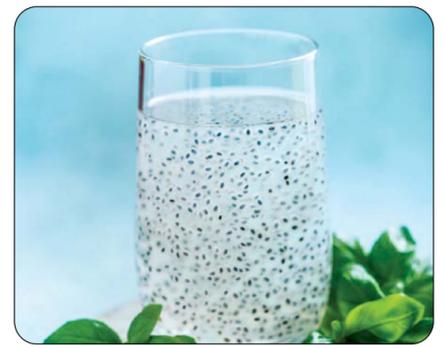


Herald Cafe



SPRING FOODS: NATURE'S BEAUTY BOOSTERS



FASCINATING BENEFITS AND USES OF BASIL SEEDS

Vibrant colours of Shigmo



Dhulvat at Shree Satiya Devi Devasthan, Naibagh, Pernem

Shigmo or Holi is in full swing as the beating of dhol and taso is echoed all around the Goan cities, towns and especially the villages, where the festival is organised true to its ethnic character

Govind S Poteker

Shigmo is the most appropriate time of the year to explore the diversity of festivals and the ritual attached to it, which very few places can compete with Goa. Goa has unique tradition of celebrating Dhakto Shigmo before the full moon for five days and Vhodlo Shigmo mostly in the vicinity of village temples. In the villages, a tall tree trunk decorated with mango leaves, flowers and coconut (naal) is erected as Holi at a sacred place, Maand. The festival begins with invocation of local deity and Naman accompanied by music and Shigmo songs with chants of 'Shabai Shabai... While sprinkling of Gulal is universal during Shigmo, some festivals in the villages stand out for its uniqueness.

PLAYING WITH FIRE

Running over hot burning amber is quite a sensational ritual which not everyone can dare to perform, but such event is part and parcel of Shigmo as it is considered as an act of purity of soul. While the practice of running over fire during Homkhand is quite well-known at Britona, the one at Chorao Island has gained great publicity in recent times as thousands of people attend the ritual.

Resident of Saude, Rohan Volvoikar shared, "Homkhand is an occasion where the faith and science meet hand in hand. People walk

on the fire to prove the holiness of Rakhandar as beautiful rhythm (Naman) sang by villagers with Dhol and Taso energizes the atmosphere. It is exciting to see as devotees run over a bed of fire, chanting the name of lord Vishnu, Bhumika Devi and Rakhandar. For many, it is a lifetime experience."



PLAYING WITH COLOURS

Dhulvat or Dhoolvad in many villages is held mostly on the seventh day of Shigmo. Coming back to their roots and getting smeared with colours is considered as a blessing. Shigmo. At Satiya Devi Devasthan, Romta Mhel from seven villages gather at this rock shrine dedicated to Shree Satiya Devi located along the bank of River Tiracol. The villagers seek blessings from Devi, who is the mother of Lord Shree Mulvir, an incarnation of lord Mahadeo.

MISTAKEN THIEVES AND WARRIORS

Sattari is known for Chor, Karavlyo, Chorotsav and Ghodde Modni traditions that draws huge crowd. During Shigmo, there is a practice of petty stealing by Chors (robbers) which is loved by everyone without anyone questioning them. Young boys acting like thieves, wearing mango leaves garland roam the village streets and rob only the seasonal fruits. However, the biggest attractions of the Shigmo in these areas are the Chorotsav festivals near Sateri Kelbai Devasthan at Zarme and Shantadurga Devasthan at Caranzol. According to some legends, the festival is in remembrance of mistaken identity, mark of respect and repentance by the villagers. Karvalyo in these villages is remembering the sacrifice of women who underwent Sati ritual. The ancient cruel Hindu practice of woman jumping in funeral pyre after husband's death was quite a norm then and the mistaken robbers are thought to be their husbands. Two boys dressed as woman in typical Nav Vari saree worn by Hindu married woman are taken from house to house on shoulder. Pooja is performed and they are offered Vhuti comprising Shripthal, Saree, bangles, Haldi-Kumkum.



Karvalyo at Zarme

ROMTAMEL

Haldoni ritual at Agarwada-Chopdem, Pernem is very special as a Shigmo fest at Bhumika Panchayat Devasthan. Holi (tree trunk) is erected in the precinct of Shree Ravalnath temple. After the invocation (gharane) to god, the Romat takes round of the main temples. During Haldoni, sacred Haldi water is sprinkled on the deity and all devotees take it home, which is considered to purify everything. A resident, Nitin Parsekar says, "The Romat

Mhel visits as far as Kaisuva and Siolim villages on 4th to 6th day. On the 7th day, it's the day of Dhulvat, splashing of colours in the village in the village when Shree Phal (coconut) is taken down after Gharane for the wellbeing of the villagers." Devotees from these villages are the Mhajans of Shree Vetal. The deity has a great significance for fishing community who considers Shree Vetal as their protector. Even people from Karwar and Ratnagiri take part in the festivity and also some noted industrialists pay their obeisance.

GADE UTSAV

Famous amongst the festivities is the Gade Utsav at Sal, Kudne and Pilgao in Bicholim taluka. In all, 64 dhoti clad Gade take part in the ritual in the past who follow some strict norms of purification before the festival. Gada who takes part in the ritual is thought to develop unnatural power who perform acts beyond their normal self. Gade gathers near Gadyacho Maand and the moment singing and Dhol starts beating, they get possessed by spirit (Devchar), the Protector of village and in their trance state, they disappear in the forest, all bare feet and in the safe hands of Protector.

Strict vigil is kept in the villages where Gade festivals are organised. All illumination are mandatorily cut-off as only



Shishya Ranni at Gaondongri

flashes of light that is visible throughout the festival is the burning torch shown by Devchar emanating from different direction that guide the Gade running in all direction in the forest.

