

# THE PEACOCK

SATURDAY, 25 NOVEMBER 2023





BY DAMODAR MAUZO

In Goa, we have produced a number of writers who have earned great reputation in the rest of the country, and even worldwide. Besides the stalwarts who gave a big push to Konkani literature, we have those who served the neighbouring Marathi language along with Portuguese and English. Right from Monsignor Sebastiao Rodolfo Dalgado, the lexicographer and researcher, to the Jnanpith awardee Ravindra Kelekar, the essayist par excellence who strived for the upliftment of Konkani, and the pioneer of modern Konkani literature Sheno Goembab to the brilliant theologian and Sanskrit scholar Dr. Jose Pereira, we have a wide range of writers. Those distinguished writers who contributed to English literature include eminent poets like Armando Menezes and Dom Moraes, the list is very long.

However, for this column for IFFI delegates, I would like to dwell upon a multitasking personality, Dr. Francisco Luis Gomes (1829-1869), who earned laurels in diverse disciplines during his short-lived span of life, and he began his career by excelling in his studies at the renowned Goa Medical College, the very same building at the centre of this festival's heritage precinct. He was the first Indian intellectual to

become widely recognized on equal terms by his contemporaries in the West, being awarded a Doctorate in Social and Political Sciences by the University of Louvain in Belgium, and becoming a Member of the Society of Medical Sciences of Lisbon, the Society of Economics of Paris, and the Royal Academy of Sciences of Lisbon

Gomes was an extraordinary polyglot who knew, besides his Konkani mother tongue, Marathi, Latin, Portuguese, Italian, Spanish, and English. He even revised the works of Fr. Thomas Stephens, author of an early Konkani Grammar. Immediately

after graduation, he served Goa Medical School as a Professor and also as a surgeon, then his countrymen elected him as a member of the Portuguese Parliament where he played a magnificent innings on behalf of freedom, equality, justice, and truth. Dr. Gomes also advocated for agricultural reforms, including 'land to the tiller' to be adopted in his colonised homeland. Taking note of his brilliant oratory and clarity of thought, he was offered a ministerial post, which he turned down in order to remain independent.

Dr Francisco Luis Gomes, who

hailed from the village of Navelim near Margao, had the courage to demand independence far before other Indian nationalists, proudly proclaiming that "I belong to the race which composed the Mahabharata and invented Chess. But this nation that made codes of its poems and formulated politics in a game is no longer alive. It survives imprisonment in its own country. I ask for India liberty and light." To date this remarkable statement remains buried in most tellings of our

history. Dr. Gomes died in 1869, at the early age of forty, and that may have contributed to being forgotten, but it is high time the government of India takes notice of his vision of compassion for his people and pride for his nation. Sadly, there is very little mention of this great man in our polity.

As a writer myself, I am particularly proud of Gomes' contribution to Indian literature. As far back as 1865, he wrote the first-ever novel by any Indian author to be published in Europe. *Os Brâmanes* speaks of the evils of the caste system and untouchability, and should be much better known and celebrated than it is (although it has long been available in Konkani, Marathi and English translation). Other than one excellent essay about it by the Booker Prize winner Aravind Adiga some years ago called *The Lusitanian in Hind*, there is almost no mention of this valuable early novel in the literary history of India.

## Liberty and Light

SHORT TAKES



I love the vibrancy of this place. These kinds of opportunities and platforms are not usually available to regional filmmakers like me.

**Amitabha Chaterji**  
Director  
Kolkata



I feel like there was more representation for women in this year's panels. I'm glad they've finally settled on Goa as the venue for IFFI.

**Suchana Saha**  
Director  
Mumbai



You can compare IFFI to the Cannes Festival which is also along the French Riviera. In a way you can say that this is the Indian Cannes.

**Manoj Nandwana**  
Distributor  
Mumbai



They're not treating the media representatives very well over here. This has been my worst year at IFFI.

**Namrata Shukla**  
Journalist  
Lucknow





Photo by Assavri Kulkarni

## On The Wild Side

BY PRAGYA BHAGAT

Under the gaze of the international film fraternity, Kartiki Gonsalves - along with producer Guneet Monga - won the Academy Award for Best Documentary Short Film for *The Elephant Whisperers* (2022) last year. Here in Panjim, at the 54<sup>th</sup> edition of IFFI, the first Indian film director to win an Oscar spoke to *The Peacock* about life before and after the global recognition.

Gonsalves grew up as a child of the forest, in the Nilgiri Biosphere of Tamil Nadu. “My grandmother was a naturalist who took children to nature reserves. My mother is a historian who had a strong bond with animals. My father is a computer scientist who was very interested in photography.” As a child, Gonsalves was taken to aquariums, museums, and long walks in the forest. “That’s where it all began for me. I was the girl who’d bring back a stray puppy every day, until my mother said there were too many in the house.”

Gonsalves always wanted to be a photographer, but bills needed to be paid. Her stints of employment included being a salesgirl at Fabindia, working at a gym, and freelancing as a tour guide. Being a photographer in India, Gonsalves says, was difficult to sustain, and she looked for something on the side to support her passion. “I started exploring cinematography. There was beauty in moving images.”

Gonsalves was 30, and transitioning from a life in Bangalore back to her hometown of Ooty, when she first met Raghu, the baby elephant that changed her life. “He was the cutest little three-month-old calf I’d ever seen.” She witnessed the relationship Raghu shared with Bomman who was part of the *mahout*, or elephant caretaker, community. “What was behind this beautiful bond?” Her research led to the discovery that “Raghu was there because of climate change. His mother got electrocuted and died on the spot. Bomman became his foster father.” Over the next year and a half, Gonsalves kept returning to

Mudumalai. She wanted people to see and feel what she was experiencing with Raghu and his bond with Bomman. *The Elephant Whisperers* was born.

“In the beginning, everything was a question. I took my first funding from my mother. The initial belief and support came from her.” When the documentary started to become a reality, Gonsalves looked for directors, and in the end, it became her debut into the field. Later, when Netflix came on board, they provided her with a list of international producers, which wasn’t going to work. She wanted an Indian producer; Guneet Monga joined the project. “Guneet introduced me to Douglas Blush, who is our Executive Producer, co-editor, and my mentor. He was a big support system in my journey. You spend a lot of days alone, long work hours, a lot of time in the field. You have to have a tight group of people who know you in and out, because there’s lots of ups and downs in the process.”

Though *The Elephant Whisperers*

is an “indigenous film from the heart of South India,” Gonsalves says it has “connected with people across the world.” She has received hundreds of artworks, renditions of the film’s theme song, and countless messages of gratitude. The Indian hockey team made an elephant named Bomman their mascot for the Asian Championship in 2023. From the Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu to the Prime Minister of India, national leaders have acknowledged Bomman and his wife Bellie for their work. One of Gonsalves’ fondest memories is when the President of India, who is also from an indigenous community of India, got to meet Bomman and Bellie. “The moment is etched in my heart forever.”

Gonsalves’ next documentary is based in the Pacific Northwest of Canada, which focuses on the First Nation communities and their spiritual relationships with orcas. Her focus continues to be on human-animal relationships. After the Oscars, the director is determined to bring social change through storytelling.

SHORT TAKES



My experience was average, but the location is marvelous. I like the buildings and structures in the city.

**Parbon Mazhar**  
Film-making  
Dhaka



I’m here to advocate for accessibility features in films so that entertainment is available for people with auditory and visual impairments.

**Aparna Verma**  
Media Associate  
Pondicherry



The environment here is so peaceful and tranquil. It allows you to reflect on your thoughts in peace.

**Suresh Sharma**  
Vice President  
(IDPA)  
Mumbai



I liked *Gandhi Talks*; it’s the first silent film I saw after *Pushpak* and *The Artist*.

**Bilwa Dalvi**  
Lawyer  
Ahmednagar





## Selam Ceylan!

BY SACHIN CHATTE

Turkish auteur Nuri Bilge Ceylan's presence with *About Dry Grasses* as the mid-fest film at the International Film Festival of India is one of the highlights of the year. IFFI has seen some well-known filmmakers in the past like Kim Ki Duk, Cristian Mungiu, Lav Diaz, Krzysztof Zanussi and Andrey Zvyagintsev, to name a few, and Ceylan ranks among the best of the very best. He is no stranger to India though, having attended the Kolkata International Film Festival (2011) and the International Film Festival of Kerala in 2014.

For someone who started studying chemistry and then shifted to electrical engineering and went on to become one of the most prominent filmmakers in world cinema, Ceylan has come a long way. From winning photography competitions (his work, which includes some photos from India, has been exhibited at several museums around the world), to doing military service and then finally discovering that his calling was cinema when he went to

study at Mimar Sinan University, there has been no looking back after that.

