

SUNDAY POST

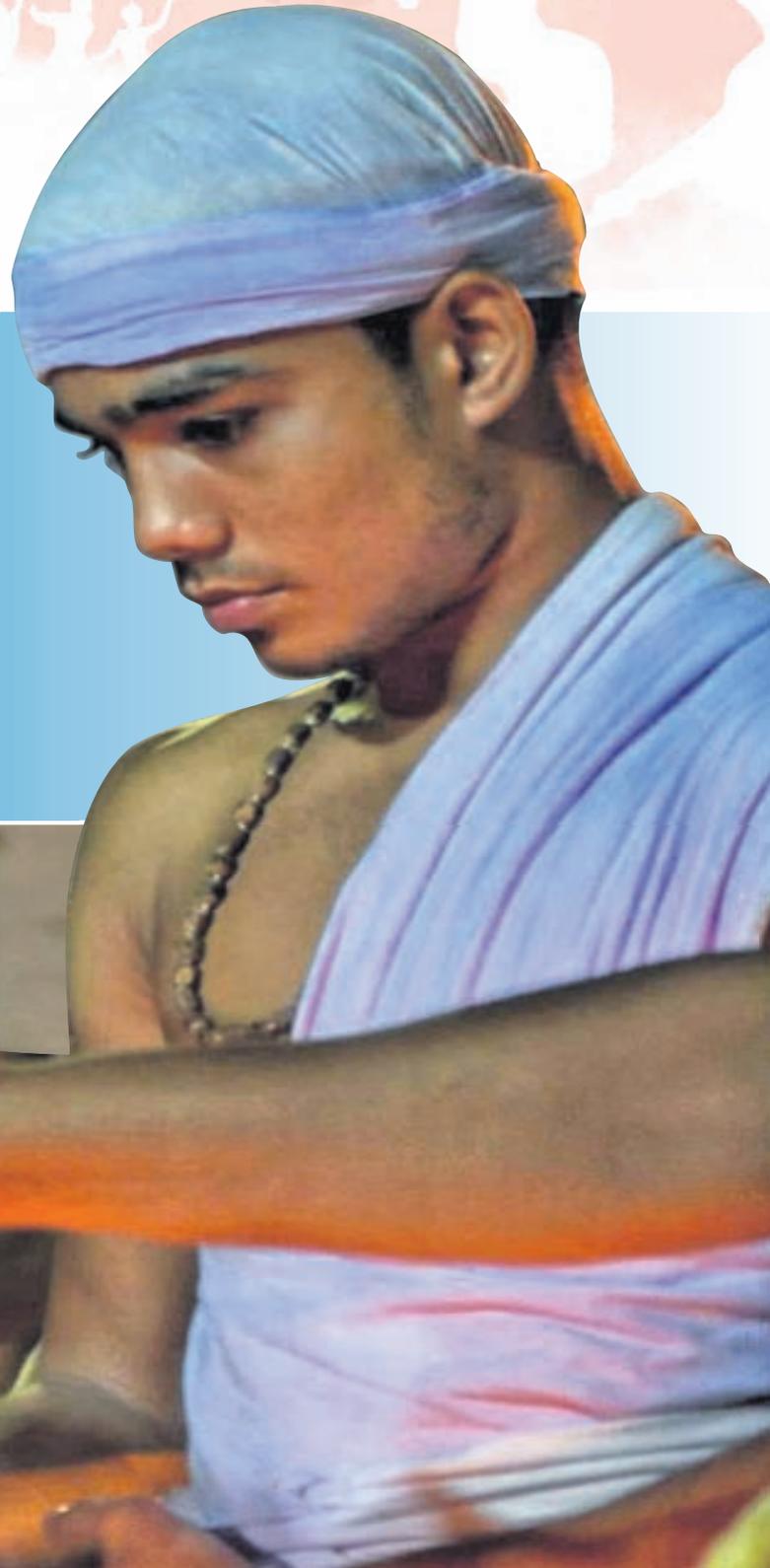
JUNE 28-JULY 4, 2020

HERE . NOW



Minors at

Lord's service





RASHMI REKHA DAS, OP



Odisha Science Academy Award winning author **GIRIJA MANJARI PADHI**, who has more than 20 books to her credit, loves to make pickles, badi and papad on her non-working Sundays.

