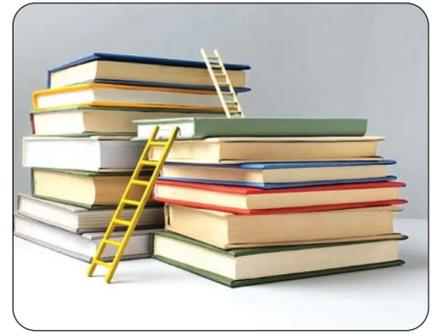


Herald Café



A PHILATELIC TRIBUTE TO EARTH DAY



CELEBRATING THE POWER OF BOOKS

MODERN STORYTELLERS: Goa's child authors

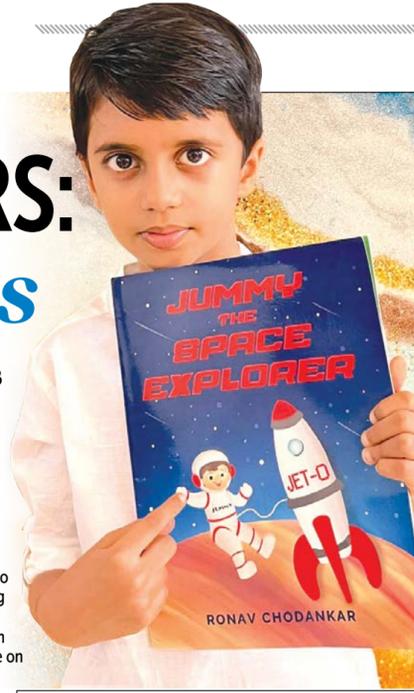
On World Book Day celebrated today, April 23, Café spotlights some of Goa's youngest literary talents. These school children penned their own books, turning imagination into pages and reaching readers far beyond the classroom

Dolcy D'Crus dolcy@herald-goa.com

RONAV CHODANKAR

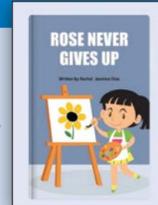
Author of 'Jummy the Space Explorer', Ronav Chodankar became the youngest author in science fiction category in the India Book of Records when he was 8 years old. Now 11, along with his 7-year-old sister, Ariana, he made two platforms using technology, Ekatraa and iSMS, which won awards such as WSRO at national level, Codeavour at regional level and State innovation award. "I wrote the book for Ariana who loves space and I thought this would be a fun way to tell her all about the space. Through

Jummy the Space Explorer and his space ship JET-O. I will also be releasing by next book soon, which will be equally thrilling and exciting if not more," informs Ronav. Books provide Ronav with company through the characters in the books that he reads. "Every time I read a book, it takes me on a fascinating journey. Writing makes my world hypnotic and enthralling. I love to doodle as I put my thoughts on paper. It helps me to visualize my story. Through my writings, I hope I can make others as happy as it makes me," says Ronav



RACHEL DIAS

Originally from Margao, Rachel Dias is now studying in a British school in Dubai and has her own foundation, Rachel Foundation, through which she supports underprivileged kids with educational resources. A Class 6 student, she is the author of 'Rose Never Gives Up'. "It is a story about a girl who never gives up and keeps trying to be her best self. She explores new interests with confidence only because she never gives up," says Rachel, whose book was released at the Sharjah International Book Fair, UAE. "Books have interesting facts which give me knowledge. Some books are funny and make me laugh. Some mystery books give me goosebumps. It enhances my spelling and I have a very rich vocabulary because I am a good reader. Reading is a great interest to have as books get me thinking," adds Rachel emphasizing her love for reading.



'Rose Never Gives Up' was Rachel's first book to be published but she continues to love writing. "I love writing because it is fun. My school encourages students to write in English class. I can write essays, stories, speeches with very little or no help. I have started illustrating my writing recently," says Rachel with hope for a new literary adventure.



SISTINE MENEZES

An inspiring young author, Sistine Menezes, is a talented girl hailing from the picturesque island of St Estevam in Goa. At just 11 years old, she has already made remarkable strides in her creative endeavours, having authored three books, 'Bulbul's Fables', 'Bulbul's Verselettes' and her latest fiction novel, 'The Kingdom of Enchants'. Currently residing with her parents and two brothers in Raia, Sistine balances her writing passion with her studies as a Class 6 student at The



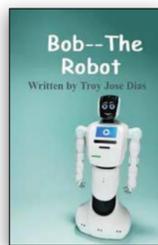
Kings' School, Mugali. "I love reading because it is one of the best ways to get knowledge or learn more about things. Reading makes you get into another world of imagination and creativity. That's why it's said books are man's best friends," says Sistine, who published three books within a span of a year. In addition to her literary pursuit, she is committed to her musical training, working on solfeggio, vocals and clarinet, alongside classical dance. Sistine has demonstrated versatility through numerous achievements, winning awards in singing, dancing, badminton etc. Sistine loves travelling and wishes to travel the world. Speaking about her love for writing, she says, "It is a creative form of expressing ones thoughts, dreams, feelings or knowledge. Writing also improves your communication skills and shows how much you can speak that's how much you can write."

