

MY SUNDAY

Actor, director and playwright Prasanta Mohapatra has so far performed in over 50 dramas and directed more than 20 stage plays. Winner of several state level awards, Mohapatra formed a theatre troupe Rangabhoomi in 2004 to promote theatre in Odisha and is pretty committed to the cause. He loves to adapt the works of famous writers into plays when he gets a break



At an open air rehearsal session

Breathing to health

After waking up, I go for the tried and tested age old practice of Yoga followed by some breathing exercises. I do it every day, come what may and Sundays are no exceptions.

Soil matters

I also have grown a kitchen garden in my backyard where I work at least for an hour every day. But on Sundays I take special care of the plants. Farming not only keeps me connected with the soil, it also helps maintain my fitness.



Fundraising activities

Since theatre is not a very profitable profession in Odisha, most of the seniors lead a life of penury. Being a theatre activist I used my leisure to raise funds to meet their medical expenses or daily needs.



With family

Sunday creativity

I love adapting novels/short stories to play. The days when I don't have rehearsals, I prefer to move to a secluded place to work on dramatization of literary work of famous authors.

Whole-day rehearsal

Sunday is that day of the week when most of my troupe members make themselves free for rehearsal. Therefore, we go for a whole-day rehearsal which is not possible on other days of the week.

BIJAY MANDAL, OP

WhatsApp This Week

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THE BEST MEMES OF THIS ISSUE

- Can I have your picture so that I can show Santa what I want for Christmas?
- If you're not supposed to eat at night, why is there a light bulb in the refrigerator?
- I'm currently boycotting any company that sells items I can't afford.
- I asked my wife what she wanted for Christmas. She told me "Nothing would make her happier than a diamond necklace" So I bought her nothing.

NEED FOR GENDER EQUITY

Sir, 'Call for level-playing field'(Feb 5) commemorating the International Women's Day has rightly highlighted the need to take gender equality very seriously. Needless to add, gender equity leads to actual gender equality. Every society must strive for gender justice, which can be achieved by removing barriers to opportunities by identifying and redressing existing power imbalances and empowering women to have a greater say in managing their own affairs. Gender equality will eventually result in eradicating poverty & hunger, ensure economic growth and help build a highly inclusive society. This acquires even greater urgency in view of the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goal(SDG)No.5 for gender equality and empowerment of women to be achieved by 2030,for which perceptible progress is yet to be registered across a broad spectrum viz.education,health, employment,security etc. It is worthwhile to remember that gender equality is not only a fundamental human right, but the basic foundation for a peaceful, prosperous and sustainable world.

AMIT BANERJEE, NEW DELHI

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

PITSTOPS FOR HUNGER



It is said that offering food to hungry is the greatest service one can extend. A few culinary entrepreneurs, expanding the concept further, have managed to create sustainable business models which are thriving at the moment

SMRUTI REKHA BARIK, OP

Food and family are possibly India's two biggest obsessions. The two define our identity and our personality to the point of both ridicule and delight. Every community in India has its own recipes, spices, and cooking techniques. In that perspective, Odias are no different. Their love of food has inspired them to create a wide range of recipes, from desserts like 'Chhenapoda' to curries like 'Machha Besara'.

With passion comes innovation. As the human mind craves for more, people do not hesitate to experiment to fulfill their satiation. The capital city does not lag behind in these offerings. There are plenty of outlets that let the residents break their monotony of eating their staples and dive into those delicacies. But the journey to provide those services is not risk-averse and effortless.

Sunday POST sought out a few of those courageous brave-hearts who opted for the road less travelled and have come out victorious to share their success stories.

Something's baking up

Anwasha Mohanty, the proprietor of a Bhubaneswar-based cloud bakery venture popularly known as Cakey Bakey, is presently pursuing her Bachelor's in fashion and apparel technology at Odisha University of Technology and Research (OUTR). She has always been into baking since childhood and is pursuing that dream with help and support from her parents to uplift the bakery status of Odisha.

