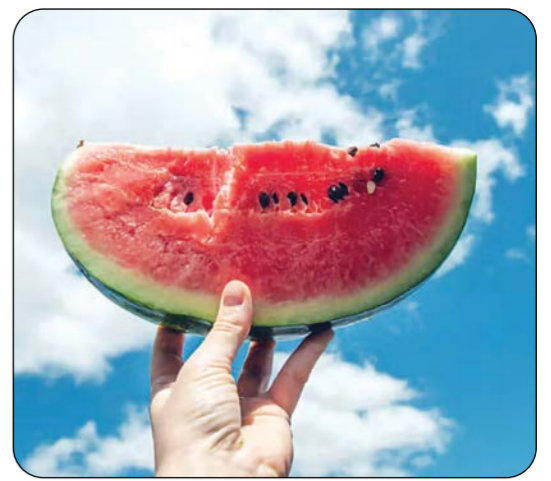


# Herald Cafe



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## Goan food influencers: Serving the right fare

These young food influencers are reaching out to eateries in the interiors of Goa and bringing them on the screens through Instagram. They share what motivates them to keep going



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### ASHRAFI GAIKWAD: From travel to food posts

Ashrafi Gaikwad, a seasoned traveller and food content creator, shares her journey of blending travel, food, and culture through her social media platforms.

Ashrafi's content is dynamic and interactive, evolving with the needs of her followers. Her versatility keeps her audience engaged. Ashrafi also experiments with creative content, like Konkani voiceovers, which have resonated deeply with her Goan followers and reached impressive engagement numbers. "Reels with Konkani voiceovers regularly hit millions of views, far surpassing my English-language posts," said Ashrafi, who is also Goa's fastest lady autocross driver.

While her niche started with food, she now includes local businesses, regional snacks, and Goan recipes, especially those not commonly found in blogs. "I portray an image of Goa and its cuisine which should go beyond the state. People from outside Goa should understand what I am telling them about our culture," adds Ashrafi.

### JADE DSA: A 9-year journey of sharing food experiences

Saligao-based Jade Dsa has been sharing her experiences online for over nine years, focusing on creating content on weekends, when she can visit new places. For her, content creation isn't just a job—it's a creative outlet. "I treat it like a passion or a hobby. It's a way for me to de-stress and be creative after a long day at work," she said. Besides managing her social media, Jade runs her own digital marketing agency, balancing both responsibilities with ease.

The feedback from her followers keeps her motivated. "I meet people who say they've visited places I recommended," she shares. "It's nice when they tell me they had a great experience, but even the negative feedback helps me improve. With a dedicated following on her social media, Jade continues to document her experiences, building an archive of memories that she can look back on."



### SHWETA ILKAR: Sharing Goan recipes and inspiring others

Shweta Ilkar, a food influencer based in Vasco, started her food page during the first lockdown in 2020 when she and her sister, both passionate about cooking, decided to share their mother's traditional Goan recipes. An ayurvedic doctor, she manages her food content alongside her medical practice. Despite the time and effort, the rewards are worth it. "When people tell me my recipes have inspired them, it motivates me to keep going," she shares.

Her journey has made her a beloved food influencer. "When I come across a food cart, which is very good, I want my followers to know about it. It is very helpful for



### SIYA SHIRWAIKAR: Providing a wider reach

Siya Shirwaikar has been posting about Goan food for nearly five years now. Her journey began with simple visits to local stalls. Over time, Siya realised the potential of social media in promoting these small businesses. "Initially, they were suspicious, not aware of how social media worked," she explains. However, over the years, they've seen the benefits as more customers started visiting their stalls, especially from outside Goa. The vendors now actively invite her to shoot, understanding that social media has a far wider reach.

Quepem-based Siya believes consistency is key to success in the online world. "It feels incredible, when they call to thank me, saying how much my posts have helped their business," Siya says. Her efforts have even earned her four awards over the years, solidifying her place as a respected figure in Goa's food scene.