TROY DIAS

Nine-year-old Troy Dias is the author of 'Bob The Robot'. It is a story about a boy named James, who has no friends in school. So he builds a robot called Bob who becomes his friend and helps him to make friends in school. Eventually, Bob becomes a buddy to lonely kids at school and James a very popular child in school. Troy Jose Dias is very passionate about environment and sustainability and is a Green Ambassador. He enjoys swimming and has won many medals in swimming competitions in UAE. He is also a budding cricket player. "I love reading because books gives me company when my parents are busy at work. I Reading keeps me busy in my free time. My bedroom



has a library and it welcomes me to read whenever I want to. My parents love reading too. I have grown up seeing them read big fat books," says Troy. Troy prefers writing during his winter, spring or summer breaks. "I love writing because it is a part of my English subject in school. My school encourages kids to be imaginative in our creative writing. I like writing because it is fun to put my thoughts in words and make a simple story for all to read," he explains.



Father-daughter duo's cycling trip to Velankanni

Sixteen-year-old Silavia Rodrigues and her father, Albert Rodrigues, took on an epic cycling challenge from Goa to Velankanni — a journey that tested their endurance and left a lasting impact on them both

Ajit John ajit@herald-goa.com

Doing anything over a long distance requires patience and a strong mind. Cycling over a thousand kilometres without formal preparation might seem foolhardy to most. But that's exactly what 16-year-old Silavia from Goa did — riding from Siolim to Velankanni, a distance of 1,066 km, over 12 days, alongside her father, Albert Rodrigues.



Preparation
Typically, such a journey would involve months of cycling to build stamina and strength. But Silavia was in the middle of studying for her class 10 board exams. Her only physical activity was playing basketball every alternate day — and she played hard. "That gave me the confidence I needed," she said.



The journey
According to both, the journey was largely uneventful — though the weather was extremely hot. At one point, Silavia suffered a heat stroke and had to be taken to a nearby hospital. They checked in for the night and then moved to a hotel next door so she could

Why did she do it?
Albert Rodrigues, a 47-year-old businessman, who rents scooters to tourists in Goa, had completed the same journey to Velankanni the previous year. His daughter, Silavia, had followed his adventure with great interest. So he was taken aback when she told him she wanted to do the same trip in December. "I got my inspiration from my dad. I wanted to go out like him. The thought came to me on a random day in December," Silavia says. That was it — once she made up her mind, there was no turning back.

rest and recover. To avoid the heat, they began cycling early each morning, usually around 4:30 a.m. They passed through forests but had no encounters with wildlife. "The only question people kept asking was where we were coming from and where we were going," Albert recalls. They took regular breaks for breakfast, lunch, and dinner, and food availability was never an issue. One memorable moment came when Silavia got spooked by a woman in what she thought was a ghostly white saree — only to laugh at herself when she realized it was just a light-colored outfit. The final day required them to cover nearly 140 kilometres — much more than their usual 90 kilometres per day. "I woke up at 1 am and told myself that no matter what, I would complete the distance. We would usually cover around 90 kilometres in a day so this would require some effort. We managed it coolly and reached Velankanni around 11 am," Silavia says. They stayed there for two days before returning to Goa by train.



What's next?

Laughing, she revealed her future plan: a cycling trip from Goa to Kerala, and then on to Velankanni. The return journey mode is still undecided. She plans to ride again with her father — and says anyone interested is welcome to join them.

'APT' becomes fastest Asian music video to reach 1.5 billion views



Blackpink's Rosé and Bruno Mars have officially made music history with their explosive collaboration 'APT' and the internet can't get enough of it. The music video for 'APT' soared past 1.5 billion views on YouTube, achieving the milestone in just 184 days since its release on October 18, 2024. With this, 'APT' is now the fastest music video by any Asian artist to ever reach the 1.5 billion mark on the platform. It joins the ranks of global viral hits, tying with J Balvin and Willy William's 'Mi Gente' for the third-fastest climb to this number in YouTube history.



Karan Johar shared the motion poster for the movie, 'Naagzilla', starring Kartik Aaryan in the lead on Instagram. Kartik is seen shirtless with snake-like skin, wearing blue jeans and looking at a city from a snake-infested lair.

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