Describing her service, she says, "Our bakery deals with an array of products with ample customization options for the clients. In flavours, it's the chocolate and fruit-based



ones. Brownies are the most beloved of all desserts. We have a lot more options in cookies, donuts, macarons, etc. We also offer pet-friendly bakery items. Because I started the venture during the time of COVID, I have always prioritised quality and provided a healthy range of assorted segments. My biggest motivation is the client's reviews and their trust in me and my venture."

Anwasha, talking about the USP of her venture, adds, "Given our emphasis on client-centered services, we have never used automated or third-party services for social media content management. We focus on quality packaging as well. As the client base shifted online, providing doorstep delivery was another massive boost for us."

Workout enthusiast's pitstop

Anshumaan Acharya, a Bhubaneswar based engineer who owns City Grills says that it is a cloud kitchen, and they are the pioneers of premium healthy dishes in Bhubaneswar.

On the conception of the idea, he said, "My friends and I used to work out in a local gym during my college days, and the boiled eggs were the healthiest supplement we could use. Well luckily, I met Mr. Gurucharan Pradhan, who worked in a very renowned restaurant in Bhubaneswar. He is an amazing chef and also a great human being.

With the idea of starting the venture with him, I



looked for feedback from people who had been working out, and they were delighted with this concept."

"I ventured into the business with 'first try, pay later' offer. Even though I was skeptical at first, we delivered about 100 paid meals, with a few of them becoming our regular clients. Their reviews were equally heartwarming and encouraging. Recently, we had a surge in a few particular items like grilled chicken with stuffed cheese, vegetables and brown bread sandwiches, and power cakes", he said, articulating his business details.

Toothsome experience

Syed Farooq Hussain, the co-founder of Maha Belly is an aeronautical engineer who delved into the idea, to pursue his passion. It started off as a cloud kitchen in the spring of 2020, serving cheeseburgers, sandwiches, and other finger foods.



Co-founder **Swagat Chhotray**, a KIIT School of Management (KSOM) alumnus, came into the picture with an appetite for entrepreneurship. About the vision of the outlet, Syed said, "As partners, we ideate to infuse local flavours and ingredients in a pocket-friendly approach. In the nascent stage, we tried to bring forward a brand that would be relatable to youth. The hunger to deliver value for money and taste to our customers is what fueled our idea."



He further continued, "We believe that there is no place for entitlement in entrepreneurship. Our friends and family have supported us. We have the vision of building a homegrown burger chain across Odisha. If we forge a significant customer base in our home state, we can hopefully transcend into other corners of our country."

"Our Zinger burgers and Kiwi shakes are some of the customer favorites. One shouldn't miss out on creamy pastas and tempting waffles", added Syed.

Hustling to feed

Suryanshu Panda (founder and CEO) and **Epari Pritam** (co-founder and CFO) of Chef Junction are alumni of XIMB.



They were placed in good companies after graduation, but COVID altered their fate. They rewrote their story to create a brand that could help the people of Bhubaneswar during the pandemic.

Recalling the days of hustle, he says, "At a time of virtual communication, Pritam and I were constantly calling each other, eager to share every idea that popped into our minds. We were excited to launch our startup and make a difference in our community. Those were the times filled with a sense of camaraderie and purpose."

Describing the outlet's menu, he added, "Though most of our orders are for Indian dishes, pizza and other snacks are popular among children. Recently, our bakery has been in high demand. We intermittently cater to special requests for senior citizens and patients who prefer meals with regular dishes like rice, dal, and curry."

Expanding the franchise

Fat Tiger is a franchise spread all across India. **Neha Gupta** and her co-worker **Parul Agarwal** started off with two of their outlets in Bhubaneswar, followed by a third in Rourkela, with a plan to expand it all over Odisha with at least 20 more branches.

With putting up with the challenges, Neha said, "Every day is a new

challenge in all businesses, but how we handle them is an art that almost takes a lifetime to master, but we learn every day from each quandary." Neha was working as a scientist and Parul as a computer engineer; hence, entering the field of food was something new and taxing considering the rigorous competition.



