

Herald Cafe

Fur and Fangs: GoT's dire wolves are now a reality

The world is waiting to hear the loud howl of the de-extinct dire wolf that was lost for over 10,000 years. 'Game of Thrones' fans have a reason to rejoice as the wolves are crossing the line from fantasy to reality

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Known scientifically as *Aenocyon dirus*, the dire wolf was once one of North America's most formidable carnivores and later gained pop culture fame through HBO's 'Game of Thrones' - symbolizing the Stark family's strength and fate with each of the five children receiving one pup. Grey Wind was adopted by Robb, Lady, adopted



by Sansa, Nymeria, adopted by Arya, Shaggydog, adopted by Rickon, Summer, adopted by Bran and Ghost, adopted by Jon Snow.

A huge wolf, the dire wolf was lost for 12,500 years and has been brought back from the dead and will be roaming in a pack by the end of this year, claim the scientists at Colossal Biosciences. Just this week, the company announced that three white dire wolf puppies have been born, which is the first creature ever to become de-extinct.

George RR Martin, author of the saga 'A Song of Fire and Ice' which was adapted for HBO's 'Game of Thrones' series, invented dire wolves in his fantasy world. Now, in the real world, he has the opportunity to actually hold the pups in his arms, thanks to Peter Jackson, the director of 'Lord of the Rings,' also an investor in Colossal Biosciences. The private company founded by George Church, a biologist at Harvard Medical School, and tech entrepreneur Ben Lamm, with gene editing advances had made it possible to produce offsprings born from surrogate mothers.



As a 'Game of Thrones' fan, seeing the revival of a creature 10,000 years ago in real time is nothing short of astonishing. When the kids from the House of Stark encounter a pack of wolf puppies abandoned on their land, they immediately proceed to adopt them. Each direwolf is shown to share a unique bond with its owner, often reflecting their personality. This feat blurs the line between fantasy and reality and one can stand in awe at biotechnology's incredible progress. Reintroducing extinct species could disrupt ecosystems and ironically threaten existing ones including grey wolves. Re-engineering ancient species could possibly bring new light to better understanding genetics and help prevent future extinctions. This could be the start of a fascinating era where science meets fantasy and among other things seeing our favourite creatures come to life might just be worth the wait.

—Velsey Carrasco, Porvorim

Despite being a fan of the show when it aired, I didn't really associate this scientific feat with it. There's a lot in 'Game of Thrones' that's better as fiction. It is, however, exciting to learn about the advancements in genetic analysis. While there's nothing much we could have done about species that went extinct thousands of years ago, I hope they use this breakthrough to aid in the conservation and de-extinction of species that have gone extinct or functionally extinct due to human intervention.

—Gwenlyn Noronha, Margao

DIRE WOLVES IN POPULAR CULTURE

- Alpha (Film)
- The Witcher series (TV series)
- World of Warcraft (Online game)
- Dungeons & Dragons (Game and film)



The very first episode of the epic saga of 'Game of Thrones' introduced us to dire wolves. As the show progresses, we learn that these powerful, mythical creatures are not only are they tough, menacing creatures, they are also fiercely loyal and deeply connected to the Starks of Winterfell. Dire wolves symbolize the Stark legacy and Northern strength, often appearing in scenes where they are required for protection or for foreshadowing. Any appearance by any of these dire wolves has been epic in its own right and also a fan favourite moment.

—Pranav Naik, Panjim



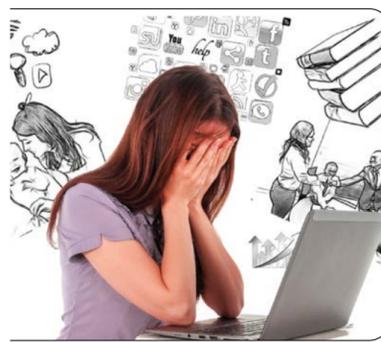
We know the dire wolves from 'Game of Thrones' but keeping the show aside, it is a global historic moment, which opens up endless scientific possibilities, especially to reopen chapters that have been permanently closed. Let us now wait and watch what else is there to surprise us considering the milestone achieved.

—Annelise Fernandes, Mercas



The dire wolves in 'Game of Thrones' weren't just pets; they were powerful symbols of the Stark children themselves. Each dire wolf mirrored the personality, fate, or path of their respective Stark child. With de-extinction projects, scientists have made progress in understanding the real dire wolves — and now, with advances in genetic research, there's talk about 'that they are back.' It's really cool that something introduced to most people through fantasy is now becoming part of real-world science.

