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SUNDAY POST

HERE . NOW



Rising cases of student suicide

A wake-up call

COVER STORY

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Foodie soul

I love to tantalize my taste buds with authentic dishes on holidays. Though several Indian dishes tempt me to unrestrained indulgence, my go-to-cuisine is rice and Chicken Kassa, my soul food.

Though he secured a degree in Engineering, his passion for cooking and respect for rich culinary traditions of Odisha and Bengal made him work in some of the best restaurants of Bangalore, Hyderabad and Thailand as a chef. A former Masterchef Season 7 contestant Biswajit Moharathi, owner of Breathe by Biswajit, a multi-cuisine restaurant in Bhubaneswar now works as a food and beverage lecturer at the Utkal University of Culture. The alumnus of Culinary Academy of India loves to binge-watch web series at his leisure

Pet person

My mother chastises me frequently, but I keep bringing pets like birds, rabbits, canines, cats, and fish and they've really made a big difference in my life. I relate to them better.

Movie freak

Apart from cooking, my other love is movies. Though it's not always easy to watch films in theatres, I manage to steal a few hours on those rare holidays to binge-watch my favourite web series.



Treat for family

When at home on my day off, I mostly cook desi Odia or Bengali food as my family is not fond of exotic restaurant foods. I enjoy taking care of their food choices.

OPINION MATTERS

Springs in their steps, a fantastic sight, Creativity boundless, Sunday-POST's light. Dancing is dreaming with feet or limbs? Odissi or contemporary, it's a joy that brims.

Whether in real life or in the reel, We all dance and square up the bill. RJ Saugato was in the mixed bag, Stands and promotes regional tag.

World Veterinary Day, a wealth of knowledge, Companionship with animals, a bond to acknowledge. Man-man connection lost, but with beasts we thrive, A snake pacified, better than a wicked man's jive.

Madhubabu's legacy, Utkal Gauraba year, Destiny of Odisha, waiting to mark 175th bar. Utkal Tannery at Cuttack he made, A global success, with no downgrade.

With a German expert he came, Quality was never compromised, to have fame. Lizard skins made the tannery popular; In the UK, Europe and Japan, it was so popular.

Potpourri of facts, a great winner; Anecdotes and nostalgia, all in shimmer. Tinsel Town shows Disco and Yammi's role. Samantha feels lucky featuring in *Citadel*.

Sunday-POST, an interesting and educative read, Viral Whatsapp message as diet of sea-food, Orissa-POST, a messenger of all, Life beautiful and educative, it stands tall.



DR. BHUVAN ANAND ROUT,
SHANKARPUR, CUTTACK

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

- The reward for a job well done is more work.
- Some of us learn from the mistakes of others; the rest of us have to be the others.
- What did one eye say to the other eye? Between you and me something smells.
- Why couldn't the bike stand up on its own? It was two tired.



UNIVERSAL LANGUAGE

Sir, The **Sunday POST's** cover story from last week, "Springs in their steps," April 23, ahead of International Dance Day made for an interesting read. Debasish Sahoo, the founder of Dance Ka Keeda Studios, expressed how dance resonated with him from the soul, bringing together his love for art, music, and movement. Lucky Prajna Pratisthita Mohanty, a skilled Odissi artiste and disciple of Padma Shri awardee Guru Kumkum Mohanty, discussed the importance of sincerity, passion, practice, and humbleness in dance. Lucky feels that Odissi is his true calling in life, as it is an integral part of his being. He aims to convey his Guru's artistry through his performances and artistic expression, believing that the ultimate fulfilment of his passion is to achieve God's grace. The article highlights how dance has been an essential part of ceremonies, rituals, celebrations and entertainment, serving as a universal language for expressing emotions.

MUKESH KUMAR, CUTTACK

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



Rising cases of student suicide

A wake-up call

THERE IS A NEED TO HAVE AN EFFICIENT SUPPORT SYSTEM AND MENTAL HEALTH SENSITIZATION PROGRAMMES BOTH AT HOME AND IN EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS TO IDENTIFY AT-RISK STUDENTS AND PROMOTE MENTAL WELLBEING, SAY EXPERTS

MADHUSMITA SAHU, OP

- Law student jumps to death in Bhubaneswar
- University student ends life on City outskirts
- Class X student consumes poison in Keonjhar
- Year's 4th suicide case in IIT- Madras

These are some of the disturbing newspaper headlines that hogged the lime lights of late. However, these are not stray cases. According to National Crime Records Bureau, Odisha accounted for 2682 student suicide cases in a span of three years (2019-21) which suggests that more than two students are ending life every day in Odisha and the rate is much higher than the national average.