She added, "We studied many outlets before taking the Fat Tiger franchise because their food quality is unmatched. Also, we offer a wide range of food options, such as momos, burgers, pizza, rice bowls, pasta, and lots of drink options, both milk- and water-based. We offer Boba drinks, which are the favourites among the youngsters."

QSR is the way

Entrepreneur **Priyanka Rath** describes Rotiwala as a QSR (quick service restaurant) where she and her husband **Krishna Sahoo** cook a fixed amount of food in bulk. "We serve homemade healthy food with a reduced waiting period



because very few people can wait for an order to get cooked and delivered. Chilli chicken, veg manchurian, paneer chilli, chicken lababdar, and paneer bharta are our most popular items", says the entrepreneur.

Elaborating on future plans, she said, "We are definitely planning to expand, and by God's grace we have already started our second shop in February, which is near K-7."

Speaking about her career choice, she said, "We basically started our business right from the streets, fighting with people's stigmas about starting such a little start-up despite being highly educated. In the food industry, if your food is tasty, fresh, light, and pocket-friendly, people will find their way."



Picture perfect Café

A brainchild of **Boon Pattnaik**, Teatotaler is a photography-themed TEA Café that took shape during the first wave of COVID, with ideation dating back to 2013. He started the



business with an active brainstorming session, taking help from YouTube to prepare a standard operating procedure for foods and other things. It started as a cloud kitchen with a struggle to find a perfect corner. Eventually, the owner turned it into a beautiful cafe with a good location.

Boon reflected, "I always wanted the place to be creative and more artistic. Since I am into photography, I picked the same for the theme. Confidence in me and the product is the motivation to pull this off. As they say, 'the grass is greener on the other side', the toughest part of the food industry is the staff management, and we are constantly strategising to overcome that."

Defining success for him, the entrepreneur said, "For me, success is peace of mind. If your business is running smoothly without any hassle, then you are successful."



'With honour comes the responsibility'

Though he has played multiple roles- vocalist, teacher and administrator - in his professional life, singing remains his first love, says Sangeet Natak Akademi award winner Bijay Kumar Jena

MADHUSMITA SAHU, OP

The present principal of Utkal Sangeet Mahavidyalaya, the only government degree college of Odisha that imparts training in dance, music and drama, Bijay Kumar Jena is one of those Gurus who go down to their business without much fuss. Jena has not only made a name for himself as a vocalist and performed in several countries, he has also helped many of his students establish themselves at national and international levels. The accomplished classical singer, who has innumerable songs to his credit, has also authored two books. No wonder, Jena has recently received Sangeet Natak Akademi honour from the President of India at New Delhi. The acclaimed singer had a tête-à-tête with **Sunday POST** at his office over several issues.

Here're the excerpts:

- **Congratulations on being conferred with an Akademi award. How would you react to it?**
- First of all, I am obliged to the government for recognising my efforts. I am also thankful to my colleagues at Utkal Sangeet Mahavidyalaya and above all Lord Jagannath. With honour comes the responsibility. Akademi award will make me more responsible and humble towards my craft.
- **How did you start off as a vocalist and what inspired you to make it your profession?**
- I used to take keen interest in music, singing in particular, since my childhood. I recall, in the absence of proper musical instruments, I along with my friends used classroom furniture to create music for my songs. I didn't get any professional training but that didn't stop me from pursuing music. Listening to 'Gitinatyas', 'Chhanda', 'Bhajans' and memorizing them had laid the foundation. Then, there was no looking back.
- **How challenging was the job as Secretary of Odisha Sangeet Natak Akademi?**
- I was in charge for two years and the period was quite tough. As OSNA Secretary, I didn't have just one department to take care of, but several, including dance, music, and theatre. At the same time, it was an opportunity to serve artistes from various disciplines, including classical, folk art, and Odissi music.