His short film *Koza* (1995), which he produced, edited and directed became the first Turkish film at the Cannes Film Festival and since then, every film of his made it to prominent festivals around the world. His debut feature *Kasaba* (The Town, 1997) premiered in Berlin, and won the FIPRESCI (International Critics) prize at Istanbul. Set in a sleepy Turkish village, and revolving around the four seasons, the film was shot on a shoestring budget where Ceylan also doubled up as the cinematographer with some stunning shots in black and white. This was the first of his Provincial trilogy, which includes *Clouds of May* (1999) and *Uzak* (2002). With those three films, he affirmed his place as a festival favorite and critics and cinephiles from the world took note of his languid, unapologetically artistic style, with sparse dialogues. *Uzak* won the Grand Jury Prize at Cannes in 2002.

In 2006, Ceylan made *Climates*, in which he acted with Ebru Ceylan, whom he went on to marry. Manohla Dargis called it "a film that paints

a haunting portrait of existential solitude, one in which the images speak louder and often more forcefully than do any of the words." Following that, *Three Monkeys* (2008), a subtle social commentary won him the Best Director award at Cannes, but the best was still yet to come.

*Once Upon a Time in Anatolia* was released in 2011 and it remains the director's most recognized work. A remarkably haunting film with stunning visuals, I can still see the car headlights on the Anatolian steppe. What is so great about that, you might think? You have to see it to experience it because there is also a larger context to the visuals and the manner in which the story unfolds. This is probably the slowest of the slow burners, and also the best of the slow burners. I remember when we screened this film at our popular Goa Cinephile Film Club, the post-screening discussion spilled onto our Whatsapp group for days. As a curator, I have never seen a livelier discussion on cinema.

*Anatolia* was the co-winner of the Grand Prix at Cannes but his next film, *Winter Sleep* (2014) took the top

prize, the Palm d'Or. Adapted from the novella by Anton Chekov and a subplot of a story by Dostoyevsky, this was another signature Ceylan film – brooding, absorbing, occasionally demanding and eventually mesmerizing. The film clocks 196 minutes (the longest film ever to win the Palm d'Or) and I remember the night screening at IFFI in 2014. The film started around 10.30 pm and it was almost 2 a.m. by the time it got over. Even though there was considerable sleep deprivation during festival time, *Winter Sleep* kept me wide awake.

*The Wild Pear Tree* (2018) another three-hour-long film was also screened at IFFI that year. Inspired by a real-life story, Ceylan met the actor on Facebook and decided to cast him in the lead role of a struggling writer. There is always a lot to admire in a Ceylan film, and in the case of *The Wild Pear Tree*, it was the use of music (and sometimes lack of it) and the background score itself. After the screening, I remember sitting in the Kala Academy canteen and pondering about cinema and life, over a cup of tea. Filmler için teşekkürler Ceylan bey!

SHORT TAKES



You get to meet a lot of independent, indigenous artists, which isn't very common at other festivals. What better place than Goa!

**Suchira Halder**  
Executive  
Producer  
Kolkata



*Mountain Onion* was the best film so far because of the subtlety of its narrative.

**Sarath Kovilakam**  
Actor  
Kerala



I enjoyed the beachside chats; I think they went well. Goa has become a melting pot for cultures and communities. It's the best place for an event like this.

**Ekta Bhandari**  
Founder  
Mumbai



I have attended a lot of master-classes, sessions and lectures here and at the Film Bazaar. I enjoyed *Road to Oscars* the most.

**Dnyaneshwari Vichare**  
Writer  
Pune



# Many-Hued Man

BY MAAZ BIN BILAL

Jitin Hingorani is buzzing with energy as he moves around in his couture kurta at the Film Bazaar, introducing a panel, connecting producers and filmmakers, and performing various other tasks as the event's Programming Head in its 17th iteration. This is a newly created role at National Film Development Corporation of India (NFDC) that Hingorani has filled since the first week of July this year. He spoke to *The Peacock* about his vision for it, and his own trajectory.

With degrees in English from Oxford and broadcast journalism from Austin, Texas, Hingorani also brings with him varied entrepreneurial experience and interests. The most important factor for the Film Bazaar, he feels, is "having an understanding of the needs of filmmakers," having been involved with filmmaking and programming since many years. Hingorani is the executive producer of the documentary *Call Me Dancer* (2023) which follows the international journey of the first male ballet dancer from India across five cities, and the associate producer for *Zende: The Supercop* (2023), which focusses on the man who caught Charles Shobhraj—conman supreme—twice.

Hingorani has also curated for the South by Southwest (SXSW) fest at Austin, Texas, and the South Asian content at SXSW at Sydney, Australia, through his curatorial venture South Asian House, and worked as a television journalist for many years in New York covering Bollywood celebrities. At various times, he's also launched a PR Company, a men's luxury line, a travel company, a culture organization, the Dallas Indian Arts Collective, and combines his "Sindhi business sense" with a penchant for "platforming artists of all kinds." He believes in "putting whatever you have out there in the sole life one has to live. I love films, I love fashion and I love the arts and I have been very fortunate to make a

living doing that."

The image-maker in Hingorani urges me to imagine Film Bazaar through the "extended-metaphor of a wheel" to further filmmaking in India and South Asia, with "each spoke supporting an important vertical of filmmaking. Even our logo symbolizes that completion of processes in that wheel." Each year, Film Bazaar gives out a call for submissions, from which a jury selects a handful of participants. For the Coproduction Market, they received 253 applications and selected 32, 8 were selected from 160 for Screen Lab, 30 out of 60 for Book to Box Office, a mere 10 from 157 entries for Work in Progress, and another 10 from 200 for the Film Bazaar recommends Viewing Room.

Hingorani says "the idea is to have the world's attention on Indian projects. Given the success of Indian documentaries just in the last year, the amount of buzz Indian projects are getting across the globe with the Indian diaspora in support, and mainstream communities are now finally starting to pay attention to our content, it's time for us to amp up our internal infrastructure to churn out the content that will deliver internationally."

Regarding his own role, Hingorani stresses the importance of furthering the wonderful work of Nina Lath Gupta, "an icon" who started Film Bazaar as then NFDC director, whose "big shoes he has to fill".

Now, he says, Film Bazaar should be the "hottest ticket in town" at the level of Cannes, a destination for the very best. But how is he planning to go about it? Hingorani says he is programming through his own unique lens, getting a lot of diaspora productions, and making sure the Bazaar is representative through programming from women, from different Indian languages beyond Hindi because "India is so much more than that". A deep dive of this year's projects will reveal that they are all unique and diverse and made by "all sorts of people on the spectrum".



Photo by Assavri Kulkarni

SHORT TAKES



I really liked *Thunders*; the shots of feet were purposeful. I feel like Goa is very similar to Kerala and I have been eating a lot of fish.

**Pranathy Pushkar**  
Student  
Kerala



The daily editions of *The Peacock* have kept me updated on the happenings at IFFI. I'm really enjoying attending the festival.

**P Dhiresh**  
Student  
Chennai



I feel like people mostly come here to party, but I'm trying to stay focused and meet like-minded people who are here for the work.

**Pramiti Narke**  
Actor  
Pune



I like the diversity of the films at IFFI; I watched *Gandhi & Co* and *Toldi*. I'm loving the energy, nature, and architecture in Goa.