There may be so many reasons such as unrealistic expectations of parents, adverse impact of social media, inability to accept failure, too many restrictions by the authorities and so on.

But for a society that is striving to raise its living standards using youth powers, the situation is truly alarming.

With the trend of suicide catching up fast with the students and the cases increasing year after year, a few experts and parents share with **Sunday POST** their thoughts and

discuss how to trace the reasons and find solutions to the issue.

'Mental health awareness programme should be conducted at school level'

Dr. Subhankar Swain, a consultant psychiatrist based in Sambalpur, chips in to educate and raise awareness on the gravitas of the topic. Explaining the key factors that lead a student to take such a drastic step, he says, "Brain resilience refers to the ability of the brain to bounce



back from stress and adverse life events. When the brain is less resilient, the person is more susceptible to experiencing stressful events that can lead to suicidal thoughts and behaviours. Childhood trauma and mental health disorders such as depression and substance use disorders can reduce brain resilience and increase the risk of suicide."

Social media has been referred to as one of the leading causes of suicide, where social comparison takes place, triggering low self-esteem and high social anxiety among students. On the impact of social media on mental health, he adds, "Each brain perceives social media differently. For example, teenage brains tend to relate more to trending pop culture. The Instagram generation seeks comfort in reels and stories. When individuals compare themselves to their wealthy or more successful peers

on social media, it can shatter their self-esteem. Furthermore, a gradual decline in meaningful human connections can make individuals more vulnerable to stressful events, with no one to share their problems with other than a phone screen."

It comes down to the educa-



tional institutions to study more about the prevalent issue and come up with solutions to tackle it.

"An efficient support system and mental health awareness programmes are essential both at home and in school to identify at-risk individuals and promote mental wellbeing. Mental health awareness programmes should be implemented at the school level, including stress management, coping skills, and regular physical exercises as part of the curriculum, not just extracurricular activities," suggests the psychiatrist.

'Creating a welcoming environment is a school's primary responsibility'

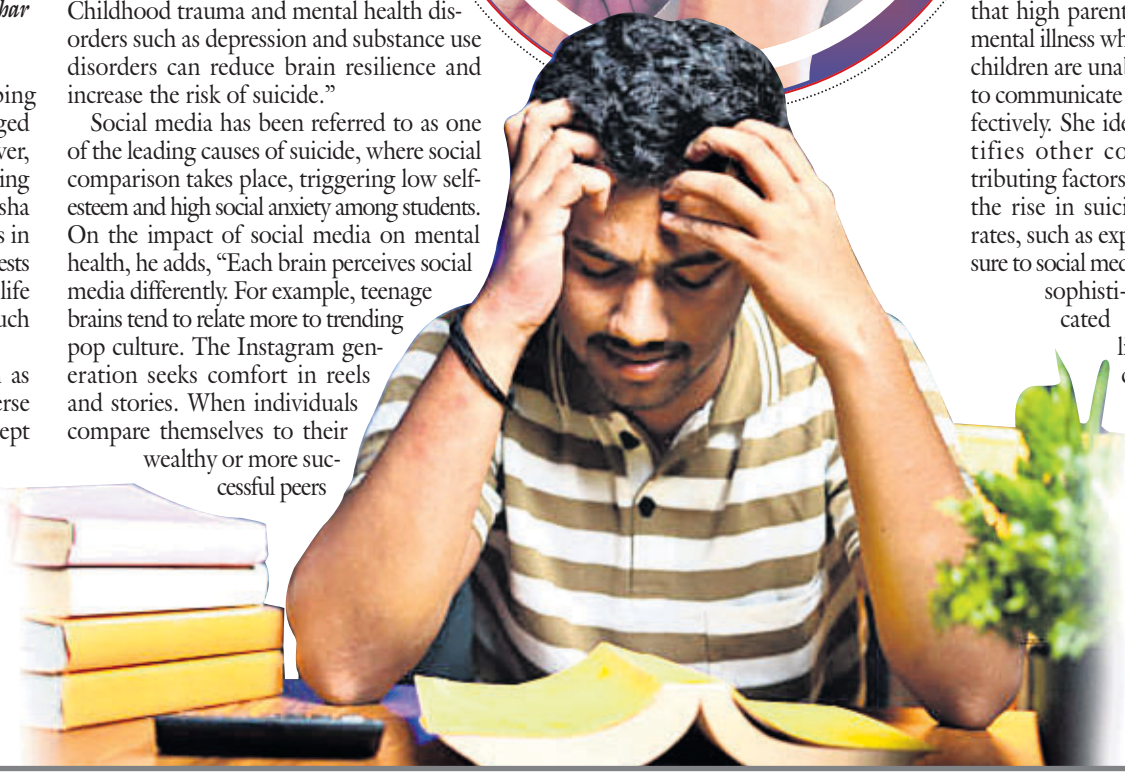
As most of the suicide cases are being reported either in hostels or the school/college buildings, the role of educational institution is crucial in dealing with the issue.

