



Black and white prodigies

Goa is home to some incredibly talented young players who are already making waves in the chess world. Meet some of them here

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Interest in chess reached a high point in the country recently when D Gukesh became world champion by defeating Ding Liren in the 2024 FIDE World Championship. Other

young players like Praggnanandhaa and his sister Vaishali are also making steady progress towards greatness. We spoke to upcoming players in Goa to find out what makes them tick.

ETHAN VAZ

He is undoubtedly the brightest star in the chess world of Goa. He achieved the IM title at 12 yrs and 4 months of age. Ethan is the world's youngest IM between Jan 3rd and 30th June, and currently the youngest IM in India.



THE START: When Ethan was six, his parents brought a chess set for him and his brother Edrick. Ethan was determined to defeat his dad, and one day he finally won in a game that ended at 11:30 that night. As the kids started showing more interest in the game, formal chess coaching was considered. After just eight months of coaching, Ethan represented Goa and won an award at the Under-7 National Chess Championships 2018 at Tumkur, Karnataka, in the Open category contested by 214 players representing their respective States. From then on, there was no looking back. His parents have backed him with his father travelling with him to all the competitions.



THE PREPARATION: Earlier he used to go for regular coaching at a chess academy but things changed after he became an IM. Now his routine involves more of self motivated activities.

FUTURE PLANS:

Ethan says, "I want to become a Grandmaster as soon as possible and will continue working hard to achieve my dream of becoming a World Chess Champion".



GAINING KNOWLEDGE: Ethan says, "Chess involves a lot of theory, and requires a lot of practice too. One can prepare some opening theory, but after the initial few moves it boils down to practical skills because one cannot really plan in advance how the game would turn out. Practising tactics and endgames helps, but you cannot prepare those for a specific game as such. Deep knowledge is essential, but more important is practice. In chess, there's always more that one can learn and improve on. So it's a continuous effort to keep getting better and better".

EVAN AND JOSHUA TELLES

They are the deadly duo who are considered special in the chess circle. Joshua has won State level competitions regularly and Evan is known for being the youngest Goan chess player to earn FIDE international ratings in all three formats (Standard, Rapid, and Blitz).



THE START: Joshua, who will turn 11 in August, started playing chess during the Covid break. He had nothing much to do apart and so he downloaded chess app on his phone and started playing. His mother noticed his interest and looked around for a coach. She found a centre near the house in Gogol and he played there. He won a trophy in the first tournament he participated in. Years later, his younger brother Evan won that award too in his first tournament. Evan would accompany his brother to the various tournaments and watch him win them and come home with trophies. That got him interested and he trains with the same coach as his brother. He is in the second standard and is blazing his own path that marks him out as someone special. Evan's recent triumph at the 3rd Goa International Open Grandmaster Chess Tournament 2025 further solidified his reputation. Competing in Category B and C, he dominated the U-7 age group, securing first place in both categories. The parents are proud of their achievements and hope they continue in the same vein



THE PREPARATION:

Joshua practises one to two hours a day because as his mother puts it the demands of education cannot be ignored. He does it after he returns from school at 4 o'clock. On holidays it goes up to three hours. She says as long as the kids are doing well in school and enjoying it and playing well in chess they have no problems.

GAINING KNOWLEDGE:

Joshua learns from his coach, Prakash Singh. A student of fifth standard, he wants to play more but that means he would have to learn to balance his demands at school and chess ambitions.

FUTURE PLANS:

Both the boys have won tournaments in the State and like the feeling and want to achieve more nationally and internationally. Evan's dreams are as big as his talent. He says "I want to become a Grandmaster like Magnus Carlsen".



GAINING KNOWLEDGE: Priyank says, "My approach to studying chess openings is a blend of structured coaching and self-driven practice. Under the guidance of coach Prakash Vikram Singh, I learn key openings and strategies, which are essential for success in competitive chess. Additionally, I sharpen my skills by solving puzzles online and working through exercises provided by my coach. This allows me to develop my tactical skills and understanding of various opening strategies".



FUTURE PLANS: Priyank has set ambitious goals for the future, with the dream of becoming the youngest International Master (IM) and Grand Master (GM) of India by the age of 11.



THE PREPARATION: Priyank dedicates 4 to 5 hours daily to his chess practice.



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Marvel unveils 'Avengers: Doomsday' cast with 'X-Men'

Marvel Studios unveiled its cast for 'Avengers: Doomsday', revealing a mix of Marvel Cinematic Universe mainstays as well as actors from 20th Century Fox's now-defunct 'X-Men' universe and upcoming stars of 'Fantastic Four: First Steps'. Notable names missing from the roll call included Tom Holland ('Spider-Man') and Chris Evans ('Captain America'), the latter of whom is expected to appear at least one of the two-part movies. The cast announced included Chris Hemsworth (Thor), Tom Hiddleston (Loki), Anthony Mackie (Captain America), Paul Rudd (Ant-Man), Letitia Wright (Black Panther), Simu Liu (Shang-Chi), Danny Ramirez (The Falcon) and Winston Duke (M'Baku).



