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SUNDAY POST

HERE . NOW



AN INDIGENOUS FOLK THEATRE FORM

On way to extinction

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COVER STORY



With her movies like 'Dil Mora Manena', 'Kiss Miss' and 'Bidyarana' ready to hit the theatres and several others on the floor, actress Sivani Sangita has her hands full. But the 'Sister Sridevi' actress likes to relax with family at some less-explored destinations of Odisha whenever she gets a break



RASHMI REKHA DAS, OP



With actor Swaraj

On vacay

Despite my hectic schedules, I manage to steal some time to visit a few little-explored destinations of Odisha with my family and seize some beautiful moments. Last year, I visited Similipal Tiger Reserve and some lesser-known yet magnificent temples of Balasore district.

Passion for music

It may sound strange, but my Sundays begin with a riyaz session. Though I am not a professional singer, I enjoy the art of singing. It also helps me during dubbing a character for my films.

Dance to de-stress

Dancing, which I have been doing since my childhood, enhances my mood. For me, it is also the biggest stress buster. So, I do it religiously on my non-working Sundays.



With family

Satiating taste buds

I never say no to street food on Sundays, my cheat days. Not on every Sunday, but once in a while I love to satiate my taste buds with paneer tikka, paneer kabab and dahi gupchup.

Not a gym rat

I love cycling. It not only bolsters one's fitness, it is also an efficient mode of transport that causes no pollution. I love cycling over hitting gyms to remain in shape.

Movie maniac

I hardly miss watching the latest releases in theatres. Also, I remain glued to the TV on Sundays as a few channels air some of my unseen favourite old classic movies during weekends.

WhatsApp This Week

Only on Sunday POST!

Send in your most interesting WhatsApp messages and memes received to: features.orissapost@gmail.com And we will publish the best ones

THE BEST MEMES OF THIS ISSUE

- I recently decided to sell my vacuum cleaner as all it was doing was gathering dust.
Money can't buy you happiness? Well, check this out, I bought myself a Happy Meal!
People say I've got no willpower but I've quit smoking loads of times.
I asked God for a bike, but I know God doesn't work that way so I stole a bike and asked for forgiveness

PURPOSE OF THEATRE

Dear Sir, Last week's cover story 'Culture Matters' on World Theatre Day made for an interesting read. Theatre practice is all about discipline and dedication. No wonder, more youths are getting attracted towards stage and theatre workshops. But unfortunately, after appearing in a couple of plays, they are switching to TV serials and working in movies, leaving their learning in halfway. One more thing that I have observed is the lure of government funds. If not all, most of the theatre troupes in Odisha are competing among themselves to please the government agencies, instead of finding the flaws in government policies which is their primary responsibility, to get more projects. In this context, I would appreciate the new age theatre gurus like Probir Guha and Dolgovind Rath who are promoting the art of theatre without making compromise with their ideologies. The activities of Natya Chetana founder Subodh Patnaik, who has shunned all comforts for a cause, also deserve applause.

RAGHAV DAS, BHADRAK

LETTERS



A WORD FOR READERS

Sunday POST is serving a platter of delectable fare every week, or so we hope. We want readers to interact with us. Please send in your opinions, queries, comments and contributions to features.orissapost@gmail.com B-15, Industrial Estate, Rasulgarh, Bhubaneswar - 751010, Orissa. Phone (0674) 2549982, 2549948

On way to extinction

Though Chadheya Nata, a popular form of folk theatre, is gradually fading into oblivion due to rapid growth of cosmopolitan culture, a last-ditch effort in north Odisha is on to revive the art

RASHMI REKHA DAS, OP

Folk theatre in Odisha has a rich legacy. While each region has its own distinct form, many are on the brink of disappearance with the audience turning to other modes of entertainment.

Chadheya Nata, which would help propagate social, political and cultural issues in the past, is one such folk theatre form which is gradually fading into oblivion.

Sunday POST takes a look at the origin, growth, subsequent decline and the last-ditch effort to revive the art.