Sharing her views on this, Madhumita Mohapatra, the Founder/Principal of D.P. Model Public School in Bhubaneswar, says that high parental expectations can lead to mental illness when children are unable to communicate effectively. She identifies other contributing factors to the rise in suicide rates, such as exposure to social media, sophisticated



lifestyle, and the trend of nuclear families.

According to Mohapatra, schools or educational institutions play a vital role in promoting a healthy lifestyle for children, as they spend a significant amount of time there. In her view, schools are responsible for fostering a child's academic and mental growth in a balanced manner.





Mohapatra emphasises that a school's primary responsibility is to provide a safe and welcoming environment where children can think, act, and create freely. Schools must strive to make students feel at home, with the Principal playing the role of a surrogate mother.

Discipline is necessary, but excessive control can be detrimental to a child's development. Children should be encouraged to explore and not feel restricted by arbitrary rules. To prevent discrimination, schools should avoid creating exclusive groups or classes, advises Mohapatra.

According to her, direct engagement with students, individual conversations with them, the incorporation of enjoyable games, sports, and activities, and the delegation of more responsibilities, and their involvement in various school activities, can play a big role in preventing such unfortunate incidents.

'Social media has negative impacts'

Weighing on the issue a neuropsychiatrist and wellness consultant **Dr Amrit Pattojoshi** says, "There are multiple factors that contribute to student suicide, including social problems like social isolation, relational issues, lack of counselling, failure in exams, social stigma, family problems, depression, sleeping habits, unemployment, fear of exams, and peer pressure."

He also expressed concerns about the role of social media. He says, "Social media can also have negative effects on students, including unhealthy comparison, fear of missing out (FOMO), cyberbullying, online reputational sabotage, and increased risk for depression, anxiety, loneliness, self-harm, and suicidal thoughts."

This apart, it is important to identify risk

factors such as abuse, mental disorders, access to lethal means, social isolation, chronic disease and disability, adds the professor.

"Once you spot risk factors, talk to the person, express your concern, suggest therapy, and help them identify and equip themselves with protective factors like building social connectedness, building self-esteem, having a sense of purpose in life, and identifying cultural, religious, or personal beliefs that discourage suicide," he further says.

Pattojoshi emphasises the role of educational institutions and society when it comes to the prevention of suicide among students. Elaborating on the few possible actions on that front, he says, "To ensure that students receive the support they need, universities and schools must provide on-campus clinics or strong connections with local health services, and students must be made aware that they can speak to trained medical professionals and counsellors about their issues. Schools and universities should work on the prevention of mental

health issues in young children, raise awareness about the problem, and support students to develop social and emotional skills and capabilities that promote lifelong mental health and wellbeing."

"To help prevent suicide, it is important to talk to the person in a private place, express your concern, use active listening skills, educate parents and students on early signs and symptoms, create a safe and positive school or college environment, encourage social time, be supportive, and ask if the student has thoughts of suicide to build their self-awareness," Dr. Pattajoshi signs off.