### RUBEN RODRIGUES: Honest reviews for the followers

For Ruben Rodrigues, the most rewarding aspect of his work is the connection with his followers. "Whenever I meet them, they always tell me, 'Because you mentioned this place, I tried it, and it was amazing!'. It goes both ways," he adds, showing how mutual respect and engagement help drive his content.

Honesty is a core value for Ruben. "If the food is not good, I don't promote the place. People are spending their money based on my recommendations, and if they have a bad experience, I make sure to follow up with the restaurant," says Ruben emphasising the responsibility he feels toward his followers. Reflecting on the changing food

landscape, he says, "This youth is like an Instagrammable youth. They go once, they take a photo and then they would go again or not based on the food. They still love Goan fish thali and Ros omlete and enjoy experimenting with new foods."

## SWIPE RIGHT



### Filmmaker Tahira Kashyap's breast cancer relapses

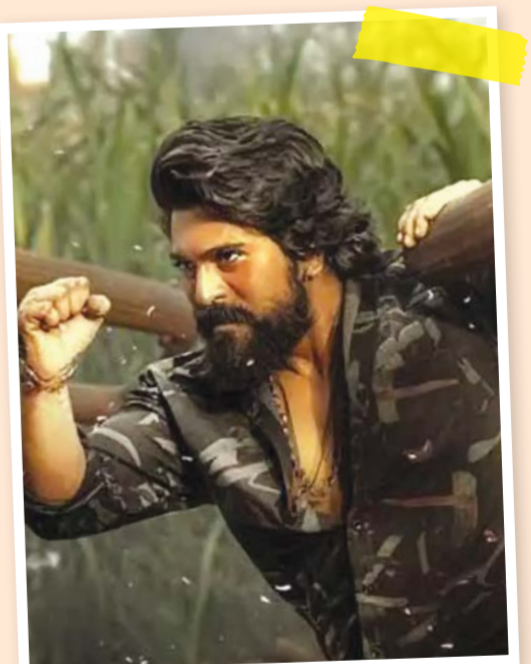


Writer-filmmaker **Tahira Kashyap** shared a note on Instagram, revealing her cancer diagnosis. Wife of actor Ayushmann Khurrana, the 42-year-old is now battling a breast cancer relapse, seven years after she beat it for the first time. In her social media post, she spread awareness about regular mammograms, and called her relapse 'round two' of the battle. She used the popular phrase 'when life gives you lemons, make lemonade' to express that she is going to fight the disease for the second time with a positive outlook towards life. She was first diagnosed with breast cancer in 2018.

### Lennon's sister hits out at biopic casting

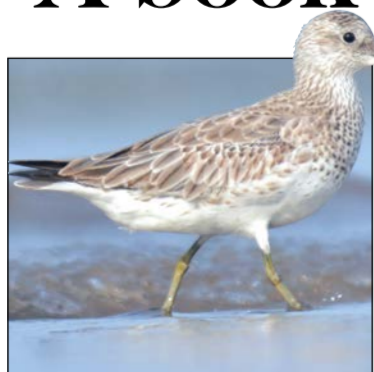


John Lennon's half-sister **Julia Baird** believes he should have been played by a Scouser in the new Hollywood film. Sam Mendes is making four films, one for each Beatle, and John Lennon will be played by Harris Dickinson. But asked if she would have preferred someone from Liverpool, Julia said, "Yes, of course. No one else can get that Liverpool intonation. Nobody." She also said it was highly unlikely Sam Mendes would get in touch with her for advice. "He's never going to ask me! I'm the last person he would want to talk to because then he can't make it up," she added.



The makers of 'Peddi' released the first glimpse of Ram Charan in a striking new avatar

## A book on birds that speaks about Goa's biodiversity



Arti Das

It is stated that Goa which has 0.1 per cent of India's area has 37 per cent of its listed birds as more than 480 species of birds are recorded from Goa. However, the recent research which is compiled in a book titled 'Threatened Birds of Goa—Status of Globally Threatened Birds Reported from Goa' by Pronoy Baidya, Jalmesh Karapurkar, and Sujatekumar Dongre, states that around 56 species of birds are threatened.