Avid gardener

Being a senior citizen, all days are like Sundays for me. As my daughters-in-law look after household chores, I don't have to make much effort. So, I take lots of interest in gardening. Apart from nourishing the plants, I plant saplings to for a greener tomorrow.

Passionate writer

As writing is my favourite pastime and passion, I devote three to four hours a day to pen for the kids. At the moment, I am writing three books of which one will be published at the month end.

Talking spirituality

I believe spirituality affects our everyday life. Therefore, I often deliver spiritual discourses on Sundays to make people feel a sense of serenity in their lives.



With husband



With her son

Part time vocalist

At times, I fancy myself as a singer. Since I have good command over multiple languages, I try my hand at singing devotional songs in different languages during my free time on Sundays.



With her daughters-in-law

STARTLING FACTS

Sir, I liked reading the cover article Juggernaut halted that appeared in last edition's Sunday supplement. Though I am an ardent devotee of Lord Jagannath and make it a point to visit Puri dham every year during Rath Yatra to be part of Lord's annual sojourn, I had no idea that the grand festival of Lord Jagannath and his siblings was not held for 32 years due to attacks on the temple by Islamic rulers between 1568 and 1735. I was also clueless about the fact that Rath Yatra was conducted even during the infamous Orissa Famine of 1866 which claimed lives of over a million people in eastern India. That apart, the carnival was conducted in the times of Spanish Flu pandemic, referred to as the Bombay Fever in India about a century ago resulting in more than 14 million deaths. The whole piece was informative and I read it at one go.

KISHORE SAHOO, PARADEEP

FIRST HERO

Sir, I am a regular reader of Odisha's only home grown English daily. I was expecting an article on Father's Day on your last edition of Sunday supplement. However, I did not find a single piece on Father's Day. I really felt bad about it. Last year, Sunday POST had come up with two articles. This year we have none. As we know a father is every son's first hero and every daughter's first love. A father's role is not just limited to being a breadwinner for the family. His involvement influences the child's overall development. A father leaves no stone unturned to keep his children's life protected. He toils hard to make kids' life better. He stays strong against all odds. Therefore, we have all reasons to salute our dad for being so awesome on Father's Day.

DINESH DAS, NABARANGPUR

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
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Minors at Lord's service

RASHMI REKHA DAS, OP

The appointment of Mudirastas, who are the representatives of Gajapati King, is unique as servitors exceeding 18 years of age and those married are not allowed to render their services

After a gap of 44 years, Gajapati Maharaja Dibyasingha Deb, treated as the foremost servitor of Lord Jagannath, abstained from performing his hereditary Chhera Pahanra ritual this year on the day of Debasnana Purnima. Even as the king is regarded as the living reflection of the Lord from a religious point of view, as a human being he has to deal with issues like any other citizen of the country. Coronavirus didn't spare even the Puri Gajapati who had no choice but to comply with the COVID-19 guidelines and stay away from performing the age-old ritual.

However, since centuries provisions have been put in place to ensure that the rituals associated with the functioning of Srimandir are maintained in any eventuality. There were occasions in the past also when Gajapatis were unable to render their services to the Lord. In such circumstances, the role played by Mudiratha or Mudirasta, known as Gajapati's representative, becomes vital. According to the Record-of-rights and duties of various service providers or ritual functionaries of Shree Jagannath Temple, Mudirasta seva is one of the nearly 200 sevas of Srimandir. A Mudirasta servitor officiates Chhera Pahanra and other functions when Gajapati is prevented from performing them for some reason or the other. Though a hereditary position, the appointment of Mudirastas is unique as servitors exceeding 18 years of age and those married are not allowed to render their services. In fact, a Mudirasta

should be in the 9-12 year age group at the time of his appointment, mandated by Srimandir rules.

This year, in Gajapati's absence, 17-year-old Aditya Narayan Mudirasta had to officiate the Chhera Pahanra ritual. His uncle Padmanav Mudirasta had also officiated Chhera Pahanra ritual in 1976. In a candid chat with Sunday POST, Mudirasta servitors share their feelings while carrying out rituals on behalf of Puri Gajapati.

According to records, it was the second time when Puri king was unable to perform Chhera Pahanra during the Snana Yatra. Earlier, he couldn't be part of the rituals in 1976 when he was in the USA for his law studies.

