

Herald Cafe

Goa's wildlife and occupations steal the show at Carnival

'Viva Carnival' were the chants that were echoing on the streets of Panjim as the Carnival parade created an exciting vibe in the city



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The four-days of Carnival kicked off in Panjim bringing the crowds flocking to the city with a mix of traffic and chaos. The colourful floats were lined up for the parade and began with King Momo, dressed in red and gold leading the way. With around 53 floats participating in the carnival.

From two floats on Pangolins, a frog and a massive dinosaur, the focus was also on the traditional occupations of farming and fishing brought out the best by the villages of Morjim and St Estevam

King Momo Cleeven Fernandes was overwhelmed with the love and attention that he received from the revellers. "I was very happy to be among the crowds. People were excited to click photos and it was a great start to the Carnival. I'm looking forward to the parade in Margao as it is closer to my hometown," says Cleeven, who headed to the Samba Square after the parade in Panjim.

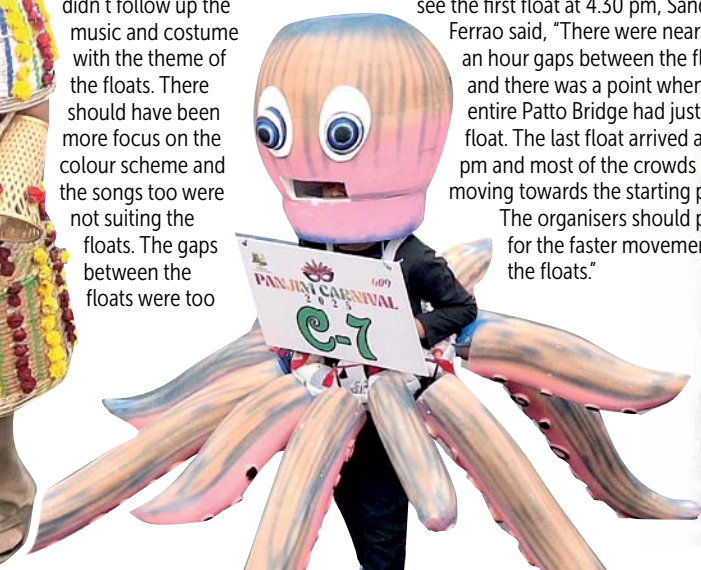
A person who hasn't missed any Carnival parades in Panjim, Freddy Ferrao from Divar said, "The floats were well designed but many didn't follow up the music and costume with the theme of the floats. There should have been more focus on the colour scheme and the songs too were not suiting the floats. The gaps between the floats were too



long."

A mother, who wanted her child to enjoy the same experience of her childhood of Carnival, dressed her son for the occasion. Donning a mask, Nancy Afonso Rodrigues from Salvador-do-Mundo says, "Most of the floats were based on the wildlife of Goa and were fun to watch. Zac was too excited to see the Dinosaur."

The carnival also attracted several visitors from beyond the borders who were seen dancing to the music of the various participating floats. However, the long gaps between the floats in the scorching sun was bothersome and irritating for the tiny tots and the senior citizens. Waiting at the starting point to see the first float at 4.30 pm, Sandra Ferrao said, "There were nearly half an hour gaps between the floats and there was a point when the entire Patto Bridge had just one float. The last float arrived at 6.30 pm and most of the crowds were moving towards the starting point. The organisers should plan for the faster movement of the floats."



PICS: CEDRIC DA COSTA



Cedric da Costa

It's Margao's 'Big Fat Carnival Sunday' today and King Momo will reign with traditions and festivities, colorful decorations, flamboyant costumes, masks, revelers, multicolored hats, water balloons, spray guns, float parades, khell tiatts and the 'Intruzacho mono'.

St Sebastian's feast and the Margao Carnival

Closer to Margao, life centers around a quaint 16th-century chapel in Aquem, where the parish's modern church and historic St Sebastian Chapel will commemorate their patron's feast. The chapel is also called 'Puddam' or 'Pandava Copel'. According



to history, a local chieftain converted to Christianity on Sunday before Lent. The chapel has adjoining laterite rock caves along the south western tip of Monte

hymns were lifted through St Sebastian. Many prayed for miraculous intercession and deliverance from illness, healing,

hill, a little ahead lies Tolsanzor. The chapel's mystique history and origins, local folklore and natural landscape justify its existence as the caves are natural structures contributing to heritage protected, conserved and maintained by Goa Government's, Directorate of Archives and Archeology.

The double martyr St Sebastian

St Sebastian, was an early Catholic from Milan, Italy and a soldier in Emperor Diocletian's Roman Army who opposed Christianity. Facing persecution he was put to death twice, once unsuccessfully tied to a tree and shot with arrows and secondly, beaten until death. Through these valiant acts of courage and self-sacrifice, he is venerated as a double martyr and saint.

Until few years ago, the faithful collectively carried the miraculous image and relic of the saint from Rosary Church, Navelim to Aquem via Margao on Maddy Thursday in a flower decked palanquin symbolizing reverence, gratitude and hope rejuvenating spiritual bonds and displaying community significance as



repayment of favors and shared testimonies. After the chapel was elevated to a church in 2003, the procession was discontinued, while few still undertake it.

Faith down the ages

The area elderly found solace in miraculous cures through their faith in St Sebastian and as part of their evening ritual, they would spend time soaking the air around the old chapel patio. Like their generations, they respected these sacred spaces.

Things have since changed

The feast fair has a selection of Carnival items such as water guns, colour sprinklers, masks, feather hats and balloons attracting children. Post the feast mass, parishioners host guests to a festive meal before rushing for floats. By evening, many non-Catholic families

including Margao's business community offer flowers and candles at the Maddy cross.

In essence, the Carnival Sunday feast becomes a powerful symbol of community cohesion, where religious devotion and festive merriment harmoniously

coexist in a secular ecosystem and the joys of which prevail around the year.

(Cedric da Costa is a parishioner of St Sebastian Church, Aquem, Margao and an emcee at the Margao Carnival Floats 2025).

Margao's double celebration with St Sebastian Feast and Margao Carnival

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