'Mother's role is crucial to her children's ability to communicate'

Sujata Satpathy, a parent of two daughters, comments on the issue from her observations: "The suicide incidents have an influence on the community. When a student attempts suicide, his or her friends are severely impacted. Some of them



turn melancholic as a result, while others become pre-occupied with their stud-

ies because it is a widespread issue and different individuals have different perspectives on the incidents."

She suggests, "Since it is the duty of parents to guide their children, they should interact positively and amiably with them when discussing and resolving issues. When parents encourage their kids to study and succeed, it's a good thing, but when they push them too hard for excellent grades, the kids become overworked and get stressed to perform well in school."

Sujata also believes that social media has adverse effects on students. She says, "We did not have social media or the internet in our day; therefore, social media had no effect on us. It was quite simple for us to learn about how the kids were spending their lives. We would get together or have family discussions with the parents. Today, other people's opinions are worth more than your own. The youngster won't disclose any instances of mental abuse because they worry that the parents won't understand. And after reading about such persecution in newspapers, s/he considers taking his own life without hesitation."

According to Sujata, a mother's role is crucial to her children's ability to communicate and comprehend one another. Because her two daughters are at different levels of mental maturity from one another, she interacts with them differently. When she is with her elder daughter, she acts as an adult. However, when she is with the younger one, she becomes her friend and attempts to understand her viewpoint. She believes her elder daughter is far superior to her in terms of schooling. She confides in her mother and tells her everything that is happening, which is a better form of communication for parents to have with their kids.

AGROPRENEUR SANJOG SAHU AIMS TO MAKE THE VENTURE A PROFITABLE FARM-TO-FORK MODEL THAT MAKES HEALTHY SNACKS FROM PURPLE SWEET POTATOES SOURCED FROM THE MARGINALISED FARMERS ACROSS EASTERN INDIA



Mati Farms - Hitting a purple patch

balance. He first started growing exotic vegetables and fruits like kale, zucchini, cherry tomatoes, etc.

The initial idea has, of course, developed

through numerous iterations, finally landing on the production and post-harvest processing of purple-fleshed sweet potatoes. The current vision of the company is to create world-class healthy snacks from the tuber, which will eventually benefit the farmers, creating a social impact. Although the business model has evolved since, the core vision remains simple: to foster ecologically robust agriculture by bridging it with sustainable consumption.

THE STRIDE

The start-up is currently engaging with farmers on a contractual basis to cultivate purple-fleshed sweet potatoes in districts of Odisha. The base of their farms is primarily in Koraput, Gajapati and the mountainous foothills of Jajpur. With collaboration from the ICAR-Central Tuber Crops Research Institute (CTCRI), it conducted multiple workshops with farmers from that region to enlighten them on the importance and feasibility of growing tuber crops. The company, with the help of the institute, provided the farmers with biofortified strains of purple and orange sweet potatoes. The goal of the workshops was to find a few enthusiastic farmers ready to take up the challenge of cultivating the same. A few of the farmers have shown their zeal to grow purple-fleshed sweet potatoes, and since then the company has been making rounds of their fields to provide them with the methodology for better results. They believe in a pragmatic approach with cordial communication and handholding of farmers when it comes to educating them on the cultivation process and monitoring. The company has shown long-term strategic interest in investing in Jaipur because of its sandy soil, warm climate and enriching water supply from the Brahmani River.

RESILIENT AGRICULTURAL MODEL

Beyond sustainability, Sanjog calls for resiliency as a better framework to guide agriculture in the era of climate change. According to him, the future food shortages in agriculture due to climate change and global warming will be nothing like the range of past climatic variations, which calls for a more future-oriented approach. He says, "Agriculture should be part of the solution and not the problem. At Mati Farms, we want to promote resilient agricultural models to meet future en-



Sweet Potato vine transplantation in Pottangi block, Koraput

vironmental challenges." The tuber and root crops (which used to be called famine food) evolved as hardy, climate-adapted crops and therefore will be an excellent substitute and a viable option because of their resilience against the unpredictability of nature.