Padmanav Mudirasta (54), who performed Chhera Pahanra ritual during Bahuda Jatra or



return journey of the Trinity in the year 1976, says, "I was blessed to be born in a family of Mudirasta sevayat. Gajapati is the living entity of Lord Jagannath. Performing rituals on behalf of Lord Jagannath's first servant is certainly a proud moment for any Mudirasta servi-

tor. However, every Mudirasta servitor is not fortunate enough to get that opportunity."

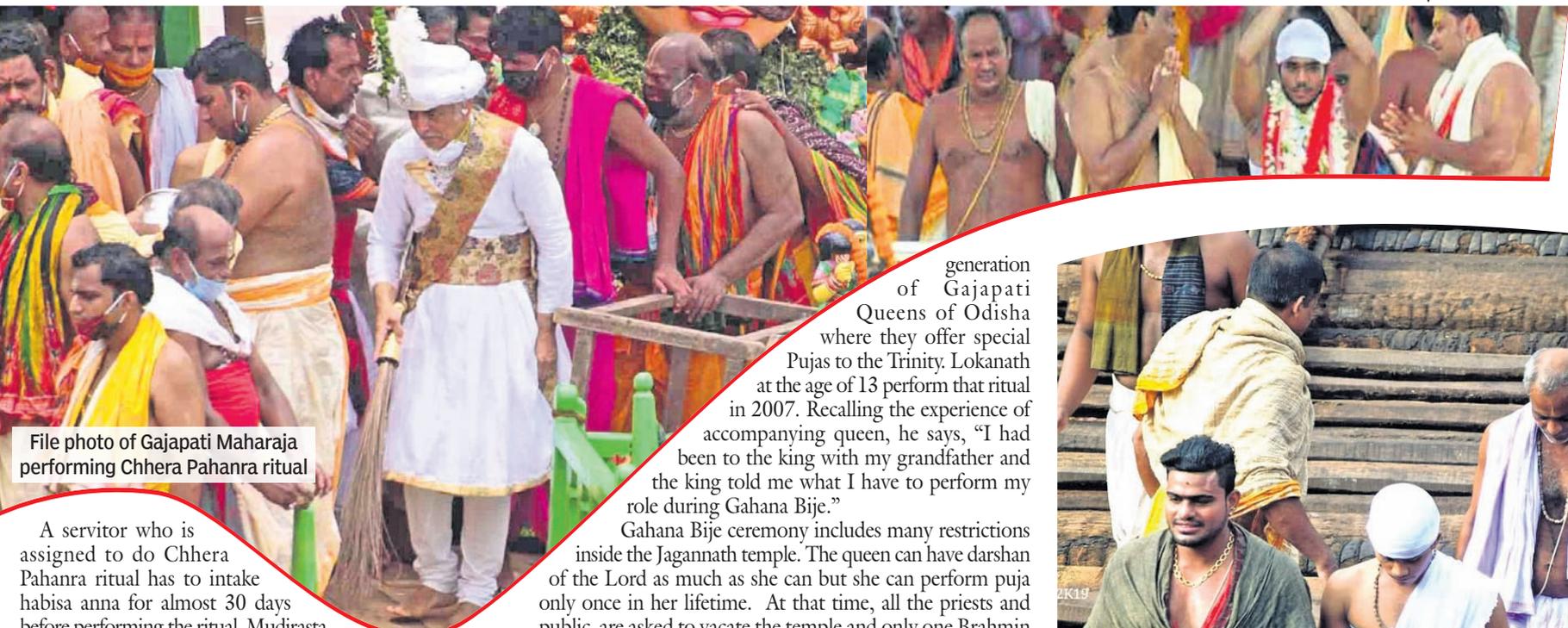
He continues: "I always watch how the Gajapati is brought to the temple in a palanquin from his palace to perform Chhera Pahanra during Snana Purnima and Rath Yatra. He

would sweep the floor of the Snana Mandap with a gold-plated broom and scavenge the chariots to consecrate them for the Rath Yatra of Lord Jagannath and his siblings with the assistance and direction of Rajaguru. On the day of Car Festival he worships goddess Kanak Durga inside the Raja Nahar (his palace) and dons his sacred thread. But I have not imagined that I would one day perform the same ritual on behalf of the king. I was all but 13 when I had performed the Chhera Pahanra ritual during Bahuda Yatra of Trinity when Gajapati was in the US. On the eve of Bahuda, I was informed to perform the ritual. My happiness knew no bounds when I was assigned to perform the service. In our family it was only my father's eldest brother who had earlier done the Chhera Pahanra ritual."