**Édua Kiszner**  
Film-maker  
Hungary



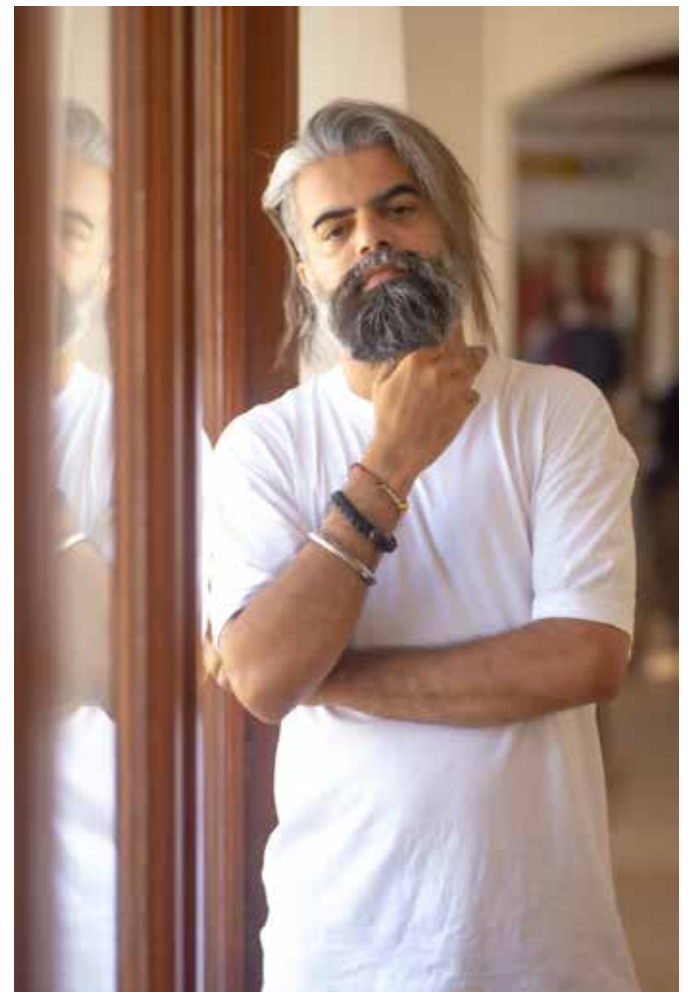






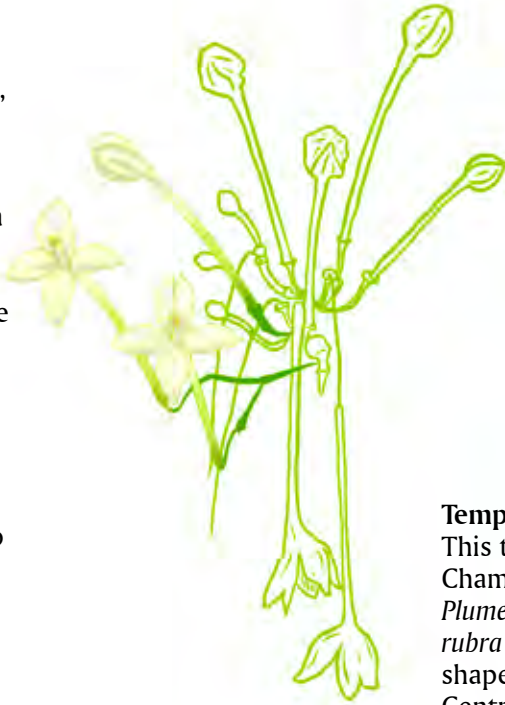


Illustration by Trisha Dias Sabir

There are quite a few trees, shrubs, herbs, vines, ramblers, and creepers in bloom right now. You are likely to see them as you move around from one venue to another, at the International Film Festival of India, on the Mandovi waterfront.

**Tree Jasmine, *Mellingtonia hortensis***

Tree jasmines dot the Dayanand Bhandodkar road, especially near ESG-INOX and the Kala Academy. The trumpet-shaped milky-white flowers have a slender tube. One can see them like a carpet on the ground below. The delicate fragrance of its flowers is tangible in the early morning and in the misty moonlight, as we head to the Kartik Poornima on 27 November. Children hold the flower by the tube, dip the broad end in a soap solution and then remove to blow from the other end to get soap bubbles. It was earlier called as the India Cork tree because the British thought they could make bottle stoppers with the bark. It did not work.



**Temple Tree, *Plumeria species***

This tree has various names like Pagoda Tree, Temple Tree, Champaka and Frangipani. It also has many species including *Plumeria alba* with white to cream coloured flowers, *Plumeria rubra* with red to maroon flowers, *Plumeria pudica* with arrow-shaped leaves and other variants. Though these species are Central American in origin, they are attributed religious significance across Asia by Hindus and Buddhists alike. There are three species of Frangipani in the Dr. F.L. Gomes Garden in Campal and two good specimens of *Plumeria alba* can be seen at the Panjim Gymkhana parking lot.



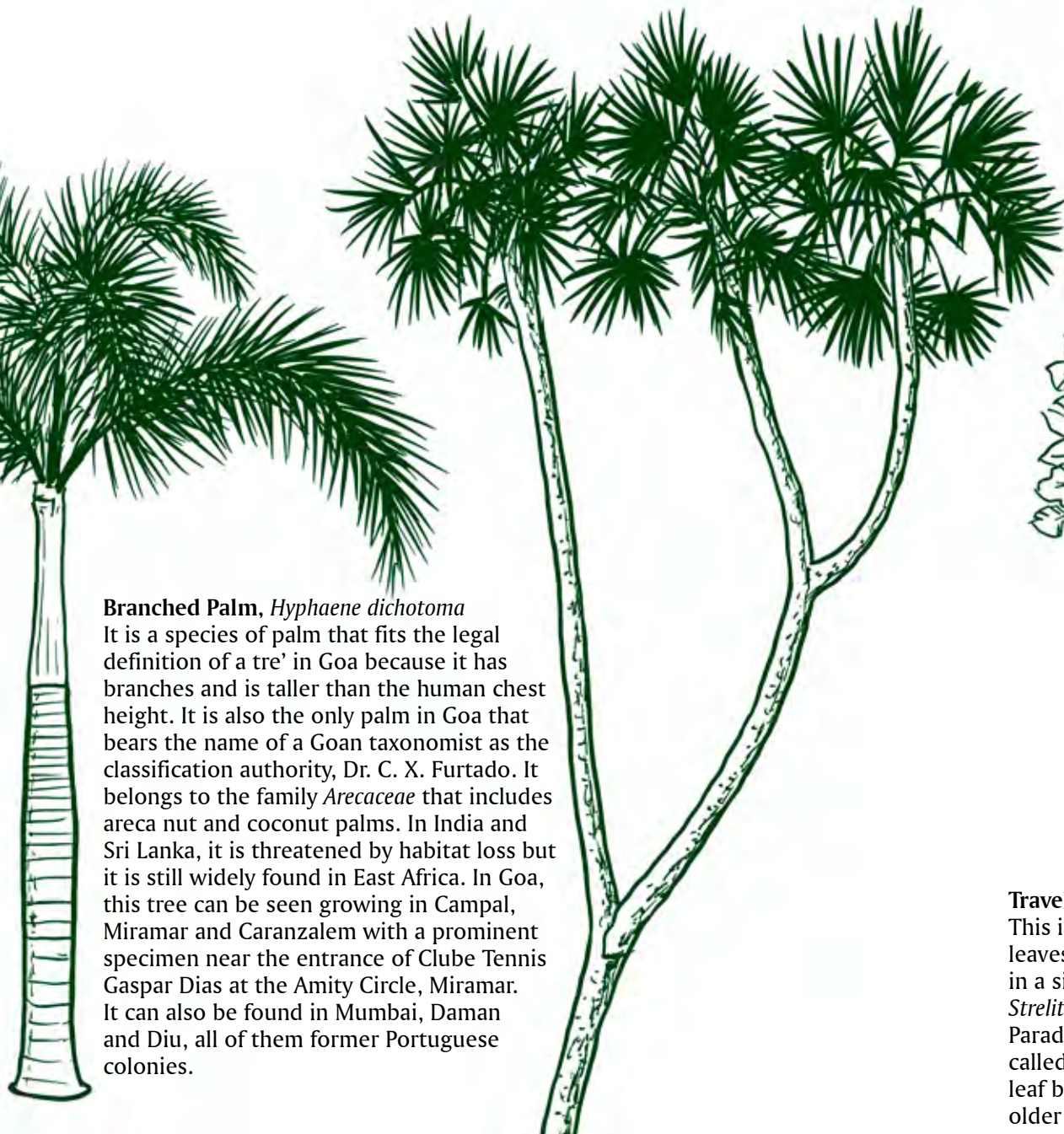
**Peacock Flower, *Caesalpinia pulcherrima***

Known variously as Poinciana, Shankar and Peacock Flower, it is a flowering shrub belonging to the pea and beans family, *Fabaceae*. The stem is thorny and the shrub bears flat pods like beans. It is native to the tropics and subtropics of the Americas. Its exact origin is unknown due to widespread cultivation across the world. It is often regarded as a dwarf Gulmohar or Flamboyant tree, *Delonix regia*.



**Foxtail Palm, *Wodyetia bifurcata***

This palm has plumose leaf fronds and hence it was called as Foxtail Palm. The name of the genus *Wodyetia* is in honour of the aboriginal man named Wodyeti who showed this palm to botanists in 1978. Till then, this the genus from Australia was unknown to the rest of the world. These palms can be seen near the Ashoka Stambh in the Garcia de Orta garden in the Church Square. This palm is often confused for the Royal Palm *Roystonea regia*, that can be seen between the ESG building and the Maquinez Palace. It has distinctly different leaf fronds.



**Branched Palm, *Hyphaene dichotoma***

It is a species of palm that fits the legal definition of a tree in Goa because it has branches and is taller than the human chest height. It is also the only palm in Goa that bears the name of a Goan taxonomist as the classification authority, Dr. C. X. Furtado. It belongs to the family *Arecaceae* that includes areca nut and coconut palms. In India and Sri Lanka, it is threatened by habitat loss but it is still widely found in East Africa. In Goa, this tree can be seen growing in Campal, Miramar and Caranzalem with a prominent specimen near the entrance of Clube Tennis Gaspar Dias at the Amity Circle, Miramar. It can also be found in Mumbai, Daman and Diu, all of them former Portuguese colonies.