- **You have played multiple roles in your professional life - vocalist, teacher and administrator. Which role did you enjoy the most, and how do you balance them?**

■ I had trouble rehearsing my musicals when I was the Secretary of OSNA. But after getting transferred to Utkal Sangeet Mahavidyalaya and spending time with my students as a lecturer I was able to free up my schedule. So, I would say I enjoy my role as a vocalist the most. I also love teaching. As per balancing, I organise my tasks and distribute them according to the time they deserve.

- **Could you name the teachers/mentors who had a significant impact on you as an artiste?**

■ When I was a student at SCS College in Puri, there was a cultural organisation called Sura Bharat. There, I was inspired by many but Bhalabhadra Patiari, a deaf and blind teacher, who taught me many important lessons, was my idol. Then in 1985 when I took admission in Utkal Sangeet Mahavidyalaya for further studies, I met legendary artistes such as Guru Ramahari Das, Pandit Gopal Chandra Panda, Bhikari Charan Bal and Guru Niranjana Patra. They all have made me what I am today.

- **Can you talk about a memorable experience or moment in your career that has stayed with you?**

■ Receiving the Akademi Award from the President of India, so far, is the most memorable day in my life. It was also a moving moment when my students and co-workers at Utkal Sangeet Mahavidyalaya cut a cake in my honour and showered me with flowers.

- **You have been a lecturer for a long time and then be-**

came the principal. Do you find any difference as far as your relations with the students is concerned?

■ I still teach the students and try to engage with them even after becoming the principal. However, I find them (students) a little wary of me and not very friendly of late as I was promoted to the post of principal which is quite understandable.

- **How has your artistic style evolved over the years, and what have been some of the most significant influences on that evolution?**

■ When I started off as a student at Utkal Sangeet Mahavidyalaya in 1985, I began to understand the essence of music. My guru Ramahari Das encouraged me to take the next step. He has influenced me immensely to achieve my goal. When I began my career, Odissi shows used to last only a few minutes, but now they can last up to an hour. Guru Gopal Chandra Panda helped popularise musical compositions such as alapa, tan, swara binyasa, and bol tan. I can croon for an hour straight without stopping thanks to the training I received under the tutelage of these legends.

- **What will be your advice to aspiring artistes who want to pursue a career in Odissi music?**

■ The only advice I would offer to young aspiring artists is that they should always work hard and get intoxicated by music because it will eventually stand you in good stead. Hard work always pays off which has proved in my case. I would not have received the award had I not been working on my voice regularly. As they say, practice makes one perfect; I encourage anyone who wants to be a singer to work diligently on their skills.



Receiving Akademi award from President Droupadi Murmu



Can't choose between acting, direction: Ajay

Mumbai: Actor-filmmaker Ajay Devgn, who is gearing up for the release of his upcoming film *Bholaa*, says he enjoys the process of work and cannot choose between acting or directing because it is all one.

Ajay during the trailer launch of the film, which is all set to hit the screens on March 30, was asked what he enjoys more - acting or directing. The actor-turned-director replied, "I enjoy the process of working. You cannot segregate between acting and direction because it is all one. You enjoy total filmmaking. You enjoy waking up in the morning and going to work and both are a part of it. It's a combination. You cannot enjoy one without the other."

Bholaa is an action thriller which also stars Tabu, Deepak Dobriyal, Sanjay Mishra and Gajraj Rao.

It is reportedly a remake of Tamil film *Kaithi*, which released in 2019, featuring Karthi in the lead role, along with Narain, Arjun Das, Harish Uthaman, George Maryan and Dheena in pivotal roles.



Kriti opens up on dating rumours with Prabhas

Mumbai: Actress Kriti Sanon talked about the time when she had to inform Prabhas about their dating rumours after Varun Dhawan almost confirmed their alleged relationship. Recalling how she informed Prabhas about the incident and his confused reaction, Kriti said she really felt bad about the whole situation.

During his appearance on *Jhalak Dikhlai Jaa*, Varn brewed the rumours and said, "Kriti Sanon isn't on the list of eligible single

women because her name is written on someone else's heart. There is someone who is not in Mumbai but is currently filming with Deepika Padukone; he is the one."