—Bindiya Vaval, Ribandar



POST-PANDEMIC PANIC: ADDRESSING THE LINGERING ANXIETY



GOA CASHEW FEST 2025 RETURNS FOR THE THIRD YEAR

SWIPE RIGHT

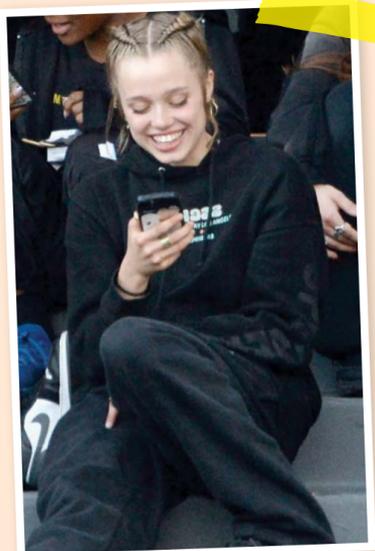
Hrithik Roshan to direct 'Krrish 4'



The buzz for 'Krrish 4' just reached a new high as the superhero series is coming back with a new story and a huge twist. Hrithik Roshan is officially taking on the director's hat for the first time. Moreover, Rekha and Preity Zinta are negotiating to play their legendary roles again, giving the much-awaited installment a nostalgic kick. Hrithik will play an ambitious triple role, portraying characters in various time zones. The movie is stated to delve into the intriguing theme of time travel, and Krrish will have to destroy a significant threat that is common across generations. Action-packed and sci-fi enough, the franchise promises to be pushed to its limits this time around.

Emma Corrin and Olivia Colman to lead 'Pride & Prejudice'

Netflix has set a new 6-part limited series based on the Jane Austen novel, 'Pride and Prejudice' with Emma Corrin, Jack Lowden, and Olivia Colman to take on the beloved literary characters of Elizabeth Bennet, Mr Darcy and Mrs Bennet, respectively. Production will take place in the UK later this year. 'Pride and Prejudice' is written by Dolly Alderton and directed by Euros Lyn, who also executive produces with Corrin.



Shiloh Jolie has the internet obsessing over her beautiful facial features, looking like a spitting image of her mother Angelina Jolie.

Ranjini Haridas lets her hair down in Goa

One of the most popular emcees and TV presenters in the Malayalam entertainment industry, Ranjini Haridas's favourite holiday destination has always been Goa

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Ranjini Haridas has always been many things to many people. For Malayalis across the world, she remains best known as the dynamic host who ruled the stage of a hugely popular music reality show. But she's also an actress, an activist, a passionate animal lover, an outspoken social commentator, and a celebrity show host.

One of her favourite escapes from it all? Goa, of course. That eternal playground by the sea. A longtime Goa regular, Ranjini doesn't need much of a reason

to hop on a flight from Kochi and head straight for the beaches, the sunsets, and the easy, liberating vibe of the place.

And that's exactly what she did the other day — a quick getaway to recharge, reset, and soak in some quintessential Goa magic. And in typical Ranjini style, it all came together at the very last minute.

We caught up with her as she shared her experiences. "I was actually supposed to travel to Dubai, but there was a change of plan and I had to stay back for a week. That's when I thought — okay, why not just quickly go to Goa? Especially since a couple of my friends were already there."

Ranjini's love affair with Goa goes back years — though, as she admits, her visits have become a little less frequent these days. "When I was younger, I used to visit Goa more often for work. I was even here during Covid. But now, it's probably once in a couple of years."

This time around, it was an impromptu break — just three or four days before her next assignment. "The first few days were all about the beaches. I went to Candolim, then Mandrem, and then Querim — which is probably the last

"Kerala also has some great beaches but because of the legal restrictions, etc, it becomes difficult to develop stuff like water sports. It is not possible even to have shacks on the beaches like those in Goa. But they are making some progress now. Then there is also the cultural issue of being seen in beach wear and in public beaches you have the issue of people staring, etc. It is because of lack of exposure and it will change as time goes by"

—Ranjini Haridas, Tv presenter

beach up north, near the Maharashtra border. Usually, when I come to Goa, it's work or parties. So, I don't often get time to really enjoy the beaches but this time, I had a really good session in the waters."

The plan was to head back after a couple of days, but in true Ranjini fashion, plans changed again when another friend arrived in Goa. "So I pushed my ticket by a day and headed to Morjim. Went to a shack, did all the typical Goa things." There was also a reunion with a dear friend who lives in Palolem, not to mention the one night

out at, a well-known club in Chapora.

"I think I did several beaches and one club this time," she laughs. "Very different from back in the day when it would've been the other way round — all parties, shopping and eating." Speaking of eating, Ranjini says her food habits in Goa have changed too. "Earlier, it was all about Goan delicacies — vindaloo and what not. I don't eat that much these days. But I had this absolutely stunning meal at a place called Vinayak — the fish fry was next level."

But even as she speaks fondly of Goa, she's quick to note how much the

place has changed. "There is a lot of development and it affects Goa's beauty, the very reason it is famous. The moment it starts looking more commercial, foreign tourists who look for peace and quiet will stop coming. But I am for development as long as it's sustainable."

This naturally leads her to comparisons with Kerala — a state with stunning beaches but, in her opinion, yet to realise its full tourism potential. "Kerala also has some great beaches but because of the legal restrictions, etc, it becomes difficult to develop stuff like water sports. It is not possible even to have shacks on the beaches like those in Goa. But they are making some progress now. Then there is also the cultural issue of being seen in beach wear and in public beaches you have the issue of people staring, etc. It is because of lack of exposure and it will change as time goes by."

And what about being recognised in Goa? Any selfie moments? "Once or twice, with some Malayali groups. But that's it — and honestly, I prefer it that way." It's one of the things she loves most about Goa — the live-and-let-live spirit.