**Traveler's Palm, *Ravenala madagascariensis***

This is a false palm belonging to the banana plant family, *Strelitziaceae*. Its leaves remind one of the banana plant but they are arranged in a single plane instead of a circle. It is called a Traveler's Palm and one is about 10m tall. There are many young plant specimens and older specimens can be seen in the Chi...





**The Copper Pod, *Peltophorum pterocarpum***

These trees are in flower amidst the Rain Trees all along the Dayanand Bhandarkar Road from the Ferry Jetty to the Kala Academy. The small golden flowers and the rusty or copper-coloured pods from the previous flowering can be seen on these trees that resemble tamarind trees, except for their showy flowers. Peak flowering is over and the next season is yet to begin. In springtime the ground below the Copper Pod tree is a sea of gold with a carpet of fallen flowers.

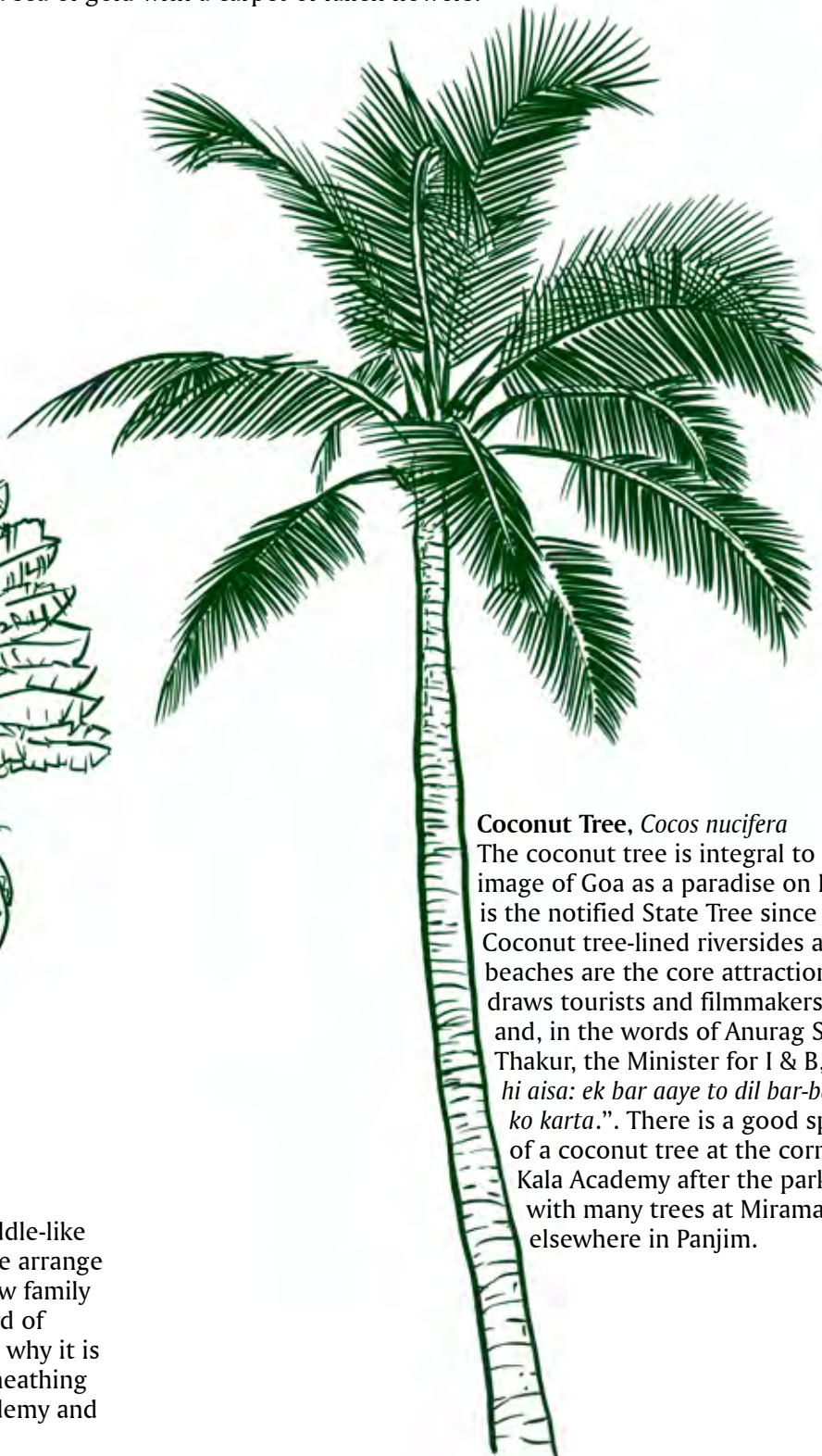


**African tulip tree, *Spathodea campanulata***

As the name suggests, this tree is native to Africa. It grows into a medium sized tree in Goa, but is known to grow up to twenty-five metres tall in its native lands. The flower buds look like rusty ladyfinger pods and contain water. The flowers bloom in bright orange to saffron colour. These trees are in flower at the Children's Park in Campal, in the Menezes-Braganza Garden, near the Collectorate building and near hotel Panjim Residency

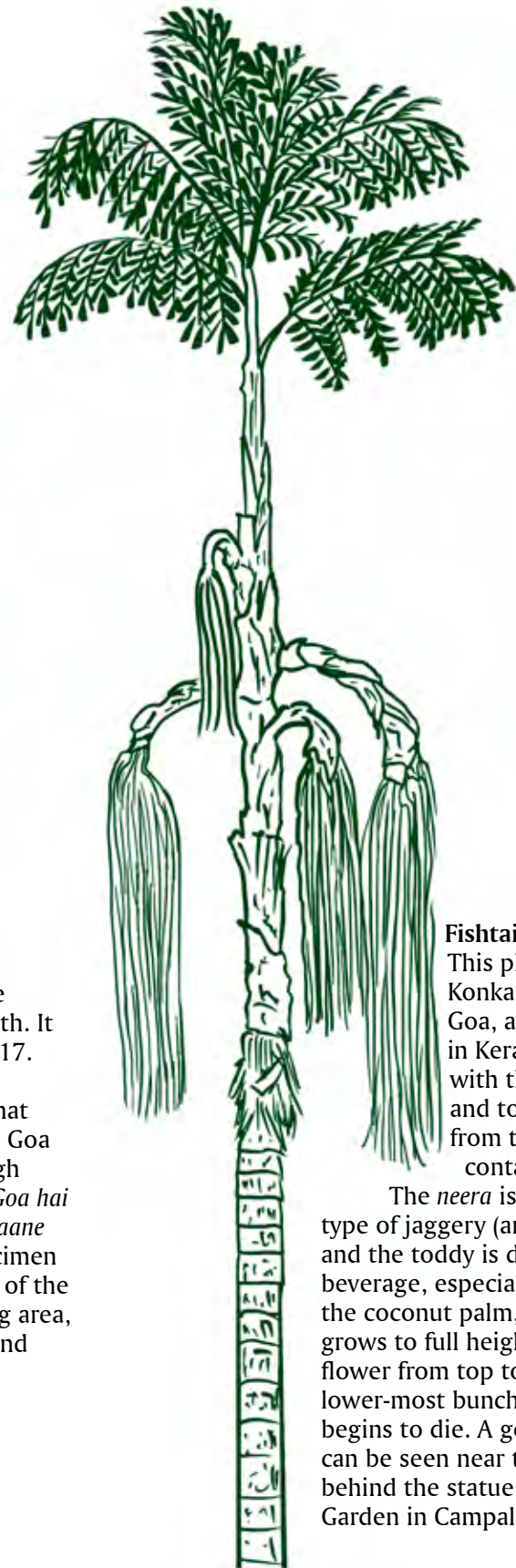


sis  
nana family, *Musaceae*. The paddle-like  
except for the fact that they are arrange  
s now being included in the new family  
garden plants, including the Bird of  
here are various versions as to why it is  
at the storage of water in its sheathing  
s at the main gate of Kala Academy and  
ldren's Park at Campal.



**Coconut Tree, *Cocos nucifera***

The coconut tree is integral to the image of Goa as a paradise on Earth. It is the notified State Tree since 2017. Coconut tree-lined riversides and beaches are the core attraction that draws tourists and filmmakers to Goa and, in the words of Anurag Singh Thakur, the Minister for I & B, "Goa hai hi aisa: ek bar aaye to dil bar-bar aane ko karta.". There is a good specimen of a coconut tree at the corner of the Kala Academy after the parking area, with many trees at Miramar and elsewhere in Panjim.