The book is a scientific summarisation

### 'Threatened Birds of Goa—Status of Globally Threatened Birds Reported from Goa', is an attempt to understand threats to Goa's biodiversity

of globally threatened species of birds that have been reported from the state of Goa. It depends on global information available in scientific literature, interpretation of historical information derived from more than 40 years of Heinz Lainer's birding notes, and current bird community structure across Goa from the Goa Bird Atlas dataset.

The book which is published by Goa-based Aranya Environment Research Organisation and Goa Forest Department, mentions various species, many known and also not-so-known like Lesser Florican, that prefer dry grassland of central India, was last sighted in 2007 at Divar Island and also about vultures that has almost wiped out from Goan soil.

Pronoy Baidya points out that the records show that Indian Vulture was known to breed till 2009 at Mhadei Wildlife Sanctuary. Also white-rumped vultures were frequently seen at the Goa Meat

Complex, Usgao. However, its population declined all over due to rampant utilisation of NSAID in treatment of cattle worldwide. But, now it is slowly improving due to constant efforts by the Government of India and other non-profits like the Bombay Natural History Society.

Can they be brought back to Goa? Pronoy says, "Today, sighting a vulture is a much-celebrated event in the state. To bring back these species to Goa, anthropogenic stress must be reduced, and areas should be controlled for feral dog population." He suggests for reintroduction program targeting the Chorla Ghat section of Mhadei wildlife sanctuary where this species was known to breed.

Along with these rare birds the book also lists birds like Asian

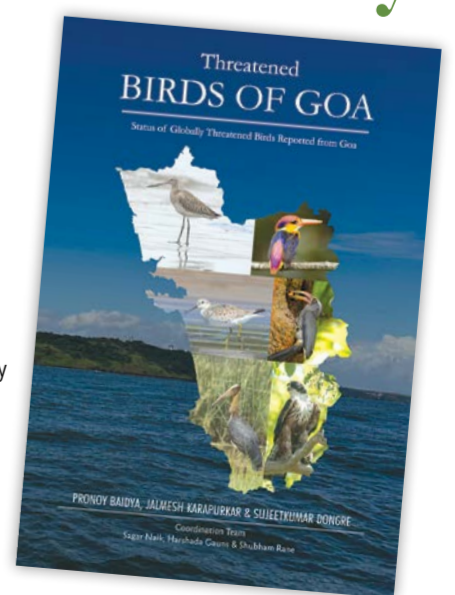
Woolly-Necked Stork, and Lesser Adjutant, which are frequently seen in and around our paddy fields and wetlands. Pronoy points out that globally the population of these birds have declined between 20 to 40 per cent over the last 40 years. And thus it puts a responsibility on us to protect these habitats. "Our region holds a major chunk of the global population of these species. It is important to prevent fragmentation of forest patches outside protected areas to ensure ample nesting site for the Asian woolly-necked stork whereas

the Lesser Adjutant is threatened by mistaken plastic ingestion which requires comprehensive solid waste management." The book also mentions

that how forest species like Malabar pied hornbill, Green Imperial pigeon, and Asian Grey Hornbill are under threat.

Along with bird species the book also highlights about the habitats like the plateaus of Goa. They are not studied much as they are considered wasteland as they look barren and dry post-monsoons and thus now are a hub for mega projects.

Pronoy points out about a recent research from Goa using insects as a model system. It has shown the importance of plateaus for providing valuable ecosystem services. He adds, "We may locally face increased insect pest attacks on agricultural crops and reduction in soil fertility all because the importance of plateau biodiversity is being undermined. Currently the endemic Malabar Lark which is known to breed in the state and



should be well distributed across Goa is starkly missing from most of the plateau regions." Pronoy hopes that this book becomes a catalyst to move policy and decision making.