Asked about the services Mudirasta servitors offer, Padmanav says, "The seva we offer is called baluta seva. Only unmarried and minor Mudirasta servitors are allowed to do the job for the Gajapati Raja. Apart from Chhera Pahanra rituals, we also provide services like Puspanjali, Dora Lagi, Chandana Lagi, Bandapana and Gahana Bijee ritual."



Aditya performing Chhera Pahanra ritual during Snana Purnima



File photo of Gajapati Maharaja performing Chhera Pahanra ritual

A servitor who is assigned to do Chhera Pahanra ritual has to intake habisa anna for almost 30 days before performing the ritual. Mudirasta families of priests carry out day-to-day rituals in the temple on behalf of the king, Gajapati Dibyasingh Deb. With many families not having sons and girls are not allowed to do the sacred services, the number of priests has been dwindling. Only two families are now left to render the service. Most of the Mudirasta families had no son and thus withered.”

Describing his experience of performing Chhera Pahanra ritual, Aditya Mudirasta (17), the youngest temple servitor, says, “Thanks to Lord’s grace, I got the opportunity to do Chhera Pahanra ritual in Snaana Purnima. I got to know about carrying out the ritual a month back. It’s our hereditary service. Gajapati is the first servant of Lord Jagannath. Mudirasta servitors are given priority after him. My heart was filled with devotion while carrying out the ritual. The feelings cannot be expressed in words. It’s divine and beyond description.”

Padmanav’s son Loknath Mudirasta had the privilege of conducting puja for the royal couple as part of Gahana Bije ritual. According to tradition, a boy priest from Mudirasta clan should be present when the queen offers prayers during Gahana Bije, a ceremonial visit which is done once in a



LOKNATH



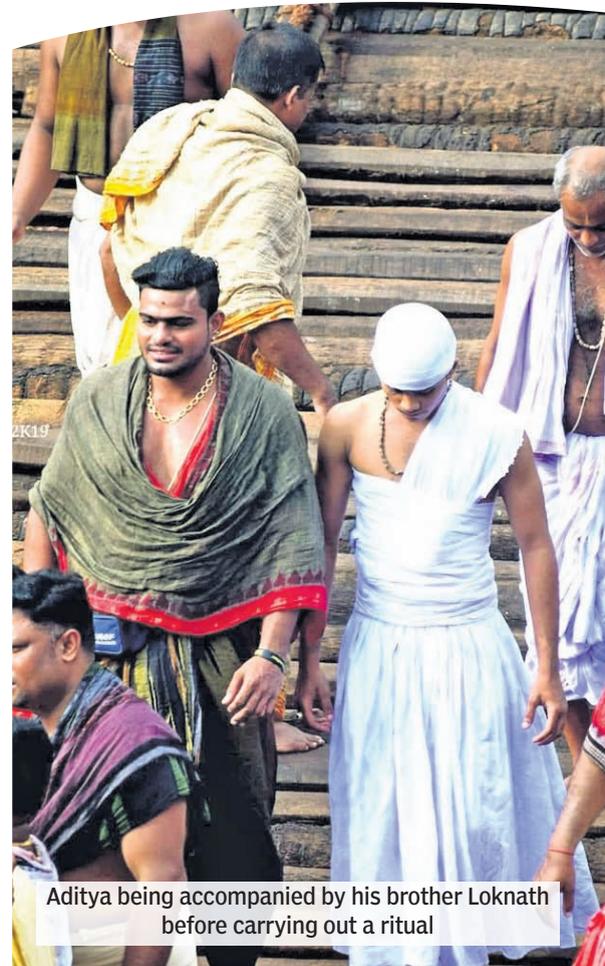
ADITYA

generation of Gajapati Queens of Odisha where they offer special Pujas to the Trinity. Loknath at the age of 13 perform that ritual in 2007. Recalling the experience of accompanying queen, he says, “I had been to the king with my grandfather and the king told me what I have to perform my role during Gahana Bije.”

Gahana Bije ceremony includes many restrictions inside the Jagannath temple. The queen can have darshan of the Lord as much as she can but she can perform puja only once in her lifetime. At that time, all the priests and public are asked to vacate the temple and only one Brahmin boy from Mudirasta servitor accompany the queen to the Sanctum Sanctorum. The queen comes in a palanquin. Processions and martial arts are also performed before the palanquin. After coming to the temple, all the gates are kept closed and the queen offers special puja to the sibling deities. Finally she is accompanied by Gajapati Maharaja to the royal palace.