THE ORIGIN

The form of Chadheya Nata is drawn from mythology. King Sweta, a renowned ruler of the Puranic era had made an oblation. A bamboo plant emerged from the sacrificial pit and taking some parts of the plant, the king crafted a noose. Then, he gave it to Biswabasu, the king of Sabara tribals, and ordered him to hunt birds for his livelihood. From that day, Biswabasu and his successors have been catching birds and are called Chadheya or a bird-hunter.

Meanwhile, a successor of Biswabasu one day thought that killing birds for a living is a sin. Therefore, he decided to visit a few shrines along with his wife to do penance. During their visit to a shrine, the couple got separated from each other in the crowd of devotees. They tried to trace each other, but in vain. As the story goes, the search is still on. This folktale forms the theme of the play, Chadheya Nata.

CRUX OF THE PLAY

Chadheya holds a pole in one hand and a noose in the other. The artistes

of Chadheya Nata perform vigorously to the accompanying music, including the thundering sound of dhol (drum), the symphony of mahuri (a trumpet-like instrument) and the sound of cymbals. The play has four major characters: Chadheya, Chadheyani, Mause (uncle), and Chaukidar (watchman). The artistes need to be versatile as the characters have to sing, act and dance simultaneously. The play starts with a kid urging his grandfather (Mause) to tell a true story following which the latter narrates about Chadheya and Chadheyani. Then the entire story of Chadheya and his wife and how they got separated is shown in flashback. At the end, it is shown that both Chadheya and Chadheyani meet Mause separately in the process of searching for their life partners and express their distress to Mause. Mause calls the Chaukidar and requests him to help them. Gathering all the information from both of them separately, he finally unites them and the play concludes.

As the play aims to entertain, Chadheya and Chadheyani describe humourously in lyrics, each other's looks, complexion and nature. The lyrics are thought-provoking and enjoyable. The play is performed in the open air and the audience thoroughly enjoys the mirthful lyrics.



Subhendu in a Chadheya's garb

GROWTH

Earlier, Chadheya Nata was performed and watched by people belonging to the bottom rung of the ladder. With the passing of time, upper caste people too began appreciating its aesthetic and religious values. Among the key exponents of this folk play was Bhagaban Sahu, the ace director who is believed to have taken the art form to a global audience. Renowned Chadheya Nata artistes include Bhagabat Das, Brundaban Jena, Golak Das and Sachindra Jena.

DOWNHILL JOURNEY

Artiste **Brahmanath Rath** who has played different characters like Chaukidar, Chadheya and Mausa for the last 35 years held the government responsible for the declining popularity of Chadheya Nata. "The culture department is doing nothing to revive it. No training programme is held to connect youths with the dying art form. That apart, people don't have time and patience to watch Chadheya Nata. Gone are the days when people from all walks of life used to sit up all night to watch folk play. Nowadays, we are told to wrap up the play as soon as possible as there are only a few people to watch the show. As a result of this, we cannot do justice to the play. Many artistes stopped acting due to financial problems. Chadheya Nata is certainly a dying folk art form now. A collective ef-

fort is required to revive the form," says Rath.

THE SILVER LINING

Bhadrak-based cultural outfit Sanchar Cultural Association is leaving no stone unturned to popularise the form.

Secretary of the outfit **Subhendu Lenka** says, "We formed Sanchar with an objective to revive the folk art form in 2016. From 2016 till the outbreak of corona we staged 25 shows, out of which five were sponsored by the government. When the art form is staged at Rabindra Mandap or Jaydev Bhawan, it draws a huge audience. But it fails to woo the audiences when staged in smaller auditoriums. Elderly people love watching the play while today's youths show little interest in watching it. To attract the young mass, we have made some changes in the script and kept the duration of the play to 45 minutes."

Subhendu adds: "I love playing the role of Chadheya because the lyrics are funny as well as thought-provoking. I love the interactions between Chadheya and Chadheyani."

Badal Sikdar, whose efforts have kept the famous theatre form of Bhadrak's Mughal Tamasha alive, is an advisor to Sanchar. He says, "Odisha is famous for its rich cultural heritage and traditions and it is our responsibility to promote them. So, I am working for the art forms which are on the verge of disappearance. I have formed Sanket, a cultural organisation to popularise Mughal Tamasha.

This time, we — 15 members of the outfit — have come forward to revive the TV and exploring social media than watching a folk play," says Ajay, a lawyer by profession.

