

Herald Cafe



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The Ghumot Revolution: Passing on Goa's heritage to students

A heritage Goan folk musical instrument, the ghumot is an earthen pot-shaped instrument. Over the years, the ghumot has reached more hands of students in different schools and colleges

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The ghumot, one of Goa's oldest indigenous percussion instruments, remains deeply connected to the region's cultural roots. Traditionally made from a simple earthen pot and once topped with monitor lizard skin—now replaced by goat skin—this humble instrument has a rich heritage. Though it had faded from the public eye for some time, the ghumot returned to the spotlight in 2017 during the first-ever Ghumtache Fest, held at Sirdao Beach. The event featured live performances, including a historic appearance by Goa's first all-female ghumot group.

Crafting a ghumot takes two days, one to shape and dry the earthen pot, and the next to stretch and fit the leather across its mouth. The skin must be thin enough to

produce the distinct, resonant beat the instrument is known for. Ghumots come in three sizes: the small 'barik tonddachem', typically used by children; the 'medium tonddachem', suited for women and young girls; and the larger 'vhoddle tonddachem', traditionally played by men. Deeply embedded in Goan culture, the ghumot features prominently in Hindu religious rituals such as aartis and bhajans, as well as in Catholic folk performances like Dekhnnis and Mandos. In 2019, it was officially recognised as Goa's state musical heritage instrument.



THE BIRTH OF 5G - GLOBAL GOAN GIRLS GHUMOT GROUP

The Goa College of Home Science hosted the 'Khoshi Lokanchem Fest' meaning Festival of Happy People. A major highlight was the debut of the college's own all-girls percussion group 5G - Global Goan Girls Ghumot Group, which shone a spotlight on the ghumot. The group's performance not only impressed the audience but also served as a statement on gender

inclusion in Goan folk traditions, as the ghumot has historically been dominated by male performers.

Principal of Goa College of Home Science, Mahesh Pai says, "The group consists of students who will be returning to college for the new academic year. The group includes Rajwee Naik, Arthelia DaCosta, Gresshma Volvoikar, Kalpita

Halankar, Khushbu Sayed, Gayatri Goankar, Sayli, Chaitra and Lenika Monteiro. The festival even featured a 'birthday celebration' for the ghumot, complete with a cake-cutting ceremony to honour and promote it as Goa's own musical treasure." The group also went on to perform at the Purnmentachem Fest last month.



Carlos Gonsalves with students of Nirmala Institute

BRINGING THE GHUMOT TO NEW MINDS

Noted Goan percussionist Carlos Gonsalves, vision goes beyond local performances. He aims to take the ghumot to the world. However, that global vision must be matched by consistent enthusiasm and dedication at home in Goa. "We need that same energy here," he emphasised.

In a spirited initiative to revive and spread the traditional Goan art of ghumot playing, he recently conducted a workshop at the Nirmala Institute of Education, Altinho-Panjim. The session drew enthusiastic participation, with 40 to 50 ghumots brought in for the occasion, an encouraging sign of growing local interest in the instrument.

"I earlier had a workshop which was a part of a structured preparation for a larger performance. The

former principal Dr Delia Antao, was encouraging and I held four intensive classes and rehearsals, during which participants learned various solo techniques, starting slow, building to medium, and then fast tempos. The sessions also had songs which were difficult for new students. I first had to teach them how to play the ghumot before introducing the music," explains Carlos. Despite the initial hurdles, the group made impressive progress, ultimately performing two full songs at an event at the college.

IN SEARCH OF NEW TALENT WITH 3G - GIRLS GHUMOT GROUP

Dr Suresh Kunkalikar, principal of Goa College of Agriculture, Old Goa is always on the look out for fresh talent entering the college in the new academic year. Through the year, he gives the students a stage to showcase their talent. "Last year, we have great ghumot players who used to perform ghumot aartis too. They were also part of different festivals at the college. During the orientation programme, ask the students about their talents and accordingly make them part of the Heritage, Music and Culture Committee which further motivates other students. We also introduced 3G, a Girls Ghumot Group which performed in college," explains Dr Suresh.



Montfort Institute, Corlim

MOULDING STUDENTS FOR THE GHUMOT

Marius Fernandes has been promoting the ghumot through the various people's festivals organised by him in the past 18 years. It was through these festivals, that many potters were able to take their ghumots to the hands of young boys and girls. "The Ghumot is not just an instrument, it's the heartbeat of Goa. When it echoes, it awakens our ancestors, stirs our soil, and unites every Goan, young and old, in rhythm and spirit. The time has come to take it to the world and hand it to the girl child which has been happening at all our recent festivals and the girls and women have accepted it gleefully and are prepared to play with style and innovation. The Ghumot is the living pulse of Goa. It's time the world heard their rhythm."