**Fishtail Palm, *Caryota urens***

This plant is native to the Konkan region, including Goa, and can also be found in Kerala and Sri Lanka. Like with the coconut, *neera* and toddy can be tapped from the unopened spathes containing the flowers.

The *neera* is used to make one type of jaggery (an unrefined sugar), and the toddy is drunk as an alcoholic beverage, especially in Kerala. Unlike the coconut palm, the fishtail palm grows to full height and begins to flower from top to down. When the lower-most bunch matures, the palm begins to die. A good specimen of this can be seen near the internal road behind the statue in the Dr. F.L. Gomes Garden in Campal



# “Art is secondary to survival”

BY SAACHI D'SOUZA

**P**ankaj Tripathi is many things on the screen: Sultan, Babulal, Narottam Mishra, Aatma Singh, Akhandanand Tripathi, and most recently, AK Shrivastav. What he isn't, despite blending into all those varied roles, is ordinary. But he'll tell you he is. “I'm a middle-class man. *Hum bhi roti hi khaati hain* (we eat rotis like everyone). It's only when I file my taxes do I realise that's not the case anymore,” he said to Mayank Shekhar in their Masterclass on Unique Swagger in Every Role at Kala Academy.

*The Peacock* caught up with Tripathi, a few minutes before his session. When we asked what he looks for immediately in a character, he told us it is “their history. The background, context, that's really important.” Later, in his session, he said that “when I used to go for auditions in Mumbai, I'd see people of all kinds - vendors, railway workers, theatre artists - and in those days you don't know the person playing your mother or daughter. I don't know whether my on-screen daughter likes her food spicy, salty, or sweet. An actor fleshes out these details and creates the world of a character.”

Tripathi recalled his days at the National School of Drama, where the students were required to do yoga every morning: “We were stumped. Are we here to become yogis? But later we understood what it meant to include the physical body in acting. The flexibility of the body ensures the flexibility of the mind. Emotions are a body's game.” Of course, as an actor builds his persona in this industry, his uniqueness can become challenging. Shekhar asked Tripathi whether the fandom around the unique

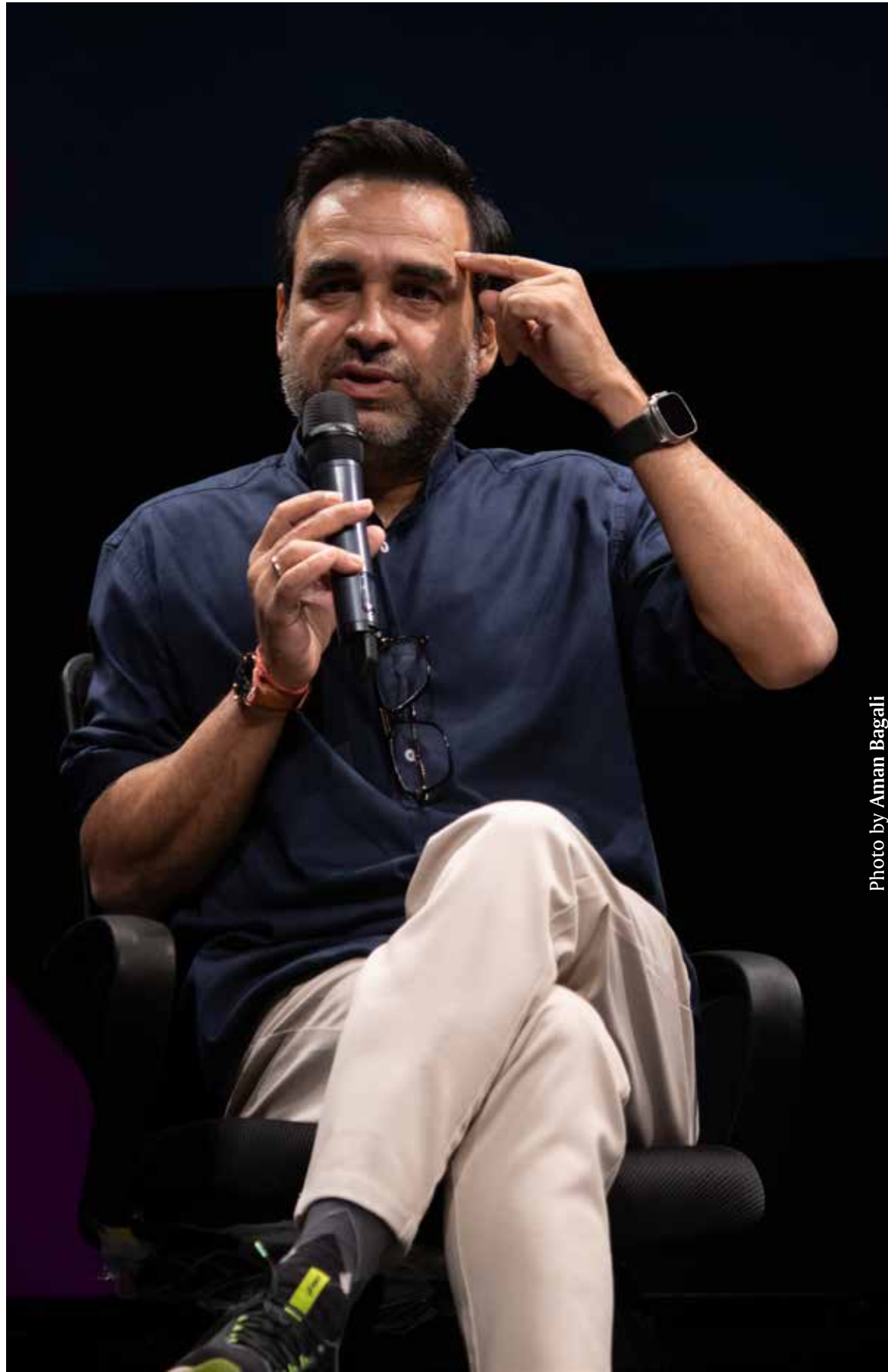


Photo by Aman Bagali

mannerisms of old Bollywood film stars, like Dev Anand, remains today, to which Tripathi speaks the eternal truth - “Globalisation has allowed audiences to compare actors' distinct features on-screen. In my case, I'm expected to make everybody laugh. So when I enter a set, the director says, *tum apna bas karlo* (just do your thing). But after a point, it gets hard to escape that expectation. Distinctiveness is also a trap.”

While shooting *Newton* (2017), which involved tribal communities of Chattisgarh, Tripathi recalls “you have people here on set speaking in a language you don't understand, but they're a part of this, and as important to the film. So I spoke to them, in a manner I possibly could - and tried to understand how we, as people, communicate despite barriers like language.”

How does an actor prepare at home? Tripathi muses about the introspection that is key to this process. “On my way to Goa, I was reading about the state's history too. Self-introspection and self-discovery drive preparation. You have to sit with your own world, your own life, and then look at the world around you. What is happening in society right now that would be relevant? This is how you build a character.”

“No matter what role and what film,” says Tripathi, “maintain your truth. I have no bitterness in this industry. *Mera koi dost nahi hai yahaan, na dushman.*”

Fame is an illusion, and it is fleeting - 15 years ago he came to Kala Academy when he was relatively unknown, for an acting course, and it's possible that 15 years from now he'll become unknown again. “Art is secondary to survival,” he says with a small smile.

SHORT TAKES



IFFI is huge and I like to watch the Indian movies here. I felt at home in the Goan markets.

**Mariana Musalem Ramos**  
Film-maker  
Oaxaca



I wish I could spend more time here. I walked along the coast, and ate some amazing food in small places I don't know the names of.

**Suomi Sponton**  
Project  
Coordinator  
Italy



It's really something to be talking about cinema while amidst such cinematic, scenic beauty.

**Yuganshi Baxi**  
Student  
Kolkata



This time IFFI is more cine-focused; that's an upgrade. I like the way Goa has accepted me, even though I am North Indian.

**Keerat Gill**  
Between  
Careers  
Chandigarh



# "IFFI is for the audiences"

BY AILEEN CARNEIRO

**J**erome Paillard has returned to Goa after fifteen years to serve on this year's jury. The former executive director of the Cannes Film Festival's Marche du Film is all praises for IFFI, which, he says, has a very different goal from that of its French counterpart. "Cannes is a market, a festival, a *marché* for the industry worldwide, with tens of thousands of participants. Here, at IFFI, I like that it is more of a boutique market, and the festival is for a real audience." He chooses not to compare the two festivals, other than that both take place by the beach.

He remarks on how IFFI has grown over the years. "It has seen a huge change. The size, the number of films screened, the NFDC Film Bazaar, the work of the Entertainment Society of Goa are all impressive. The screening rooms are very good." He has paid a visit to the technical booth and considers it well-equipped. "Some films from Cannes are also shown here. People are enjoying the festival and the ambience is great," he notes.