Sanjog believes that in the age of technology fetishisation, resilient agriculture might simply have to do with creating farms based on sound ecological design first. Smartphones and 5G connectivity with farmers can be leveraged to clear the information and knowledge deficit on crop growing. Therefore, the need of the hour is to leverage such available technologies first instead of advocating for expensive devices on the field or other unscalable hardware as a panacea for agriculture.

FUTURE PLANS

On the topic of future expansion of the company, Sanjog says, "Scaling is critical to Mati Farms as agricultural problems occur at a global scale. In fact, we pivoted early multiple times until scaling became hardwired into our business model. So we definitely have plans for rapid expansion into different products in the health food category while continuing to work directly with farmers across different crops and geographies."

Sanjog hopes there will be more entrepreneurs who will release the stress both from the farmers and the consumers with suitable innovations in this domain. The idea is to make people more conscious of their choices, which eventually impact the environment. He says, "With each consumer decision, we are essentially voting every single time for or against the planet. Mati Farms is trying to bank on the right side of the equation by being fair to the farmers, environment and consumers."

mand. When it comes to Odisha, there are few such entrepreneurs who are not only making a business out of it with the help of updated technology but are also empathetic towards the farmers and shareholders and striving to make a socio-ecological impact.

Sunday POST spoke with one of such agropreneurs, Sanjog Sahu, founder of Mati Farms, who is pushing boundaries by making a successful enterprise based out of agriculture in Odisha:

THE BEGINNING

Mati Farms is the brainchild of Sanjog Sahu, an entrepreneur based out of Chilika, who is aiming to make the venture into a profitable farm-to-fork company that makes healthy snacks from crops sourced directly from smallholder farmers across eastern India. It was founded with his partner, Sukanya Panda, in 2018. The company, which believes in creating a social impact with the backward integration of farmers, is enabling them with techniques, technology and financial inclusivity. The budding start-up was initially bootstrapped before it raised social venture capital through the incubator, KIIT-TBI. Recently, it raised another round of investment from angels and was also awarded a product development and marketing grant from Startup Odisha during the Make-in-Odisha Conclave, which will help it take the homegrown brand nationwide. The company sees itself as creating its own brand of healthy snacks from an array of crops, primarily cassava, purple flesh sweet potato and jackfruit.

On the conception of Mati Farms, the entrepreneur said that the idea came to him while he was pursuing his Ph.D. in environmental anthropology at the University of Arizona. While engaged in fieldwork in Koraput, he found that agriculture is a major driver for environmental change. He wanted to do something tangible to address the problem. He set out to create a sustainable model for agriculture without ecological im-

SAMEER RANA, OP

Agriculture, known to be the foundation for human civilization, needs innovations and improvements considering the global climate change to meet the demands of rising global consumption. That's where agropreneurs come into play. An agropreneur is basically an entrepreneur who uses agriculture to build a business and bridge the gap between food supply and de-



Sanjog Sahu with co-founder Sukanya Panda

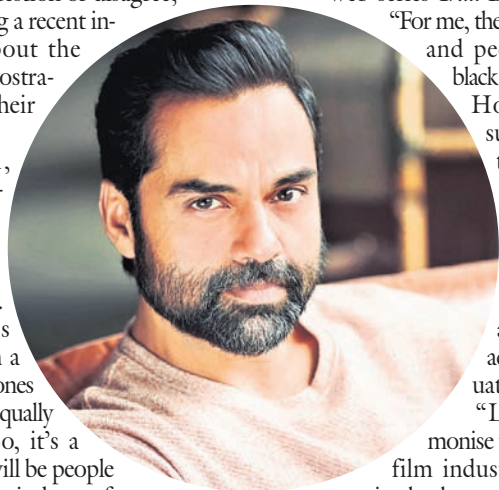


With farmers of Satyasanti SHG, Tikabali block, Kandhamal

People, human condition aren't black and white

Actors and their movies have often faced the wrath of the 'Boycott Bollywood' brigade, and that phase raises its head occasionally. While it's fair to question or disagree, Abhay Deol, during a recent interview spoke about the cancel culture that ostracizes actors and their films.

