

Rise of sports tourism in Goa

The number of tourists coming to Goa to participate in various sporting events like the marathon, the triathlon and the Ironman is consistently increasing

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Of late there has been a great deal of discussion in the public space about the number and the kind of tourists coming to Goa. There are a few events however that bring in visitors who would otherwise not come to Goa. Sporting events in Goa have a niche all their own and seem to attract visitors from the rest of the country and the world.

IN THE BEGINNING

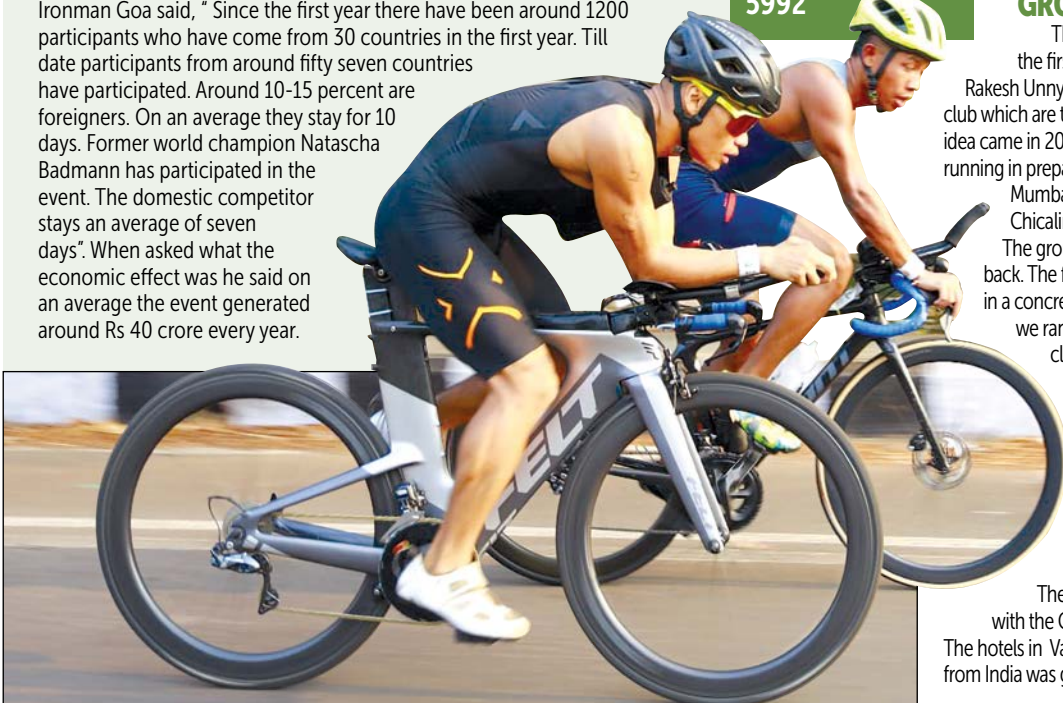
Elias Patel the founder director of Enduro Sports Goa was sitting with friends sometime in 2014 and discussing the kind of tourist that was coming into Goa. It was important to bring in the tourists who would come to Goa, spend a decent amount of money and get healthy while doing it. That then became the core principle of the company. The focus he said was to attract high quality sports

tourism to Goa, with the emphasis on health, well being and family based sports events.

Speaking about the miniOrange Aquamoga he said it was a unique one of its kind multi day sporting event which celebrates the ocean and encompasses 2 days of the Goa Swimathon in 1, 2, 5 and 10kms format which was founded in 2011. The Goa Triathlon- Olympic distance was founded in 2014 and The Goa Aquathlon made its debut this year.

IRONMAN IN GOA

Another positive for Goa is the Ironman which will be conducted in the State since 2019. Neil D'silva the Deputy Race Director of Ironman Goa said, "Since the first year there have been around 1200 participants who have come from 30 countries in the first year. Till date participants from around fifty seven countries have participated. Around 10-15 percent are foreigners. On an average they stay for 10 days. Former world champion Natascha Badmann has participated in the event. The domestic competitor stays an average of seven days". When asked what the economic effect was he said on an average the event generated around Rs 40 crore every year.