Chadheya Nata, which was once popular among art lovers across the country."

Hemant Singh, president of Sanchar, says, "Our only aim is to revive the dying forms of folk art. Earlier, kids were sent to Chatasali for their early learning. Now they are being taught in air-conditioned rooms. With time, we need to adapt to the changes. So, we formed Sanchar to keep the art form alive by making some changes in its presentation. Chadheya Nata had almost disappeared from the scene in the 90s. But now people are getting attracted towards it because of our efforts. Unfortunately, the government is not doing anything for the survival of the art and its artistes."

Assistant secretary **Sumati Panda** who does playback for Chadheyani says, "I have been rendering voices for the Chadheyani character for the last four years. We held the first show in Balasore where we felicitated the prominent artistes of folk theatre. At the beginning, we had a thin audience. But gradually it grew. Now, the shows are witnessing footfall of around 500 people."

Apart from Sanchar, Balasore-based Nritya Sangeet Kala Mandir is working hard for the revival of folk art.

Ajay Acharya, a member of the organisation who has been playing the Chadheya since 1986, agrees that Chadheya Nata has lost its charm in the present scenario. "Earlier, people used to watch the play for about four hours. Now, when we stage Chadheya Nata, the organisers request us to wind up the play in 15-30 minutes. From this, you can gauge the falling interest of the audience. People's mindset has changed over the years. Now they are more interested in watching



Subhendu Lenka



Brahmanath Rath



Sumati Panda



Ajay Acharya



Hemant Singh



Ajay and his co-artist during a performance



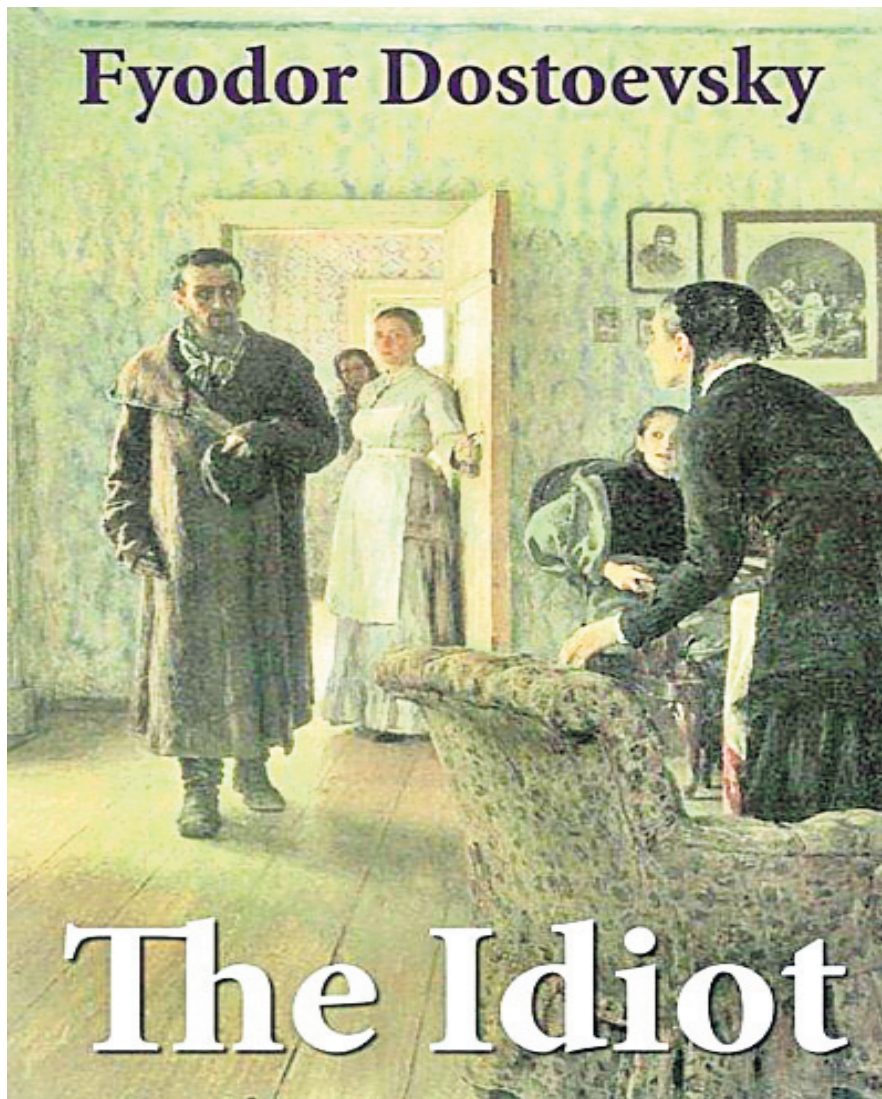
A still from Chadheya Chadheyani Nata played by Sanchar outfit members