After a long gap of forty years, wherein Gajapati Divyasingha Dev’s consort Lilabati Patamahadevi at the age of 51 visited the Temple along with other members of royal family and offered prayers April 8, 2007. Since the queen is treated as the representative of goddess Laxmi who is not supposed to directly face Lord Balabhadra (husband’s elder brother) as a mark of respect, Lord Balabhadra is put under cloth partition. Lilavati’s mother-in-law Suryamani Pattamahadevi had visited the temple as part of Gahana Bije ritual October 26, 1966 while the then queen Chandramani Pattamahadei came on Gahana Bije September 18, 1933.

Recalling the event, Loknath says, “I accompanied the royal procession after word was sent to the palace that the temple has been sanitised. After reaching the Sanctum Sanctorum, I went to the Ratna Simhasan, handed over a sari to the king, which he tied around the queen’s head — giving her sanction as a servant of the Lord. The couple then performed arati before the Trinity. It was such a pleasant memory which I would like to cherish till my last breath.”



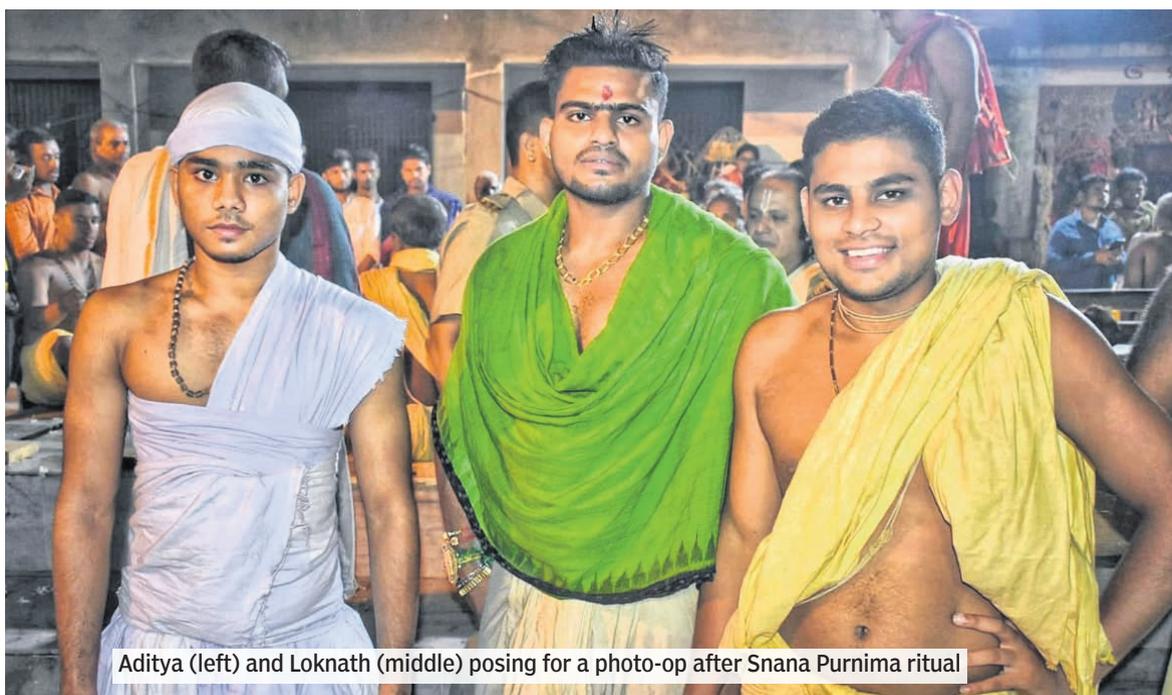
Aditya being accompanied by his brother Loknath before carrying out a ritual