RESPONSE

The response to miniOrange Aquamoga was very good. They had almost 600 participants at this event, the majority of which were from other parts of India. The event also saw a percentage of International athletes from Europe, the Middle East, Australia, South Asia and North America. The triathlon saw around 150 participants from outside. There were no Goans participating. 6 to 8 percent of the participants were from countries like England, Russia and Germany. He said the international participants would stay for two days while the domestic participants

stayed as long as a week in very good hotels. Several of the international athletes were pretty famous. Caroline Mulline, Terry Perry, Susan Hunt to name a few. Caroline is a senior consultant in a top tier consultancy in addition to being a competitor. He refused to say how much they had earned but he said they had met their costs. The future he said was bright and they planned to have these events every year.

Mini Aqua Moga had 600 participants in 2024, 450 in 2023
Iron Man 70.3 Goa 5000 from 57 countries in 4 editions
SKF- Goa River Marathon GRM 2022 - 5723 GRM 2023- 5766 GRM 2024- 5992

PARTICIPANTS IN THE SWIMATHON

2011: 17	2014: 98	2017: 390
2012: 55	2015: 122	2018: 450
2013: 87	2016: 255	2019: 555



GROWING IN STATURE

The SKF Goa river marathon was the first ever marathon in the State. Rakesh Unny the secretary of the Vasco Sports club which are the organisers of the club said the idea came in 2009. Some of the members were running in preparation for their participation in the Mumbai marathon. They would run from Chicalim to Cortalim along the Zuari river. The group went to Mumbai and came back. The feeling was that they were running in a concrete jungle. Rakesh said, "The route we ran on was beautiful, the air was clean, the river was clean and it was just fantastic. We decided to organise a marathon. We had the first edition in 2010. Through online registration we got 350 responses from all over India with three percent from Goa. That year we had a 21 km race and a 5 km fun run. The next year we had 800 responses with the Goa response less than 5 percent. The hotels in Vasco were all full. The response from India was great. This was sporting tourism.

Just before covid we reached 7000." He said it was obvious by then that something had to be done to improve Goan participation. They started a 10 km run and that got the Goan signing up. The organisers signed up with the tourism department. A complete carnival atmosphere was created. Brazz bands would perform. People lined the routes and the hill would provide a shade till 10 o'clock in the morning. They are the only people to now present a full marathon. It is also accredited to the association of international marathons. The timings in this race can guarantee a runner a place in the big races like London, Tokyo, New York etc. These days around 5000 people take part with 60 percent being domestic and the rest from countries like Russia, Finland, USA and Germany. Rakesh said the domestic runners would usually stay for 3 to 4 days. The fact that this race is among the five most scenic marathons in the country helps its case. It is also featured on the Ahotu website which is followed by serious marathoners all over the world. It is obvious that the State has something to offer for everyone and perhaps some innovative thinking will bring about a change in the tourism industry in the State.



UNCOVERING VIETNAM'S CHARM

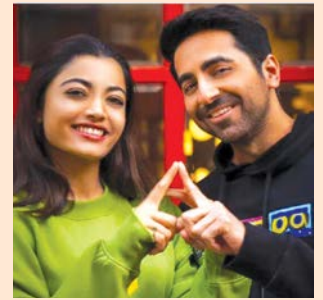


HOW TO SEE THINGS DIFFERENTLY IN BRITAIN IN 2025

SWIPE RIGHT

Rashmika Mandanna resumes shooting after her leg injury

Ayushmann Khurrana shared a photo from the sets of Thama as he resumed shooting for the vampire comedy film co-starring Rashmika Mandanna. For the uninformed, the Delhi shoot had to be put on hold after the actress



sustained a leg injury. Now, nearly after a break of one-and-a-half months, director Aditya Sarpotdar resumed the vampire comedy's shoot with a new work plan. Thama is said to be a romantic love story that explores unrequited love through a central character. The film is set in present-day Delhi, where Khurrana is said to be playing a historian. "The narrative is laced with flashbacks that take viewers to the ancient city of Vijayanagar, where the love story begins," the source further added.

Robert Pattinson Reacts To The Batman 2 Delay

Robert Pattinson is eager to return as the Dark Knight but is aware of the long wait for The Batman Part II. In a recent conversation with his Mickey 17 co-star Naomi Ackie for Hero Magazine, he shared his frustration with the delay. "I hope



so," Pattinson responded when asked if filming would start soon. Laughing, he added, "I started out as a young Batman and I'm going to be an old Batman by the sequel." The actor, now 38, jokingly called himself old but later clarified, "I'm old, but I'm healthier. I think I've actually brought my biological age down a bit."