Under Paillard's leadership, the *Marché du Film* has been forward-thinking: "Technology helped us with tools, databases, online screenings and digital screenings. We created some small boutiques within the large factory, organising events for documentaries and short films. We had many events for producers to meet, and to find co-producers or financing from other countries. 110-120 countries were represented, with pavilions from every country. The great power of Cannes is that it's truly international."

The downside remains that there is no general audience. "In Cannes it's only professionals, producers, distributors, critics. But there are very few tickets for a real audience. Unfortunately, we don't have enough cinemas in Cannes and there is not enough room for the citizens of the city to attend films, which I think would be fantastic to have. IFFI is really for the audiences."



Photo by Siddhartha Lall

Having worked for a huge festival, Paillard enjoys smaller setups such as the Locarno International Film Festival and La Rochelle International Film Festival. "The size of these events is appropriate for meeting people and networking. Another favourite is San Sebastián International Film Festival in Spain, also because the food is very good. Good food is important in a festival," he maintains.

Besides stepping down from Cannes, last year, Paillard also retired from his role as co-director of *Ventana Sur*, which specialises in making Latin-American films. "We represented all of South America. They have many co-productions there. It's a cinema which is usually focused on their social stories and their culture." While it was not an easy task, Paillard and his team helped develop the market for these films in Europe and North America. "Cinema is important in showing minorities and their quest for a better life."

Paillard has long Indian connections including working at the company co-owned by Daniel Toscan du Plantier and Gérard Depardieu, when they co-produced Satyajit Ray's last film. He recalls with nostalgia, "I didn't work with him personally. But, of course, I love his films. India produces hundreds of films every year, but for Europeans or for people who like arthouse films, it's always a pity that there are not so many of those gems like *The Lunchbox* (2013). I don't know if we lack those kinds of filmmakers, or, if unfortunately, they are not recognised."

Although Paillard's schedule at IFFI doesn't leave him with enough time to thoroughly read *The Peacock*, he's been enjoying the short takes - "I think that's a very smart idea." - and has paid close enough attention to catch the tiny but nonetheless embarrassing slip-up that we made on the first day: "I was very surprised when I saw a portion of the paper missing. I thought maybe there was a mistake and someone came in with scissors and snipped it out. I like that, when you don't know what happened but you realise something did. That's a good story."

SHORT TAKES



I liked *Seventh Heaven*; a common story was dealt with uniquely and humorously. Transportation is an issue here.

**Sumi Bahuleyan**  
Subtitler  
Kerala



I've been to the Dharamshala International Film Festival, but IFFI is a lot bigger. I've met a lot of like-minded people here.

**MD Sabbir**  
Film Student  
Dhaka



I liked *Aattam*, *Kaathal*, and *Mountain Onion*. Everybody in the halls was respectful to the movies.

**Diya Mariya George**  
Journalist  
Kerala



This is my first time here in India; I'm only here for a day. I want to introduce our IPs to Indian production companies.

**Yoshihiko Yamazaki**  
Licensing  
Manager  
Japan





Photos by Michael Praveen

# Cine Mela

BY SAACHI D'SOUZA

The International Film Festival of India celebrations extend far beyond the buzzing venues you can only access with a pass, and onto the gorgeous public walkway opposite the Old GMC building extending up the Mandovi river. An initiative of the Entertainment Society of Goa, which also publishes *The Peacock*, the vibrant Cine Mela on the Yog Setu promenade includes tents from the National Film Archives of India (NFAI) and the National Film Development Corporation of India (NFDC) to highlight their collaborative National Film Heritage Mission (NFHM) and the National Museum of Indian

Cinema (NMIC). At the first tent, a man is unravelling an old film roll for display and a large projector in the middle is where visitors will learn about the old ways of film viewing. This is the vision of the mela - to showcase the preservation, labour and *maza* of cinema. After all, cinema is a culture. Sometimes you need to see the dust on a film roll to 'feel' this world.

Ankita Mishra (IAS), the newly appointed CEO of the ESG says the mela aims to allow local businesses from Goa, which specialize in things like handicrafts and food, to connect with everyone who is attracted to the décor and festive air of Panjim during IFFI.

"We do get a good response from everyone who passes by," says Shraddha Gaonkar of Goychi Chul, who was setting up a large plate of clams when we passed by. She says "We do this every year and at this event, our biggest customers are North Indians, because South Indians have access to some of our food traditions, but North Indians enjoy our spices. It's a really good opportunity for our business."

Some tourists travelling in Panjim did tell us that they enjoyed becoming a part of IFFI by stopping by at the mela. One couple told *The Peacock* they had no idea the film festival was going on, but just by being there, they're now learning about the festival, the food and some enjoyable bits of Goan

culture. The real fun begins at night and goes on till 11 pm.

"We're travelling 15 km every day to set up our stall", says Dattaram Chari who runs S Goan Swad Food in the village of Agacaim, serving the quintessential local fast food favourite of *ros omelette*. Chari and his wife have never considered attending IFFI, saying that "if the films were free, we'd happily walk in, but for now we're okay with being here, and serving the public." Ayesha Khan, who is running a jewellery stall close by, tells *The Peacock* the same thing, that the mela is a great space to interact with tourists. "*Hum kuch na kuch unse bhi seekh lete hai*" (we also learn something from them).

SHORT TAKES



I had an interesting Q&A with the director of *Bosnian Pot*. I like IFFI's festive vibe, especially the availability of alcohol in the venue premises.

**Sonali Thakker**  
Comedian  
Mumbai



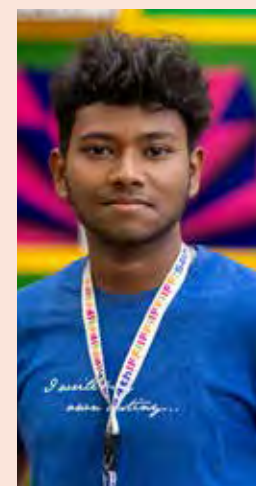
The biographical film, *Shershaah*, was patriotic which I liked. I am enjoying the interactions with famous filmmakers, the master classes, and the outside stalls.

**Saloni Shah**  
Student  
Pune



I was into seamless garments, but now after several years, I've returned to my passion – movies.

**Rakhi Jindal**  
Screenwriter  
Delhi



IFFI is the right place to live, experience, and celebrate the world of cinema. The master classes allowed me to learn new film-making techniques.

**M Bharani Karthik**  
Student  
Chennai



by Pragya Bhagat

**mhadei**

*for the River Mandovi*

in the map of my mind, there are no countries  
only islands and estuaries  
archipelagoes of ideas

there are rivers in this mind  
carriers of current  
just yesterday, i found kabir at the shore  
building a world where fishes climb tamarind trees

*kuen re kinare awadhu, imli si boi re  
jaaro ped machhaliyaan chhaayo hey lo*

and then, i saw a school of birds kabootar through  
the sky  
they dove into fields, found meals beneath mud,  
and these birds rose towards something vast and  
untouchable

life feels like that  
fishes climbing trees  
a fishnet stocking of wings  
a swing that keeps going higher and higher  
every room is a roost  
every conversation is a prayer

mhadei is a goddess  
she reclines on her side, the ebb and flow of chest,  
then waist  
then hip, then thigh, a blue-green garden, never dry

tell me mhadei,  
do you choose what you carry  
what you spit and what you swallow  
who decides your destiny  
is that something you think about  
does hope float  
why do children love you  
have they always loved you  
does destruction have to hurt

this goddess, she's shrinking  
it's hard to find a bright side  
i'm comforted with the knowledge that all of us  
even the rich ones  
are going to become plant food  
there's always going to be more books to read  
than the time we have to read them  
there's always going to be more songs to sing  
than the time we have to sing them  
this is the bright side

still, on some days, i will forget the bright side  
tributaries of salt will settle on my cheeks  
i will blame it on the full moon  
i will yell at techno lovers, delhi drivers  
i will say, *ignore my hypocrisy*  
say, *we were born imperfect*  
say, *we are the stories we tell*  
say, *it's all i have*  
and then a pigeon will shit on my head  
and remind me what really matters  
is water

the beginning is a river, and so it shall end  
the beginning is a river, and so it shall end