INCENTIVE AND BONUS FOR MUDIRASTAS

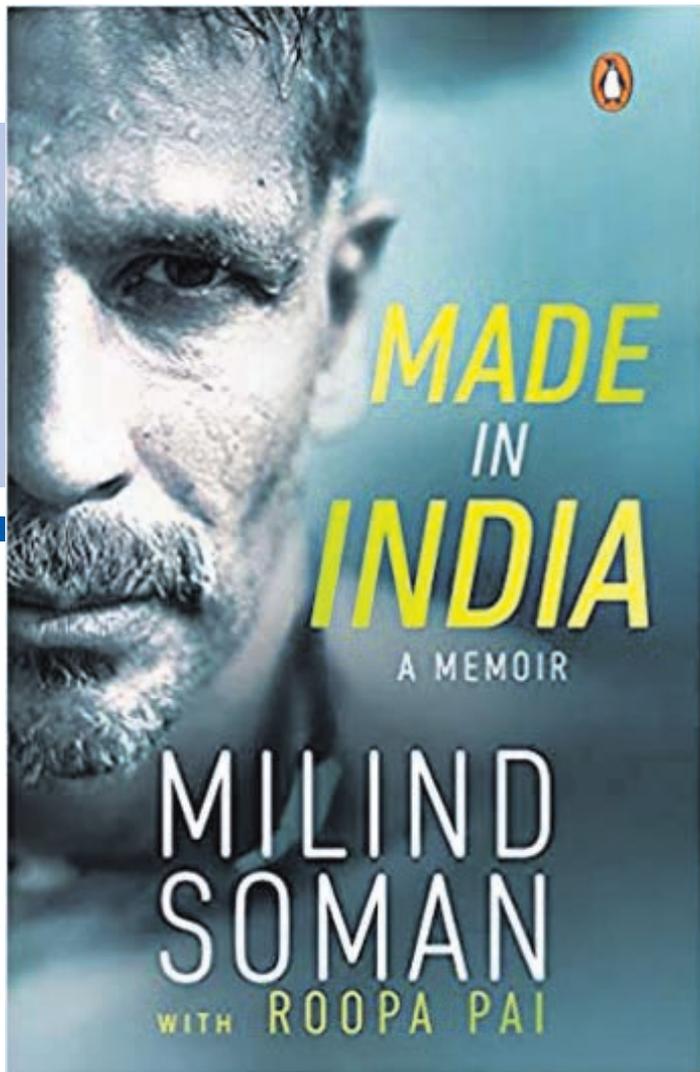
Mudirasta servitors are given a special financial package for rendering services to the Lord. Besides, their other receipts include clothes and Maha Prasad Khei (Prasads offered to the Lord at different times of the day which they sell to the devotees through Mahaprasad sellers to earn some money for their day to day-living).

Here is a list of Mudirasta servitors appointed in the last 65 years.

- ▶ Shree Naba Mudirasta
- ▶ Shree Hati Mudirasta
- ▶ Shree Bhimahari Mudirasta(1st)
- ▶ Shree Bhimahari Mudirasta(2nd)
- ▶ Shree Gopal Mudirasta
- ▶ Shree Purachandra Mudirasta
- ▶ Shree Padmanava Mudirasta
- ▶ Shree Batakrushna Mudirasta
- ▶ Shree Balabhadra Mudirasta
- ▶ Shree Narayana Mudirasta
- ▶ Shree Loknath Mudirasta
- ▶ Shree Kanha Mudirasta
- ▶ Shree Aditya Narayana Mudirasta



Aditya (left) and Loknath (middle) posing for a photo-op after Snaana Purnima ritual



The Homecoming

play the game. Soman's attitude and self-belief made him think that he didn't need to grease the wheels that moved the system. It was on a whim that he decided to give modelling a shot. His first assignment fetched him Rs. 50,000 in 1989, and he soon became a sensation. Some months later, he was approached by the then newbies in the fashion scene, Tarun Tahiliani and Rohit Khosla to model for the store 'Ensemble' and he worked for practically nothing because the "mad glint in their eyes" appealed to him. He was the first recognised super model from India and worked in England for a few years, apart from walking the ramp for reputed global design houses. Soman writes about the Tuff shoes ad in 1995 of him with his then-

lover Madhu Sapre, posing nude, and the furore it caused forcing the magazine to withdraw its publication for the month. Censorship seems to run in our veins. Sapre's parents were handed saris by women telling them to put clothes on their daughter. Soman faced no such repercussions. The double standards, perhaps, still persists.

He writes about his addictions, and his personal life. Also, he remained largely unaffected by the female adulation, though he was acutely and unabashedly aware of it all his life. He writes that his mother never really thought much of his looks, and was always amused by the attention that he got. He remained loyal to the women he had relationships with and though his first marriage did not work out because of the distance, he is respectful of Mylene Jampanoi, the French actress. His marriage to a much younger Ankit Konwar has been much publicised, with hints that he is some kind of cradle snatcher. Soman writes about Anita's parents' misgivings about their daughter's decision to marry an older man. He doesn't sound like a Casanova nor is he particularly narcissistic. He admits having temper issues and how it impacted his life. Soman doesn't shy away from talking about the dark stuff that includes his largely unknown rage issues. Milind Soman was cast as the antagonist in Mansoor Khan's Jo Jeeta Wohi Sikandar, but he walked out of the film before Deepak Tijori replaced him.