PORTRAIT OF A BEAUTIFUL SOUL

In the bicentennial year of Fyodor Dostoevsky's birth, it would do well to revisit the Russian master for some of the world's greatest works of literature. Dostoevsky defies neat strait jacket theories or any particular classification that can sum up his genius. As a subtle psychologist he delved into the life of the soul, in relentless, persistent enquiry into the human experience, leading us into unbelievable worlds of meaning. "His world is a moral and spiritual labyrinth. His world is not for a pilgrim but a spiritual wrestler" battling with the "accursed questions of life, faith and doubt, good and evil fought in the human heart". Hell was not for the afterlife but far more immediate playing out in the life of someone unwilling to forgive. Likewise happiness was not fame or fortune but the ability to empathise with every person you cross paths with. Most people in this world are ordinary, he believes, and instead of convincing ourselves of our specialness or originality if we spent our lives trying to be compassionate and honest we will find we have more to offer ourselves and our communities than we thought possible.

The life of Dostoevsky was nothing if not Dostoevskyan. A death sentence, last minute reprieve, prison in Siberia, chronic epilepsy, death of young children, gambling addiction and possible depression, everything converted to awe inspiring creativity. He believed that suffering added value to existence. "Suffering and pain are always mandatory for broad minds and deep hearts. Truly great people it seems to me should feel great sadness on this earth."

His novel *The Idiot* may be deemed the best from the angle of artistry of life and human nature. It is the most personal of his works espousing many of his convictions with descriptions of some of his most traumatic ordeals of epilepsy and near execution. It is the story of a man whose goodness, simplicity and gentleness are mistakenly assumed by the more worldly characters around him as a lack of intelligence and insight. Prince Myshkin alone and isolated represents an absolutely powerless innocence for whom an empirical world has nothing but hatred and contempt. It is a modern morality story exhibiting the inadequacy of goodness. The central idea of *The Idiot* was as Dostoevsky says "to depict a completely beautiful human being". Prince Myshkin from one of the oldest Russian lines of nobility is considered a holy fool and a descendant of Don Quixote and a Christ like figure in an unchristian world. His excruciating epileptic seizures are preceded by visionary states of bliss. "His mind and heart were flooded with extraordinary light; all his anxieties were pacified at once, were resolved into a kind of higher calm full of a serene, harmonious joy and hope, full of reason and the final cause." For this moment one could give up one's whole life- the moment itself worth the whole of one's life, in that moment



I somehow begin to understand the extraordinary phrase "there should be time no longer."

Part one of the novel is structurally beautiful whereas the succeeding parts un-plotted, rambling, phantasmagoric, move on fitfully in bursts. We are introduced to a whole host of characters obsessed with amassing of wealth. Ptityn and the Terentov widow are loan sharks, General Ivolgin and Ferdyschenko are spongers, General Yepanchin is caught up in his enterprises and Ganya believes that money will buy him talent and originality. Family groupings are shown only for their fragility, their greed, falsehood and contention. The prince is introduced to us on a foggy, cold November day in a third class compartment with Rogozhyn, a dissolute merchant's son and Lebedev, a corrupt bureaucrat sharing intimate details of their lives. The prince recalls the beauty of Switzerland where he had been spending his life in a sanatorium meant for treatment of his illness. Subsequently, in an effort to make acquaintance with the sophisticated Yepanchin family on account of distant kinship he meets their three beautiful daughters and talks of art, philosophy death and executions. His odd manner, lack of