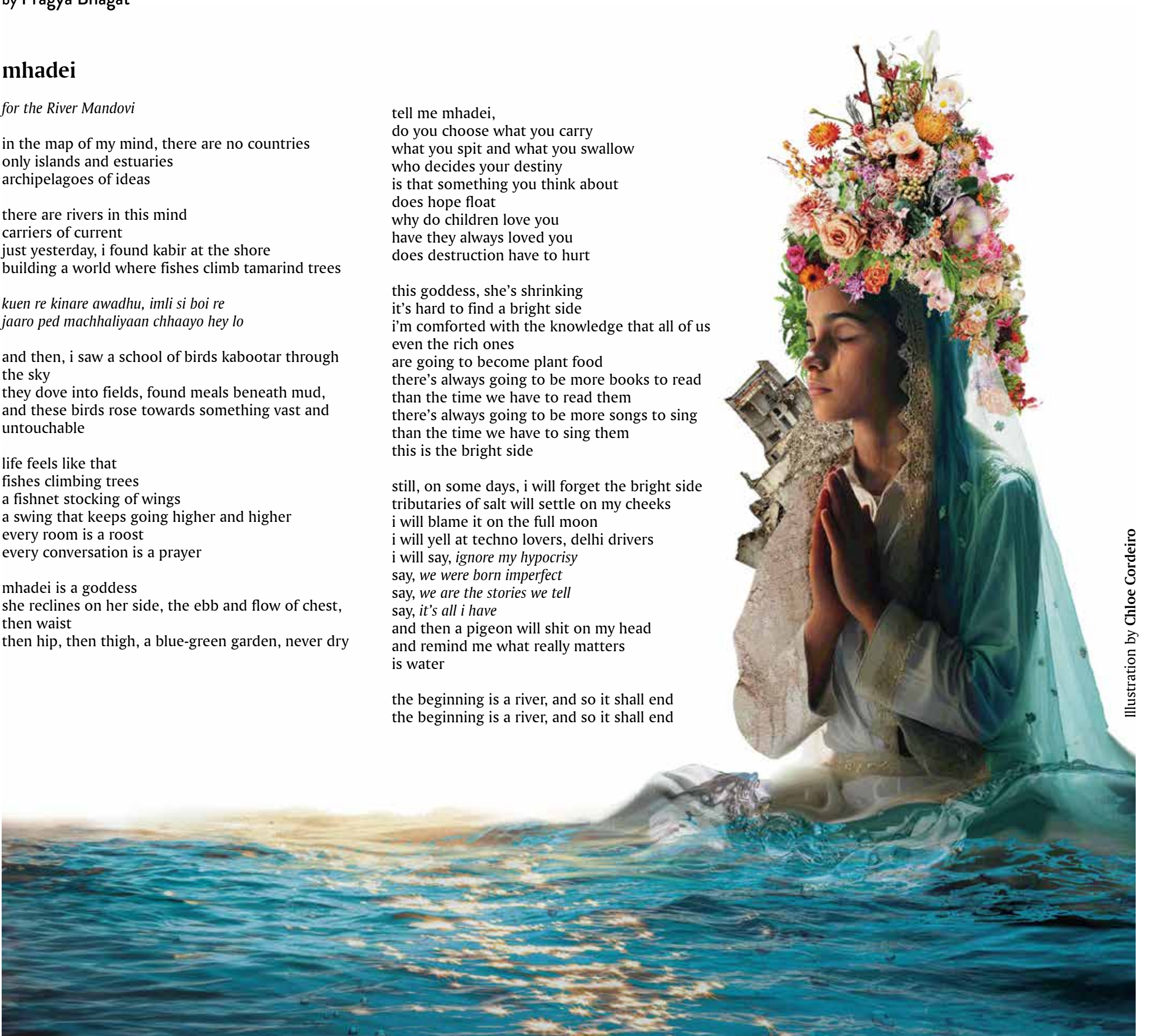
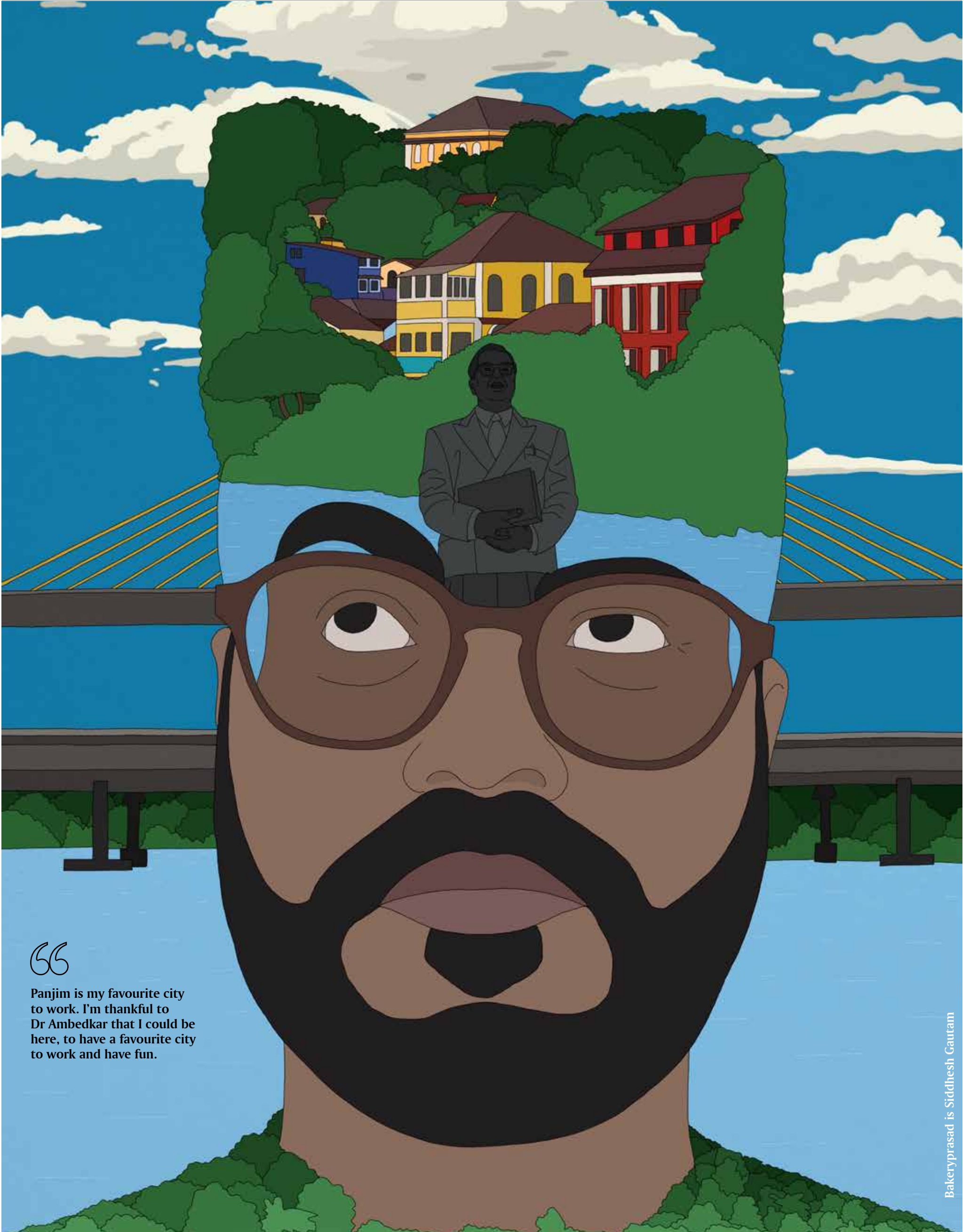


Illustration by Chloe Cordeiro

SHORT TAKES	 <p>I'm looking forward to <i>The Last Days Of Humanity</i> to see the cinematographer's work. I love Goa for the parties and the beaches.</p> <p><b>Muskaan Chauhan</b> Student Pune</p>	 <p>I really like <i>Mighty Afrin: In The Time Of Floods</i>, because of its cinematography and composition.</p> <p><b>Akalabya Changmai</b> Student Guwahati</p>	 <p>The director of <i>The Last Birthday</i>, which is based on true events, has done a great job. Both IFFI and Goa are a dream come true to me.</p> <p><b>Yukta Baviskar Bhusawal</b> Student Jalgaon</p>	 <p>It's helpful to have all these creative minds in one place; there's always opportunities flowing through the Film Bazaar.</p> <p><b>Alankrita Bora</b> Actor Mumbai</p>
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Panjim is my favourite city to work. I'm thankful to Dr Ambedkar that I could be here, to have a favourite city to work and have fun.



# Libby de Liberdade

BY VIVEK MENEZES

**T**eam Peacock has Panjim on our minds for this 16-page special edition, and we've been thinking hard about what makes this pleasant Latinate jewel so very special. For many of us it is the opportunity to experience history up close in intimate surroundings: the first medical college in Asia, the first public library in India, the path-breaking paintings of Antonio Trindade (one of the first art stars of the subcontinent) and winding streets lined with gorgeous Goan architecture. Once the capital city of the entire *Estado da India*, which extended all the way from Macau to Mozambique, a rich tapestry of meaning is writ large in the cosmopolitan character of this tiny city.

For me, however, the greatest icon of Panjim is Libia "Libby" Lobo Sardesai, who gives us the extraordinary opportunity to live in the presence of one of the most inspirational heroes of India's fight for liberty. This stylish and elegant (and extremely formidable) nonagenarian has battled for emancipation and independence in every aspect of her personal and public lives, imbibing radical politics directly from giants like BR Ambedkar and MN Roy.