Zayn Malik rings in a decade of One Direction exit

Zayn Malik drives fans crazy with a surprise performance of 'Night Changes', the hit song from his former band 'One Direction'. The singer opened his first-ever sold-out arena with a special tribute



in Mexico for his 'Stairway to the Sky' tour. Curtains rolled down, revealing Malik standing at the stage's center before a standing mic. The tune of 'Night Changes' started playing, increasing fans' anticipation. As soon as he sang the first lyric, the audience burst into cheers and roars. The concertgoers quickly chimed in, singing along to the iconic 'One Direction' song. Malik's tribute was extra special as the day marked the 10th anniversary of his leaving the band, which also included Harry Styles, Niall Horan, and the late Liam Payne.



Sara Tendulkar flaunts comfy and laid back look at airport but her Rs 3 lakh arm candy steals the spotlight.

Conflict between landlord and tenants

Pio Esteves

Tiatr: 'Zagronnachi Rat'

Writer/Director: Marcos Gonsalves
Institution: Barebhat Social & Cultural Association, Raia, Salcete

Cast: Venita Gomes, Velbe Cardozo, Rachel Fernandes, Cassius Fernandes, Jade Cruz, Seldie Colaco, Avito Pires de Menezes, Manuel Baracho, Sebastiao Rebelo, Dezly Dias, Shoin Pango, Menino Quadros, Vihaan Gonsalves
Band: Senon de Souza (first trumpet), Nolvert Cota (second trumpet), Nazareth Fernandes (tenor saxophone), Norman Cardozo (keyboard), Joao Fernandes (drums), Crusandio Pires (bass)
Stage Sets/Lights: Romeo Colaco
Makeup/Costumes: Eknath Naik, Avdoot Sahakari

The curtains unfold to a scene in the village wherein people believe in age-old practices of their ancestors. Apart from belief in the 'rakhondhar', who they consider as their protector,



they equally worship the Cross in close proximity of the huge tree.

Natalin (Venita Gomes) is residing with her only daughter Ana (Velbe Cardozo/ Rachel Fernandes). She has Jaku (Seldie Colaco) and his spouse Magdu (Jade Cruz) as her immediate neighbours.

On the other hand, there's Batist

KA's 50th 'A' Group Competition 2024-25
'Zagronnachi Rat'

(Marcos Gonsalves) residing with his only son Pitu (Cassius Fernandes). Batist

takes the lead in assembling the village folk to organize and celebrate 'zagor'. This celebration brings all the villagers together and unity builds up among the young and the old.

But trouble sets in when the landlord (Avito Pires de Menezes) steps in and wishes to have an upper hand over his tenants. He desires that all in the village, especially the children, should remain illiterate and uneducated so that no one surpasses him in knowledge.

This bhattkar's sole aim is to exploit everyone, especially the women folk, for his personal gain and pleasure. To make ends meet, Natalin bows down to her landlord's request and Batist loses his only son Pitu at the cruel hands of the landlord.

Will the villagers continue to face the atrocities blindly? Or will it come to an end some day? Who picks up the challenge to fight against the landlord? What is the end result? Will the battle bring in triumph or defeat to the opponents?

Tiatr 'Zagronnachi Rat' focuses on



the conflict that once prevailed between the landlord and the tenants. The cruelty imposed on the hapless villagers has been exposed in the presentation.

There are fine performances from all the artists on stage. But Venita Gomes stands out as one of the victims of women exploitation. Avito Pires de Menezes as

the landlord and villain is good in body language, dress code and dialogue delivery. Child artistes Velbe Cardozo and Cassius Fernandes are quite at ease with each other and form a perfect chemistry. Other artistes have extended good support to the main cast.

For some laughter moments, there Seldie Colaco and Jade Cruz coming together as a couple and entertain the audience. But the latter has tendency of overacting in some scenes.

In the category of songs, the opening is a choral, followed by six solos, two duets, trio and quartet. Solos by Naira, Dinora and Holly, a duo by Nazario Pinto and Francisco Rebello and a duet by Jose Mascarenhas and Fevila Fernandes were appreciated by the audience. Senon and his musical team provided good live music, not empowering the singers on stage.

The stage sets and light effects by Romeo Colaco deserve appreciation. Costumes and make-up by Avdoot Sahakari and Eknath Naik respectively also deserve a mention.