concern for appearances becomes an object of fascination. His hosts given to sensuality, acquisitiveness, conceit test his moral compass but the prince comes through admirably with his air of benevolence and radiance but his message of compassion is lost on them. Later he meets the beautiful Nastasia the young protégée and concubine of Totsky an aristocrat who is desperately seeking to dispose her off in marriage to Ganya the young assistant of General Yepanchin. However in a turbulent scene at her place to which the prince goes uninvited mesmerised by her dark beauty in a portrait shown to him earlier, Nastasia though admiring the prince for his innocence agrees to marry Rogozhin seemingly for his money and on a caprice. Meanwhile Aglaya one of the daughters of the Yepanchin family is also in love with the prince. Nastasia and Aglaya love the prince for his kindness and goodness but they are also repelled by the prince's practical virtue as a deficiency. He isn't really in their world and neither he nor they understand this.

When the prince is recuperating from his epileptic seizures and was visited by the elegant Yepanchin family young misguided people

including Ippolit, a consumptive youth rush levelling various unfounded charges against him. The prince smilingly accepting the unbearable, selflessly answering their shameless charges and willing to assume every fault and search for every fault in himself is despised by both sets of people who turn their backs on him.

Nastasia's party scene, the epileptic seizures of the prince, Ippolit the consumptive youth's rebellion and negation of life by blasphemy and attempted suicide and the faceoff between the turbulent Nastasia and equally volatile Aglaya constitute some of the most intense writing in the book. The prince loved both women with a Christian love but when he saw the utter desperation of Nastasia he turns to her and Aglaya turns away with a deep sense of suffering and hatred.

The end of the novel sees Nastasia denouncing Rogozhin and choosing to marry the prince but in the midst of the wedding rituals she spots Rogozhin and runs away with him to the consternation of all. The prince pursues them to Petersburg and discovers she has been murdered by Rogozhin in tortured jealousy. The end brings together Nastasia, Rogozhin and Myshkin in tragic symmetry. Lying near her, dead, with Rogozhin, in helplessness and despair he "pressed his face against Rogozhin's pale and motionless face, tears streamed from his eyes on to Rogozhin's cheeks but he no longer felt his tears."

Rogozhin is condemned to fifteen years of penal servitude, the prince returns to the sanatorium, deranged. Aglaya makes a disastrous marriage and Ippolyt passes away in dreadful agitation. Other characters are unsubstantial in comparison. Prince Myshkin towers above the rest as a human being, a person who in his epileptic flashes acquires a magical ability to be able to be everything, to sympathise with everything to understand and accept every being in the world. There lies the essence of his being. He is not moralistic or judgemental, not making conscious choices but reconciling differences and uniting everybody in brotherhood. The prince sees compassion as the only law of existence and leads us to search our souls. The most intriguing and powerful characters Nastasia and Rogozhin understand him best and others are drawn to his basic humanity. However in a world charged with greed, power and corruption the prince can work no miracles. While *The Idiot* offers no transformative catharsis it is a grand meditation on murder and execution and Myshkin makes us confront the horror of the certainty of death, appointed and inevitable while body and mind are alive, the experience Dostoevsky himself faced and emerged with the prophet's gaze.



SUDHA DEVI NAYAK

Yami talks about her *Dasvi* role

Nothing could beat Yami Gautam's simple look and sweet smile as she walks along with Abhishek Bachchan and Nimrat Kaur inside Central Jail, Agra to promote her film *Dasvi*.

Dasvi is a film that revolves around Chief Minister Ganga Ram Chaudhary, essayed by Abhishek Bachchan, who decides to give his 10th class exams inside the jail. Yami finds *Dasvi* a perfect film to work in.

Yami shares that this movie connect with the audience through its message. It focuses on the importance of education. When a Chief Minister who is a school dropout, played by Abhishek Bachchan decides to clear 10th exams, it shows that there is no age to be educated and it is a must irrespective of your position in the society.

While commenting on the challenges while playing a bold and strict Haryanvi police officer Jyoti Deswal, Yami says: "The main challenge was to get the Haryanvi diction right. It was not easy. From taking classes, I did everything to speak the dialogues in a right way. But Abhishek helped me a lot at every point."

Dasvi is scheduled to premiere on online platform April 7.