At the most crucial juncture of Goa's freedom struggle against the Portuguese dictator Salazar, this pint-sized "chit of a girl" – she was then working at All India Radio in Bombay – volunteered to spread the message of freedom in her ancestral homeland, and spent the next six years isolated deep in the Western Ghats jungles with her future husband Vaman Sardesai, working tirelessly to broadcast *The Voice of Freedom* (*Voz de Liberdade* in Portuguese, and *Sodvonecho Awaz* in Konkani) which decisively turned Goan public opinion against the colonialists.

Libby tells me "the radio was not just one of those

things that happened as a matter of course. In fact, it was the only peaceful alternative that was left to the Goans." Colonialism was coming to an end everywhere else in the world, but here, "instead of seeing reason, the Portuguese government displayed an arrogant attitude, increased their repression on the people and made their lives even more unbearable by house searches, raids, interrogations, arrests and physical brutalities on mere suspicion, strict vigilance and endless harassment. No civil liberties whatsoever, while people were kept totally in the dark. As no outside newspapers or printed matter could come in, the official radio station and the couple of local newspapers were feeding the people only with lies and false propaganda, though the Liberation movement was steadily growing and gaining support both inside and outside. It became imperative to expose the lies of the Portuguese and raise the morale of the people by informing them of the reality. The answer came in the form of an underground radio station."

Libby and Vamanbab's sacrifices paid off spectacularly well. We know that Major Felipe de Barros Rodrigues - a Portuguese military official - reported back to his superiors and the government in Lisbon that "the Voice of Freedom has assumed the command of the entire propaganda, maintained its aggressiveness and militancy. It works with the most diverse material, threatens, criticizes, explains, changes colours, alters perspectives, but in everything it does, it carries a sharp stiletto. It is free from the preoccupation of any attack from our side. It has been, in fact, the only voice that has been continually hurting us at close range." My friend and hero says that "I think we could not ask for more. We were happy that our purpose was fulfilled and even acknowledged by our main target, and that we also won our Freedom after 450 years."



Illustration by Chloe Cordeiro

## Maaznama

by Maaz Bin Bilal

### Aura—A Sonnet

So, yesterday at Film Bazaar,  
a lady asked me to click her,  
with another who seemed like a  
celebrity, and the woman  
wanted to be seen with her and  
bask in her reflected glory.

I took the snap, afterwards I asked,  
"who was that star with whom you just  
had me take your photograph?"  
but, to my surprise, she could not  
prize from her mind the name of this  
actress, nor tell me of her films.

Such is the stardust of beauty,  
we seek it blind, unknowingly.



Illustration by Nishant Saldanha



# IFFI Screening Schedule – 25th November

INOX SCREEN-I PANAJI	INOX SCREEN-II PANAJI	INOX SCREEN-III PANAJI	INOX SCREEN-IV PANAJI	MAQUINEZ PALACE	INOX SCREEN-I PORVORIM	INOX SCREEN-II PORVORIM	INOX SCREEN-III PORVORIM	INOX SCREEN-IV PORVORIM	SAMRAT AUDI	ASHOKA AUDI	KALA ACADEMY
EA1 SENECA 9:00AM - 10:50AM CW	EB1 PRADAKSHINA / DHAI AAKHAR 10:00AM - 11:52AM IP-F, IP-NF	EC1 PEACE LILY SAND CASTLE / YASHODA 9:15AM - 10:25AM GF	ED1 DRIFT 9:30AM - 11:03AM ICFT	EE1 PEACOCK LAMENT 9:00AM - 10:43AM UN-IFFI	EF1 A RAVAGING WIND 10:00AM - 11:43AM CW	EG1 ANDRAGOY 10:15AM - 12:07PM IC	EH1 THE GOSPEL OF THE BEAST 10:30AM - 11:55AM CW	EI1 GOD'S GIFT 10:45AM - 12:01PM CW			EK3 IN COVERSATION SPEAKER - BRENDON GALVIN, MODERATOR - TARSEM SINGH
EA2 ESSENTIAL TRUTHS OF THE LAKE 11:30AM - 3:05PM FK	EB2 GIDDH (THE SCAVENGER) /POOKKAALAM 12:45PM - 3:25PM	EC2 LET ME GO 11:45AM - 1:17PM A-BD	ED2 THE TRIAL 11:50AM - 2:47PM D-M	EE2 BHAAG MILKHA BHAAG 11:00AM - 2:06PM AI-AF	EF2 NOT A WORD 1:00PM - 2:27PM CW	EG2 THE OTHER WIDOW 1:15PM - 2:38PM IC	EH2 THE SETTLERS 1:30PM - 3:07PM CW	EI2 A HOUSE IN JERUSALEM 1:45PM - 3:28PM ICFT	EJ1 SEAGRASS 10:00AM - 11:56AM CW	EL1 MANDALI 10:00AM - 11:58AM IP-F, ICFT	12:30PM - 1:30PM IN-CV
EA4 MEMORY 5:00PM - 6:40PM FK	EB3 SADABAHAR / MIRBEEN 4:30PM - 6:12PM	EC3 LUTO 2:45PM - 4:35PM D-M	ED4 KNIT'S ISLAND 5:30PM - 7:05PM INTGF	EE3 BIDYAPATI 2:35PM - 4:56PM RC	EF3 REVENGE: OUR DAD THE NAZI KILLER 4:00PM - 5:30PM D-M	EG3 SUFFOCATED 4:15PM - 5:52PM CW	EH3 HOMECOMING 4:30PM - 6:20PM CW	EI3 LATIDO 4:45PM - 6:19PM CW	EJ2 ANDRAGOY 2:00PM - 3:52PM IC	EL2 SANAA 2:00PM - 3:59PM IP-F, IC	EK4 PASSION OF STORYTELLING - YOUNG FILMMAKERS 2:30PM - 4:00PM IN-CV
EA5 THE EXORCIST (EXTENDED DIRECTOR'S CUT) 8:00PM - 10:12PM RC	EB4 BEHRUPIYA - THE IMPERSONATOR / KAADHAL ENBATHU POTHU UDAMA 8:00PM - 10:11PM	EC4 RAUTU KI BELI 6:00PM - 8:15PM GP	ED5 PALIMPSEST 8:00PM - 9:49PM CW	EE4 MALQUERIDAS 5:30PM - 6:45PM CW	EF4 ALI TOPAN 7:00PM - 8:55PM CW	EG4 CITIZEN SAINT 7:15PM - 8:55PM ICFT	EH4 THIIRD 7:30PM - 9:05PM CW	EI4 LIFE 7:45PM - 10:37PM CW			EK5 RAISING FINANCE - BRINGING CREATIVE VISIONS TO LIFE 5:00PM - 6:30PM IN-CV

**25th NOV 2023**

**PASSION OF STORYTELLING - YOUNG FILMMAKERS**  
IN-CONVERSATION WITH SAGAR PURANI, NIKHIL MAHAJAN, RAJDEEP PAUL, JASMEET K. BEEN & MAYANK SHUKLA

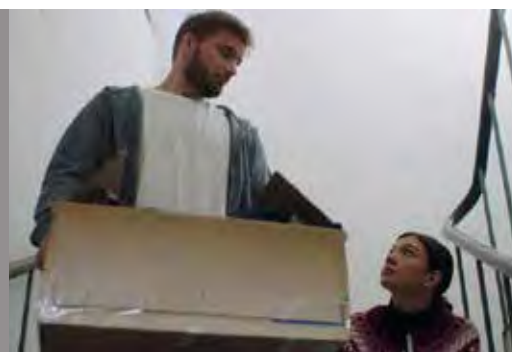
**RAISING FINANCE - BRINGING CREATIVE VISIONS TO LIFE**  
IN-CONVERSATION WITH ALLU ARAVIND, FIRDOSUL HASAN, PRITHVI KUMAR, SUNITHA TATI & KOMAL NAHTA

**IN COVERSATION SPEAKER - BRENDON GALVIN, MODERATOR - TARSEM SINGH**

Today's special 16-page special issue is inspired by the beautiful, bustling city of Panjim, for which Govit Morajkar has memorialized the waterfront statue installed in 1952 in what was then called Jardim de Sereia. He says it epitomises the spirit of our beloved little state capital, with its "fantastic built heritage and natural beauty, its innate joie de vivre and love for art, music, camaraderie, friendship and togetherness."



**Memory**  
17:00  
INOX Screen-I Panaji



**Sleep**  
20:45  
INOX Screen-III Panaji



**Citizen Saint**  
15:20  
INOX Screen-IV Panaji



**Palimpsest**  
20:00  
INOX Screen-IV Panaji