Gigi Hadid wows in a shimmering mermaid gown at the glittering Louvre gala dinner during Paris Fashion Week

TAMANNAAH AND VIJAY ARE NO LONGER A COUPLE

One of Bollywood's 'it' couples have split up after a two-year relationship; plan to stay friends

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Once a power couple adored by fans, Tamannaah Bhatia and Vijay Varma made headlines for their affectionate chemistry and relationship goals. Whispers of their wedding had even begun to circulate. However, in a surprising turn of events, the duo quietly parted ways a few weeks ago. Despite ending their romantic journey, the two continue to share mutual admiration and respect. A close source revealed, "Tamannaah Bhatia and Vijay Varma parted ways weeks ago as a couple but they plan to remain good friends. Both have been working hard in their respective schedules."

The couple met on the sets of Netflix's anthology film Lust Stories 2 (2023) and began dating soon after. While

they had not addressed the rumours of their relationship at the start, the two opened up about it because they didn't want to hide their love.

Dating rumors first surfaced in December 2022, sparked by a viral video from a New Year's Eve party in Goa. The clip, which allegedly captured Tamannaah Bhatia and Vijay Varma sharing a kiss as fireworks welcomed 2023, set social media abuzz. Even before this, their frequent public appearances, including Vijay Varma attending Tamannaah's birthday celebration, hinted at something beyond friendship. The two were spotted together multiple times in early 2023. From cozy drives around Mumbai to stepping out hand-in-hand, their growing bond was evident.

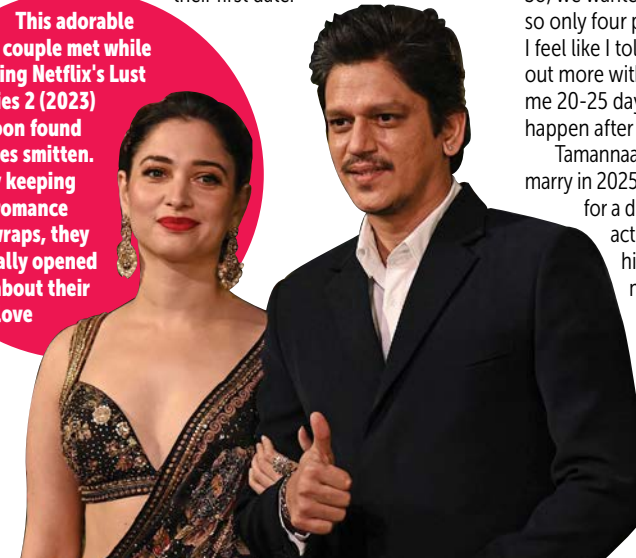
On Valentine's Day, the Jaane Jaan actor shared a cryptic Instagram post, a picture of two pairs of feet facing each other, accompanied only by a red heart emoji, further fueling speculation. While the world speculated, the

Street 2 actress remained tight-lipped. During a conversation in March 2023, she downplayed the rumors, stating, "We have done a film together. Such rumors keep going around. Clarifying all of them is just not necessary. I have nothing more to say about it." However, their continued public outings suggested otherwise. It wasn't until months later that Tamannaah Bhatia finally acknowledged her relationship with Vijay. In a candid interview with Film Companion, she admitted, "He's my happy place."

Later, in a conversation with Tanmay Bhat on Netflix

India's YouTube channel, Vijay, too, later shared how their romance blossomed post-Lust Stories 2, revealing that it took him nearly a month to ask her out on their first date.

This adorable couple met while filming Netflix's Lust Stories 2 (2023) and soon found themselves smitten. Initially keeping their romance under wraps, they eventually opened up about their love



He said, "Lust Stories was a cupid but it wasn't during the shoot that we started dating. There was discussion of a wrap party happening but it never happened. So, we wanted to have a wrap party and so only four people showed up. That day I feel like I told her that I want to hang out more with you. Then it took me 20-25 days for the first date to happen after that."

Tamannaah and Vijay were planning to marry in 2025 and had even begun looking for a dream home together. The actress, in a conversation had hinted at the possibility of marriage, saying, "Why not?" However, as fate would have it, the love story took an unforeseen turn, leading to their recent breakup.

Though no longer a couple, the respect and fondness they share for each other remain unchanged.