I personally found his ability to reinvent himself fascinating. A rolling stone, a freewheeling spirit with a nose for business opportunities, and the ability to work on his limitations, Soman was able to make the best of opportunities to suit his interest very well. Made in India focusses on Soman after his modelling days. While he does not make too much of his modelling success, treating it with a defining groundedness which seems to be a Milind Soman hallmark, he focusses on his struggle and a relatively unremarkable film and TV career. While most young men blessed with looks like Soman and after straddling modelling with panache

like he did, would want be cast as the hero in films, Soman seemed fine being considered for negative roles, and later as character actor. He was considered too westernised by the film industry. And the restless spirit in him did not dwell on the frustration of being cast as second best. Perhaps, the experience in swimming had prepared him for life. He says in an interview, 'I just enjoyed acting and never took it seriously, just like I don't take running seriously. People know me because I run a lot, and I run a lot because I love to run. I just run whenever, wherever, for half an hour to 12 hours.' Having been a fitness freak myself, I loved his tryst with running, the realisation that to sustain and be able to run long distances, you have to take care of the body and prepare for it. His promotion of Pinkathon, right from creating skeggings for women only reiterates his deep respect and support for women.

In most countries, Milind Soman would be nothing less than a role model of sorts where tales about him giving up his addictions or successfully completing the Iron man and Ultra man challenges at 50 or constantly looking for the next challenge with an attitude that's all about moving on would be life lessons for an entire generation. Seventeen years ago, when I began running, nobody cared about it. If you saw someone just running back then, people would find him mad. But today everyone talks about health, fitness. The mindset and culture have changed. Therefore I am relevant.

Written in a fluid, non-fussy style, Made in India is Soman, the loner's best attempt to allow the reader to know the man behind the multiple roles. Some of the best parts of the book appear without warning in each alternate chapter that captures his thoughts as he runs a marathon. Interestingly he chooses to interweave his worst run in the book, reflective of life, struggle and learning from failure. He doesn't make much about what he managed to achieve in a short span of time in different fields. At the same time, Soman's life is also a chronicle of the post-liberalisation India where he had a ringside seat and not only witnessed the zeitgeist but played a role in defining it. Soman can truly do it all — the 54-year-old has been an actor, fashion model, sportsman, motivational speaker, and an influencer throughout his career, and now, he has officially turned an author as well. He says "Everything has evolved. What's interesting is that a lot of good things and towering personalities have come out in 70-80s, and today there is a lot of interpretation, but little originality. We also have more efficiency and ideas to make money today and I think that has limited our ideas." So typical of Milind Soman, a man who followed his heart, and lived his life on his own terms as he made it in India like unmatched.



NANDITA MISHRA

Biographies become good literary writing when the story resonates with the personality of the author. This happens when the biographers detail their battle with the mind with as much honesty as their successes and high points. Made In India, a memoir of Milind Soman and co-authored by Roopa Pai definitely meets those expectations but it brings out a different story than what we normally expect from this genre. Made In India is no rags-to-riches story or the backstory of some individual success. It isn't even a message-dishing, sermonizing memoir where one moment changed everything. Soman admits, he has been lucky in life. He doesn't highlight the fact that he has created that luck. There is a lot more to Made in India than the headline-grabbing episode about Soman being a part of an RSS Shakhya while growing up or him marrying a much younger woman. For most people of my generation, Milind Soman epitomised what fandom was all about. He is the only model that I crushed on, and it happened long before his Made In India album which made him a national heartthrob.

The boy from Shivaji Park, who lived his early years in England and has been a loner for most of his life, surprisingly handled the harsh spotlight of modelling, television and cinema with panache, at least for the outside world. This book gives a glimpse into Soman's early 'misfit' life, his complicated relationship with his scientist father. Come to think of it, which father son relationship isn't complicated? He writes about it honestly, even admitting that his father's death didn't impact him so much.