He said, "Technology has allowed not only information but also misinformation to flow quickly. Everybody has power. Those with a conscience and the ones with an agenda are equally powerful today. So, it's a mixed bag. There will be people calling out the film industry for not changing as rapidly as the world. There are also those with an agenda, who just want to boycott and ban things because it serves their



personal agenda. I do not believe in the cancel culture and bans." Abhay, who was recently seen in the web series *Trial By Fire*, elaborated, "For me, the human condition and people aren't black and white. However, I support those who want a genuine change. Those with an agenda are just taking advantage of situations. "Let's not demonise the entire Hindi film industry for making movies that have an audience," appeals the *Socha Na Tha* actor.

AGENCIES

Alia reiterates stand on privacy at home



Actress Alia Bhatt opened up about privacy over a past incident in February this year when she went furious as a few media persons who clicked her photos while she was sitting inside her home. The *Sadak 2* actress uploaded the photos on her social media account and called out the newspaper publication and even tagged Mumbai police in the post.

Reacting to the incident Alia said, "I did feel bad about the incident that took place in February, but I wish news portals picking up the image had been more mindful. I feel like websites sometimes don't know what they're picking up either. But I just wanted to highlight that they need to be a little more conscious when it comes to actors. There are cameras everywhere and it has become this unspoken rule that when we are in public, we are up for absolute consumption. We can't stop that, but I think it's fair for me to expect privacy in my own home. Honestly, there's no beef, no angst, no upsetness. I said what I had to say and received a lot of support for it. And I think people also understood that what I was asking for wasn't too much."

Several celebrities from the industry including Anushka Sharma, Karan Johar, Arjun Kapoor, and others came out in support of the actress.

AGENCIES

Raashii's take on nepotism

Following the reported suicide of actor Sushant Singh Rajput, several industry outsiders have been airing their views on the issue of nepotism. Now, it's the turn of *Farzi* actress Raashii Khanna.

Opening up on the issue, she said, "If I focus on the troubles they will multiply, if I focus on the gratitude that will multiply. I genuinely believe in it. Like I signed a Dharma film, just an example. I also had that feeling that mostly only insiders get a Dharma film, but when it came to me I was honestly very surprised. And that's why I believe that you can make your life, if you don't focus on the negative so much. Don't focus on it; don't be bitter about opportunities that didn't come your way. Work on the opportunities that you have."

Speaking about her prized project, *Yodha* which co-stars Sidharth Malhotra, she added, "In *Yodha*, it's one of the most amazing characters that I am playing. I never thought I would get a character like that in a Dharma film, where it's strong, and when you see the film you will know that it's again one of the stronger roles."

AGENCIES



Samantha breaking taboos in new ad

Star Samantha Ruth Prabhu has spoken about various taboos faced by women today in a new advertisement she features in. From women marrying at their own will, to returning from work as per their timings or doing action in films - the advertisement talks about all of that.

Samantha captioned it: "Duniya kheechegi neeche, but you got to rise up baby!"

The video begins with Samantha sitting at a mandap as a bride.

However, a wedding guest comments on how girls should marry at the right age.

Samantha is then heard saying: "Time pe nahi, marzi se honi chahiye".

The video then shifts to Samantha coming late from work and the watchman asks: "Kaunsa kaam raat ke 12 bajae khatam hota hai?". To which, Samantha says it doesn't even end at midnight.

The last segment is about doing an action film, where the co-actor is heard saying that he is the "hero" and will do "action" in the movie. Giving a befitting reply, Samantha says: "Par is film ki hero to main hu". The ad ends with Samantha saying: "Sab ki sunoge to khud ki kab karoge".