Though Gade at Saal and Kudne has its own suspense and thrill, festival at Pilgao happens in broad day light. Pilgao resident Mahesh Falkar says, "After two days of dark night vigil in the village as the Gade room in the village, Rakhandar is thought to hide them during that period." Next morning, they come running in their trance condition carrying dead bodies, bones, skulls or any other organ collected from village crematorium as the onlookers in thousands are left aghast to observe the act. In that condition, they crash lifeless on the ground near Shree

Shantadurga Devasthan, where Devi appears to take them into her care and bring them back to their senses. After the ritual, Gades visit a well near Shree Mahadeo temple and the bones and body parts are burnt. They seek blessings and safety of the villagers through the year. All this is carried with singing of Shigmo songs as beats of Romat never stops. Another uniqueness of this village is that they organise Bhurgyache Gade, (children's Gade), a day before in the evening, which is a joy to observe.

Greed for money, power can degrade family values

Pio Esteves

Tiatr: 'Varear Ubtolo Kapus'
Writer/Director: John Alexandro Fernandes
Institution: Machi Mogi Morjim Cultural Sanskrutic Sauntha
Cast: Cyril Fernandes, Pedro Rodrigues, Jose Aires D'Souza, Laster Fernandes, Valini Fernandes, Frazer Fernandes, Melita Fernandes, Antonio Rodrigues, Fatima Fernandes, Lorna Fernandes, Robert D'Souza, Clinton Martins, Quenicio Pereira, Keaton Rodrigues
Band: Senon (trumpet), Semy (trombone), Fr Rollan Lin (saxophone), Xavier (drums), Alex (keyboard)
Stage Sets/Lights: Kapil Chari, Ratnakant Salgaonkar
Makeup/Costumes: Roland Mascarenhas, Lorna Fernandes



while his teenage daughter Natasha (Melita Fernandes) is schooling. Despite cultivating fields and fending for himself and his children, Nelson sometimes feels discouraged and hapless. At one point of time, he discontinues his daughter's education and stops her from going to school. Nelson's next door neighbour, Pandhari (John Alexandro Fernandes), carries out

his small business as a florist outside his house. His son Shyam (Robert D'Souza) had gone to become a doctor, but returns as an artiste with Madhuri (Fatima Fernandes). Pandhari extends his moral support to Nelson as and when required. But quite often the latter is short-tempered and loses his nerves quite easily. But there's Paulin (Lorna Fernandes), another neighbor, who steps in to assist Nelson. Now, eyeing Nelson's fields, Danny Dias (Cyril Fernandes), a businessman, pays a courtesy visit and proposes to purchase his fields. But Nelson declines. Another offer is made to Nelson by Danny, explaining how it would help him to instantly come out from rags to riches. Nelson finds sense in the offer made to him and he bows down. On the other hand, Danny's daughter Denzilza (Valini Fernandes) is in love with Frazer (Frazer Fernandes), who is not well to do. Unable to fulfil the challenge made to Danny, Frazer and Denzilza move apart. Now, to get more of Nelson's share of property, Danny coaxes Nelson to get his son married to his daughter. What follows



KA's 50th 'A' Group Competition 2024-25 'Varear Ubtolo Kapus'

next in Nelson and Danny's families is worth the watch in the second half of the drama. Tiatr 'Varear Ubtolo Kapus' has a story about greed and power. There are twists and turns that make the viewing interesting. All the artistes have given their best on stage.

Cyril Fernandes as the businessman and in a negative role stands tall. He is ably supported by Pedro, Laster, Valini, Frazer, Lorna and Quenicio. Melita as a daughter plays her role with ease. Antonio Rodrigues is equally good. As a priest, Jose Aires D'Souza makes brief, but convincing entries. For some lighter moments, John Alexandro entertains with a good dose of laughter pills, taking

along with him Robert and Fatima. But Robert and Fatima joining hands with Clinton, Keaton and Antonio in one scene was unwanted. In the section of songs, Peter Fernandes comes for the opening song, followed by duets, duo, trio, and a quartet. Solos by Laster and Larya Fernandes were thought-provoking. A choral of 10 singers was a befitting tribute to business icon, late Ratan Tata. Senon and his musical band provided good live music offstage. The stage sets by Kapil Chari with Ratnakant Salgaonkar as the light designer and Alex Rodrigues handling the background music deserve a mention.

SWIPE RIGHT Egyptian rapper-actor Mohamed Ramadan on first India visit

One of the biggest artistes from Egypt, rapper Mohamed Ramadan came to India recently on his maiden visit to the country and he is already in love with it. "I love India from a long time.



One thing that makes me feel at home here is that Egyptian culture and Indian culture are very similar. All of us are so simple and kind, and because of that I love this country so much," he says. The actor-musician also admits to being influenced by Indian films and music, "I love acting so much and I am inspired by Indian actors including Amitabh Bachchan and Shah Rukh Khan. I have watched their 'Mard' and 'My Name Is Khan' and I love them. I am also inspired by Indian music. I want to act and do music in Bollywood. I am an entertainer at the end of the day, so whatever it takes to put a smile on my fans' face, I want to do that."

Tom Cruise and Ana de Armas keep dating rumours swirling



Tom Cruise and Ana de Armas aren't doing anything to nix the rumours they're dating because they were spotted hanging out in London again, further fuelling the speculation. The two stars were photographed in England's capital dressed casually in jeans and sneakers after hopping out of a helicopter at London Heliport. While they weren't chatting on their walk, they both had huge smiles on their faces, clearly enjoying their time together.



Rashmika Mandanna, was spotted traveling in a basic yet stylish look with a denim crop top paired with striped Korean-style pants making an easy-going travel fashion.