Kriti later denied the rumours and clarified, "When Varun said that, I felt really bad—I felt like I had to tell Prabhas. I picked up the phone and told him about what Varun had said." She added that Prabhas was rather confused and kept asking again why Varun had made the comment. Kriti told him that Varun was a friend and told him not to take it seriously.

The duo will be starring in the upcoming film *Adipurush*.



Karan played the cupid: Vidya

Mumbai: Actress Vidya Balan remembered how she first met her husband, producer Siddharth Roy Kapur, after an awards night, and later filmmaker Karan Johar invited the both of them to his party one night where they began talking.

The actress and Siddharth Roy Kapur wed in Mumbai on December 14, 2012, after dating for a number of years. Speaking to the *Humans of Bombay* in an interview, she said, "Life was bringing us together a lot at that time. We ended up at a party together at Karan's place. Karan has played Cupid in

this relationship. He invited me to a party at his house, and I was a bit surprised because I didn't really know him. I felt how sweet."

She continued, "I went to his house, and I didn't really know most of the others. I was a bit shy, and Siddharth walks in, and because we had just watched a play together, we ended up having a chat. That's when probably something happened that night. Later, I got to know that Karan had wanted us to meet. This was an intentional invitation and it worked."

On the work front, Vidya was last in the Prime Video feature *Jalsa* and has two films, *Neeyat* and *Lovers*, due to be released later this year.



We had to slog it out for recognition: Karisma

Mumbai: Karisma Kapoor speaks about how times were different when she was an actor in the 1990s. Without social media, the actors of her time really had to work hard to get noticed.

In 1991, at the age of 17, she made her acting debut in the film *Prem Qaidi*. It became a box office hit, and soon she was signed on for several other big projects like *Raja Babu*, *Andaz*, *Coolie No. 1*, and *Hero No. 1*. With the films *Raja Hindustani* and *Dil To Pagal Hai*, she won numerous accolades and became one of the top actors in the Hindi film industry.

She recently opened up at a media house and said, "Today you are so easily recognised on Instagram and social media. We had to slog it out to get noticed. Every movie, be it, a hit, a blockbuster, a flop, or meaningful cinema, everything contributed to my career."

Karisma is returning to acting after three years in her second web series with *Brown*. In the dark drama, the actor will be seen as a Kolkata police officer and recovering alcoholic named Rita Brown.

AIANS

AGENCIES

AGENCIES

PEOPLE REMEMBER RIVERS ONLY WHEN THEY FLOOD. REST OF THE TIME THEY JUST IGNORE THE RIVERS AND MAKE THEM DUMPYARDS, LAMENTS RANJAN PANDA, THE 'WATERMAN OF ODISHA'

INTERNATIONAL DAY OF ACTION FOR RIVERS-MARCH 14

Love thy rivers

MADHUSMITA SAHU, OP

They are the lifelines of our planet, providing essential resources for countless species and sustaining the livelihoods of millions of people. However, many of them are under threat from human activities such as pollution, damming, and overuse. Therefore, with an objective to raise awareness about the value and importance of rivers and to protect them for future generations, March 14 of every year is observed as International Day of Action for Rivers.

Ahead of this day, a few prominent river activists share their thoughts with **Sunday POST**.

'Let's be the change'

Ranjan Panda, known as Waterman of Odisha, has been working on protection of rivers for more than 30 years.

"The rivers have given our civilizations their character. We, like other species, rely heavily on rivers for our livelihoods, cultural events, recreation, the ecological balance of the local areas, and so on. Are these not enough causes to commemorate the International Day of Action for Rivers?" asks Panda, when quizzed about the reason behind observing the day.

Lamenting on the lack of people's participation in conservation of rivers, a frustrated Panda says, "We remember rivers only when they flood. Rest of the time we just ignore them and make them dumpyards. Our understanding of rivers is limited to our interactions with them. The more detached we are from the rivers, because modern amenities bring water to our homes, the more ill-treated the rivers are."



