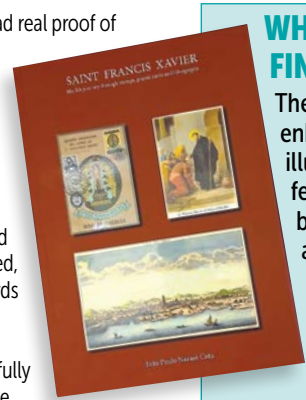
many centuries ago. I did write a philatelic article in 2012 relating to Portuguese India postal history and that won me the George Pearson literature award in Portugal for best article in Portuguese related philatelic research," says João, who has a particular interest in religious artifacts associated with St Francis Xavier. He has received multiple medals at both national (UK) and international philatelic exhibitions, consistently showcasing materials from Portuguese India.

During the previous St Francis Xavier exposition in

2014, João began to gather philatelic items, accumulating a significant collection of First Day Covers from the 1952 exposition to serve as part of a commemorative souvenir. However, the concept soon evolved into the creation of a historical work detailing the life of the saint, wherein certain books would include an original philatelic item for readers to touch and appreciate the history of philately. João consulted the master of all works related to the saint - the monumental work of Otto Schurhammer, the Jesuit priest, who had spent 60 years researching the life

of St Francis Xavier and had real proof of what he wrote.

João had help from people overseas located in countries where the St Francis Xavier had been. They were helpful in getting him good information and photographs when needed, also picking up prayer cards from their countries. The stamps, prayer cards and lithographs, were all carefully chosen. The central theme of the book is to immerse the reader in the 1500s, a time when St Francis Xavier roamed the Earth. The lithographs illustrating the cities he traversed across the seas provide a visual representation of the landscapes he would have witnessed firsthand, as these prints originate from that era, with some dating back over 400 years. The narrative chronicles the life of St



WHAT CAN YOU FIND IT THE BOOK?

The book is further enhanced by richly illustrated plates featuring stamps issued by Portuguese India, along with items of postal history, souvenirs from Expositions, and First Day Covers.

Francis Xavier, from his early years to his passing, and includes a dedicated section at the conclusion that explores a diverse array of first-class relics located worldwide. The book is further enhanced by richly illustrated plates featuring stamps issued by Portuguese India, along with items of postal history, souvenirs from Expositions, and First Day Covers. This A4-sized publication is available

in a limited edition. The initial 100 copies will include a unique philatelic item, one per book, with various options primarily sourced from Portuguese India. The pricing for these special editions varies to account for the associated costs of the items.

Besides the several individuals who helped João during the process of writing the book, he thanked Pantaleão Fernandes for his invaluable guidance and Santosh Hirve. João acknowledges the support extended by the Bishop's Palace, further thanking the Archbishop Filipe Neri Cardinal Ferrão and his secretary Fr Loliola Pereira for attending the book launching event at the Museum of Christian Art.

The book serves as a remarkable and captivating source of information regarding St Francis Xavier. From the detailed artistry of European stamps to the vivid hues of Asian releases, each piece narrates a distinct story about the lasting influence of St Francis Xavier, whose relentless missionary efforts have made a significant impact on the world.