IAN S

CHEERS TO SUMMER

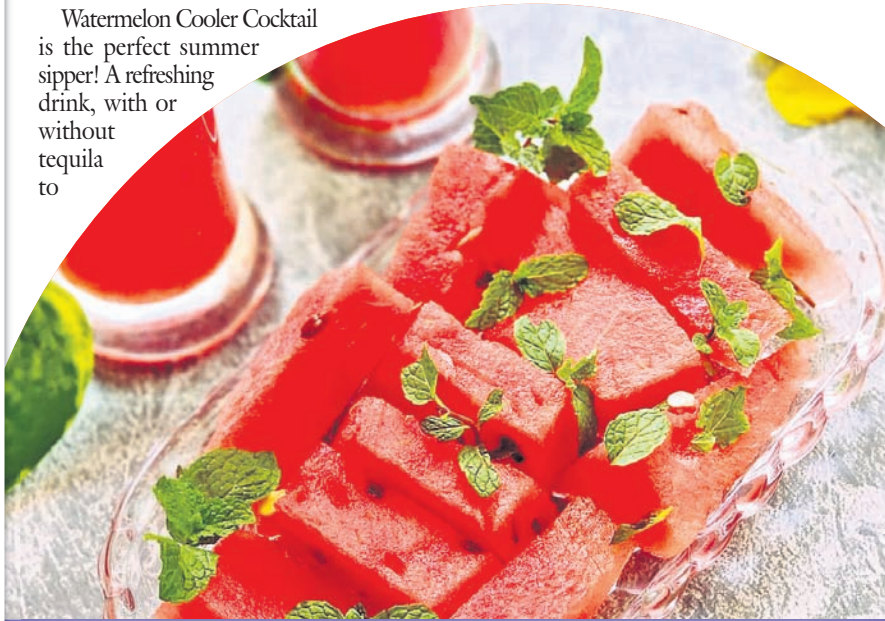
BEATING THE PAINFUL HEAT IN SCORCHING SUMMER HAS ALWAYS BEEN A CHALLENGE. MAKING THE MATTER WORSE, THIS SEASON MERCURY IS SOARING UP IN ODISHA LIKE NEVER BEFORE. NO WONDER, EVERYONE IS CRAVING FOR SOMETHING COOL AND DELECTABLE. WITH THE ENTIRE STATE REELING UNDER INTENSE HEAT, **Sunday POST** PRESENTS A COUPLE OF CHOICES WHICH ARE NOT ONLY REFRESHING TO CONSUME, THEY ALSO HAVE ADDED BENEFIT OF BEING HEALTHY

Watermelon Cooler

One of the best parts of summer is enjoying a sweet, ripe watermelon. This year, I decided to give my watermelon a little bit of upgrade and turned it into a thirst-quenching drink that's ideal for a hot summer's day. Watermelon Cooler drink is fresh, bright and so easy to make since it has less than five ingredients. It's pretty, bright red color also makes it hard to resist.

Watermelon Cooler Cocktail is the perfect summer sipper! A refreshing drink, with or without tequila to

enjoy at any summer party. It's super easy. You just need fresh lemon juice, mint leaves and some sparkling water and of course juicy watermelons if you want to make the watermelon cooler without alcohol. If you want to enjoy it with alcohol then tequila is the best liquor for this refreshing drink. Now make this bright cooler and Cheers to Summer.



Versatile Mango

Green raw mango & chili salt are a match made in food heaven. Raw mango is the star fruit of spring. Its tangy flavour compliments the weather beautifully. Once you taste it, you won't be able to stop eating it and soon you'll be adding it to everything! This aromatic fruit is a greener version of the ripe and juicy mangoes. You'll find them abundant in markets just before the mango season is about to arrive.

Raw mangoes are firm and not as juicy as the ripe ones. But this Kachi Kairi or also known as Amba, is more a versatile fruit when it comes to cooking mangoes. Unlike the sweet fragrance of the ripe fruit, raw mangoes have a pungent smell. They can be grated and pickled, added to curries (especially from the Malabar belt) or simply made into a chutney.

The simple recipe like this mango with chili powder does not require any kitchen skills. But gives you immense pleasure with its taste and flavour. Do try.



PRITISHA DAS

Malai Peda Lassi

What could be more cooling and refreshing than a tall glass of lassi on a summer afternoon? This sweet lassi recipe tastes just like the ones from Punjabi Dhaba, so thick, rich, yummy and delightful! Perfect dessert to end a lavish Indian meal!

Malai peda Lassi is a very delicious, healthy and refreshing Indian summer beverage with full fat thick yogurt. You can make numerous variations with this beverage like sweet, salted or infusing fruits. I love my chilled tall glass of lassi whether it is summer or not. I love the thick and creamy ones with a good dose of nuts and saffron on top.



The writer is a popular food blogger of Odisha

YASHMINE QURESHI



PHOTO : KB MUSIC