On the potential threats to the rivers, the Mahanadi River Waterkeeper convenor continues: "Pollution, heavy damming, encroachment of floodplains, mining and industrialization in the basin, coal-fired power plants, destruction of feeder rivers, degradation of forested catchments, heavy use of chemical pesticides and fertilizers in irrigation commands are some of the biggest threats to our rivers. A slew of actions are required to conserve our rivers."

On a few initiatives that can help the rivers from choking, he suggests, "We need better inter-state cooperation methods and there is a need to develop conservation strategies at the basin level, involving all stakeholders. Individuals and communities must preserve forested catchments, ensure zero waste discharge into rivers, and maintain direct contact with rivers through swimming, sports, recreation, and other activities. Besides, there should be the "zero tolerance policy" towards pollution. All existing wastes - both solid and liquid - discharged to rivers by cities must be halted."

"Most significantly, we must begin to love and respect our rivers. We are facilitating the #Youth4WaterIndia campaign, which connects youths to their rivers through a variety of educational and grassroots activities. I would like to encourage all young people across the nation to participate in this campaign. Let us be the difference," concludes the chief campaigner of Youth4River initiative.

'Water decides our fate'

Thirty-four-year-old eco-entrepreneur and climate warrior **Sasmita Mohapatra**, who was part of Koel River Cleaning Campaign, says if we can celebrate occasions like Independence Day, Parents' Day and Valentine's Day, it is equally important to observe a day

for the rivers.

"Our body contains 60 per cent of water. A baby develops in a fluid that comes from water. Anything without water becomes desert or barren. We don't decide water's fate, it decides ours. Can we imagine a day in our life without a drop of water," she asks.

Talking about the effects of climate change on rivers, she says, "The impact of climate change is felt everywhere and rivers are no exception. They are dying as the quality and quantity of water is going down. Extinction of several species of freshwater animals is also the result of climate change."

Asked about the measures that can be taken to mitigate them, she lists, "Adaptation of rivers and enforcing river law, active participation of anti-pollution agencies & NGOs, CSR activities along with local communities on the bank of all rivers are among the steps that can go a long way in addressing the issue. The government also needs to make environmental education compulsory."

She further suggests, "Charity begins at home. Everything starts with the word 'I'. Each of us should shun practices that ruin water bodies. We all should realise what's happening around us and start doing any good eco-friendly practices for 21 days to make it a habit, join hands in local cleaning drives, and apply 3R (reducing, reusing and recycling waste) concept seriously in our daily life. Govt. needs to involve youngsters in water projects and creating awareness. Environment conscious days should be celebrated



with strong objective and intention in educational institutes and CSR-funded organisations. Let the rivers breathe and burble."

'Live sustainably before it's too late'

Naresh Behera, one of the founders of Climate Warrior Rourkela, a group of climate conscious people who raise awareness and take action to solve the pollution problem in Rourkela city says that he jumped the bandwagon of environmental activism thanks to famous astrophysicist Carl Sagan who told people to take care of this one and only planet that is still habitable.

"If we humans don't live sustainably on Earth, we would cease to exist in a few years from now. Therefore, it is our bounden duty to take care of the planet of which rivers are an integral part," says Behera.

It was the concern for the environment, water sources in particular, which made him and the other like-minded people form Save Koel River Campaign in April 2022.

"It took over 50 days to clean up Baikunth Ghat of Koel. Then we asked locals not to dump Puja Samagri into the river which pollutes the river water. Then people kept coming on board and a big group named Climate Warrior Rourkela



was formed. Government already has many rules and regulations in place but at the ground level they are not being followed in letter and spirit. Therefore, we need river guardians who can ensure compliance of norms pertaining to the rivers. Our rivers dry up completely in summer and flow above danger mark in monsoon bringing catastrophes more often than not. All we have to do is live sustainably before it's too late."

Pratikshya



PHOTO: KAMAL PHOTOGRAPHY