THE STEP FORWARD

When it comes to teaching the ghumot, Sameer Gadekar, an actor and ghumot teacher, feels that the students should be trained with the right foundation especially if they are performing aartis and songs. He usually conducts workshops at schools based in Mapusa and Aldona. "Many students in higher classes play the instrument but have learnt it by watching YouTube videos. Some play the instrument without understanding the rhythm or beat where the voice also cannot be heard," explains Sameer. While Sameer is glad that the government has declared it as a heritage instrument, he hopes it becomes a lot more affordable for parents to buy the ghumot for their children.



The silent struggles of women on Goa's buses

For many female students, catching a bus isn't just about getting to college, it's about surviving the stares, the stalking, and the silent trauma that follows

Swati Suryawanshi

Buses may be the most affordable way to travel across Goa, but for countless young women, the real cost isn't the fare, it's the fear. It's not the monsoons, the heat, or even missing a bus that troubles them most. The real challenge is the silent harassment they endure. From subtle touches disguised as bus jerks to older men invading their space under the pretext of crowding, these everyday experiences slowly erode their dignity.

Sneha Suryawanshi, a BBA graduate from Don Bosco College, recalls a ride home to Assonora during her exams. "I stood there frozen, hoping someone would notice, but everyone was lost in their own world." She describes how a

man deliberately pressed against her in the crowded bus. When she finally alerted a woman nearby, the man backed off, only after being warned. "The look he gave me before getting off, full of arrogance, still haunts me." Today, she doesn't stay silent. "Even older men, whom we're taught to respect, are sometimes the ones who violate that trust."

Tulsi Sharma, a student from Mapusa, shares a similar experience. "A man kept brushing against me. I gave him a sharp look and called him out loudly, that made him stop." For Tulsi, the solution begins at home. "Men need to be taught morals. But since many are already grown, women must be empowered to speak up, record, and call out such behaviour." She adds, "Because the hard truth is no one is



coming to save you. Not your father, not your brother, not your boyfriend. Every woman should be her own protector." Anna Da Cunha from Margao recalls an incident where a man first sat beside her, brushing her chest with his hands and still, she says. When she got off in Panjim, he followed her, tried to talk, even offered

her food, and then got on the same bus to Margao. "He tried sitting next to me again. When he couldn't, he sat behind me near other women." This wasn't an isolated case. "Many men sit in the ladies' section or purposely stalk female passengers. It's mentally exhausting."

The problem runs deeper than a single commute. Beverly Monteiro, a

student counsellor at St Xavier's College, Mapusa, says while students don't drop out because of such incidents, many avoid late buses, change routes, or travel in groups just to feel safe.

"Whenever a woman is harassed, society asks what she was wearing or why she was standing there. We need to shift that conversation." She explains that counselling helps survivors process the trauma, understand it wasn't their fault, and find the confidence to report and ride again. Her advice: "Stand near the front, sit in the ladies' section, travel with a buddy, and don't hesitate to ask another woman or fellow passenger for help."

We need to stop expecting women to adjust to unsafe spaces. The burden of shame isn't

theirs to carry. The buses may always be crowded—but the silence around what happens on them can no longer be.



Billie Eilish and her rumoured boyfriend, Nat Wolff seemingly confirm their romance with a kiss in Italy. Nat, who is one half of the musical duo Nat & Alex Wolff, with brother Alex, starred in Eilish's self-directed 'Chihiro' music video.

SWIPE RIGHT



Jamie Foxx honoured and Kevin Hart roasts all at BET 2025

The 2025 BET Awards pulled out all the stops to mark its 25th anniversary, delivering a night of standout performances, heartfelt tributes, and sharp humour. Hosted by comedian Kevin Hart, the show blended nostalgia with celebration, featuring powerhouse vocals from artists such as Jennifer Hudson and Leon Thomas III. Hart's opening monologue was packed with jokes aimed at stars like Cardi B, Playboi Carti, and Kanye West, but he saved some of his best jabs for Ultimate Icon Award recipient Kirk Franklin.

Rising star DoeChii took home her first BET Award for Best Female Hip-Hop Artist. In her acceptance speech, she turned the spotlight on the protests taking place outside the venue. "We all deserve to live in hope and not in fear. I hope we stand together, my brothers and sisters, against hate and protest against it."

A particularly memorable moment came from Stevie Wonder, who introduced long-time friend Jamie Foxx's Ultimate Icon Award tribute. Foxx was honoured with a star-studded medley featuring Ludacris, T-Pain, Jennifer Hudson and more. Visibly moved, he accepted the award with a touching and humorous speech, reflecting on his 2023 hospitalisation, thanking his family and fans.



Billie Eilish and her rumoured boyfriend, Nat Wolff seemingly confirm their romance with a kiss in Italy. Nat, who is one half of the musical duo Nat & Alex Wolff, with brother Alex, starred in Eilish's self-directed 'Chihiro' music video.