AGENCIES



Don't have a baby at 60: Bebo to Saif

Actor Kareena Kapoor, aka Bebo, has observed how her husband Saif Ali Khan has had a child in every decade of his adult life. She has, however, told him to put a cap on it.

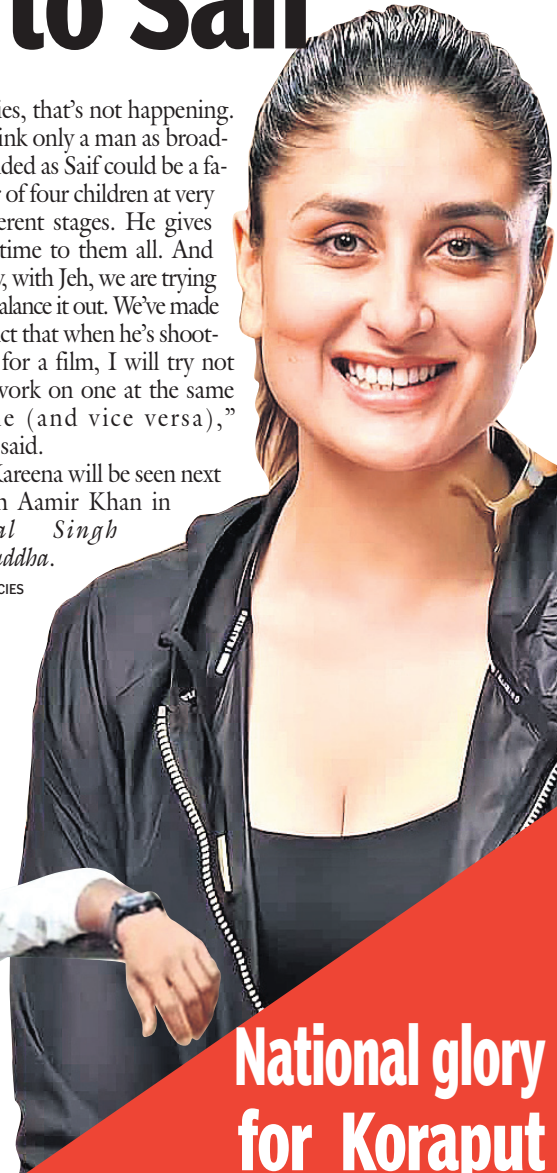
Actor Kareena Kapoor has praised her husband Saif Ali Khan for the way he has raised and been with his four kids. Saif is father to Sara Ali Khan and Ibrahim Ali Khan from his first marriage with Amrita Singh. With Kareena Kapoor, he has two sons — Taimur Ali Khan and Jehangir Ali Khan. She says that Saif gives time to all his kids.

Speaking to Vogue, Kareena said, "Saif has had a child every decade—in his twenties, thirties, forties and now in his fifties. I've told him, in your

sixties, that's not happening. I think only a man as broad-minded as Saif could be a father of four children at very different stages. He gives his time to them all. And now, with Jeh, we are trying to balance it out. We've made a pact that when he's shooting for a film, I will try not to work on one at the same time (and vice versa)," she said.

Kareena will be seen next with Aamir Khan in *Laal Singh Chaddha*.

AGENCIES



Ash helped Abhishek deal with trolls

Actor Abhishek Bachchan got the best advice on dealing with trolls and negative comments from none other than his wife, actor Aishwarya Rai. The two have been married since 2007 and often support each other with words of encouragement.

Abhishek also frequently replies to internet trolls who criticise his work or leave mean comments on his posts.

However, Abhishek says that Aishwarya wants him to focus on the good.

Speaking to a media, he said, "My wife once told me that, 'you get 10,000 positive comments but you get affected by one negative comment. You should concentrate on positivity and experience the beauty of the positive world'. So, I always try to look at things with positivity."

Abhishek took notes. "You can't deal with failures...failures deal with you. The only thing matters is how you come out of it. I don't let failures and criticism affect me negatively, I take them as positives to better myself as a person and professional. I always try to make my failures a lesson," he said.

Abhishek will be seen next in *Dasvi* with Nimrat Kaur and Yami Gautam. AGENCIES



National glory for Koraput theatre artiste

Abhaya Kumar Das, a member of Nandanik, a theatre group based in Koraput, Odisha has been selected for prestigious Young Artist Scholarship by Centre for Cultural Resources & Training (CCRT), Ministry of Culture, Government of India. He is one of the four artistes from the entire country and only one from Odisha to be selected in Folk Theatre category.

After his post graduation in Odia from Central University of Odisha, Koraput, Abhaya cleared the NET exam also. He will now be working in a project titled *Animal Characters* in Folk Drama under the guidance of Dr Sourav Gupta and receive monthly stipend as per government norms.

"I will try my best to complete my project successfully and I am grateful to Nandanik for which I got this prestigious scholarship," said Abhaya.

Nayika, Chandalumi and *Asantu Banchiba* are few of the plays he has been involved in during his association with the troupe.

Troupe's secretary Monideepa Gupta said, "It's a matter of great pride and joy for us as we hope Abhaya's achievement will inspire other young people to join Theatre." PNN





The pandemic kept most kids restricted to virtual classrooms for close to two years. Lack of physical activity, increased screen time and unhealthy dietary habits have had an immense impact on the physical, mental and social development of children. Additionally, kids are prone to 'immunity debt' as a result of not being exposed to the outside world, which causes a slower and inadequate development of the body's defence system, eventually leading to negative consequences when one returns to normal life.

Kids back to school? Rebuild their immunity

daily breakfast or lunch

Vitamin C: An essential vitamin that is produced in the body, it is abundantly found in many food groups. Fruits like oranges & lemons are a great source of vitamin C; so are vegetables like broccoli, cauliflower, and peppers

grow faster when there is a delay in growth. Sources of Arginine are dairy products, non-veg foods, nuts etc.

Vitamin K2: An important micronutrient that helps to transport calcium in the bones and ultimately helps build stronger bones. It is found in fermented foods, dairy, eggs, and meat

Zinc: An important nutrient for growth and the immune system, it can be found in lean meat, poultry, seafood, milk, whole grain products, beans, seeds, and nuts

Iron: A mineral that our bodies need for many functions as it helps muscles store and use oxygen. It is found in dark green leafy vegetables, such as spinach, legumes, pumpkin seeds, eggs, meat

Iodine: Iodine is a mineral the body needs to make thyroid hormones which control the body's metabolism and many other important functions. It is found in seafood and iodized salts

Parents should focus on protecting children by providing healthy nutrition to strengthen immunity and optimize physical, cognitive, and social development. Feeding a child, a nutritious, balanced diet, which is beneficial for their holistic development and growth is easier said than done. Science-based childhood nutrition supplement PediaSure offers a complete and balanced nutrition solution with 37 nutrients and is clinically proven to bring visible growth to children in 90 days.

Vitamin E: A key antioxidant that helps keep the nervous system healthy and it is an important nutrient that supports cell development. Moderately required in children, Vitamin E can be found in vegetable oils, nuts, seeds, leafy & green vegetables

Selenium: An important mineral that is essential for the healthy functioning of the body and ensuring healthy cells. It is a great antioxidant and is usually found in abundance in vegetables. Foods like beans, mushrooms, and sunflower seeds are great sources of this mineral. It is also found in poultry and certain seafood

Arginine: This is an important amino acid that plays a key role in growth by promoting the multiplication of cells in the growth plate of the bones to help them

With restrictions now easing up and schools reopening, students are all set to flock back, meet their friends and indulge in much needed physical playtime as well as social interaction. While parents are relieved to see their kids slowly resume normal life, there is understandably an element of anxiousness. The biggest question in their minds is on how strong their child's immunity is at present since kids in school are bound to be surrounded by their friends and teachers -- and germs.

Here comes the importance of nutrition in building the immune system in addition to aiding proper growth and overall development of a child.

The lack of a sufficient, varied, and nutritious diet can affect the cognitive development of a child, interfere with learning, and weaken their immune system.

There are several key nutrients that play a part in regulating, building, and strengthening the body's immune system and promoting healthy growth in kids. These nutrients are found in foods like lean protein, fruits, vegetables, dairy, legumes, nuts, and grains. Parents should consider adding it in





Mithi

PHOTO : ODISHA FASHION VILLA