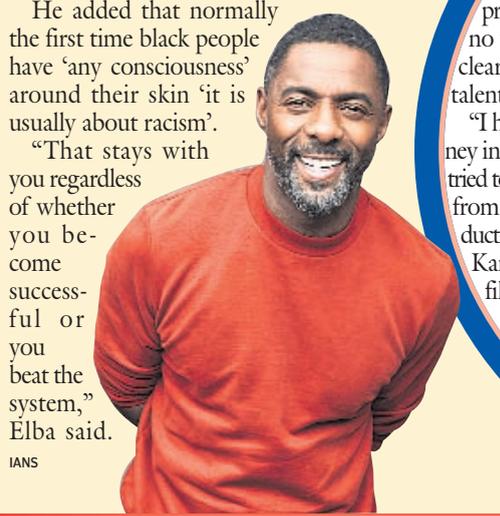
Soman's love for his mother and sisters, the love for fitness and the start of Pinkathon, his swimming which was 'never a passion' is shared with the reader. Most of what he did as a child was a combination of decisions by the family to help a teenager dissipate energy productively. As one of India's best swimmers of the 1980s, Milind Soman was destined to represent India at the Asian Games, and could have probably won an Olympic gold too but saw it all go to dust when he didn't

'I'm not immune to racism'

Hollywood star Idris Elba says his celebrity status does not make him immune to racism.

Elba shared that he was raised with the ideas that he had to be "twice as good as the white man" to succeed in life, reports *aceshowbiz.com*.

The Pacific Rim star was a part of a live question and answer session titled *The Reckoning: Kwame Kwei-Armah and Idris Elba on the Arts and Black Lives Matter*, where he spoke about his brush with racism. "Success has not negated racism for me. Asking me about racism is like asking me about how long I have been breathing," according to *Daily Mail*.



When Anushka decided to back genuine talent

She made her debut in Hindi cinema in 2008 with *Rab Ne Bana Di Jodi* having no backing in the film industry. Actress-producer Anushka Sharma minces no words when she says she was clear that she would back genuine talent in her ventures.

"I have had a very interesting journey in Hindi film industry and I have tried to apply these important learnings from my experiences for my production company with (her brother) Karnesh. Right from my debut film, I worked really hard so that I could get a chance to collaborate with some of the best filmmakers of our country. My desire was to always try and work with the best writers and directors," said Anushka, who started her own production house Clean Slate Films, when she was 25.

The actress, who comes from an army background, always rooted for talented people.

"When I became a producer at 25, I was clear that I would back genuinely talented people who give their everything to make a mark with their raw talent and who are looking for a foot into the business of films," she added.



Kiara misses her 'girlfriends'

Actress Kiara Advani cannot wait to meet her girlfriends and she is missing them very much.

Kiara took to Instagram, where she shared a photo collage with her friends.

"I miss my girlfriends so so so much. I wish I could drive over and meet them but we're not risking it. This is an appreciation post for the girls that make every day a little more special," Kiara wrote. She added that they don't hide anything from each other. "There is probably nothing we can't share with each other. We met in school, ended up in the same college after four weddings and 3 different time zones, here we are still each other's soul mates. #AShoutoutToTheGirls."

Kiara has several films lined up in the coming months. She stars in the comedy film *Indoo Ki Jawani*. She will also be seen opposite Sidharth Malhotra in *Shershaah*, which is based on the life of Param Vir Chakra recipient army captain Vikram Batra.

Kiara has also has *Bhool Bhulaiyaa 2*. The film is a follow-up of *Bhool Bhulaiyaa*, directed by Priyadarshan and released in 2007. The original film was an official remake of the 1993 Malayalam film *Manichitrathazhu*.



Sushmita gets ultimate love letter

Sushmita Sen has shared on Instagram a photo of a handwritten love letter that a fan sent to her.

"*Sushmita Sen I love you,*" the note reads.

"The ultimate #loveletter. I am blessed to receive a lot of love and kindness over the years, from all my #fans. My favourite being the old fashioned way...hand written letters!!! I've read every letter ever send to me, it's usually been an outpouring of emotions, filling pages with the overwhelming power of love and belonging!!! Yet, this is the first time, I've received a letter that took a second to read but it's simplicity will resonate a lifetime!!! I LOVE YOU TOO!!! #sharing #love #simplicity #depth #awesomeness #duggadugga," the actress wrote on Instagram.

Sushmita recently made a comeback after five years in the web series *Aarya*. The series saw her return to the screen after her last outing, the Bengali arthouse film, *Nirbaak*.

DESI RELISH

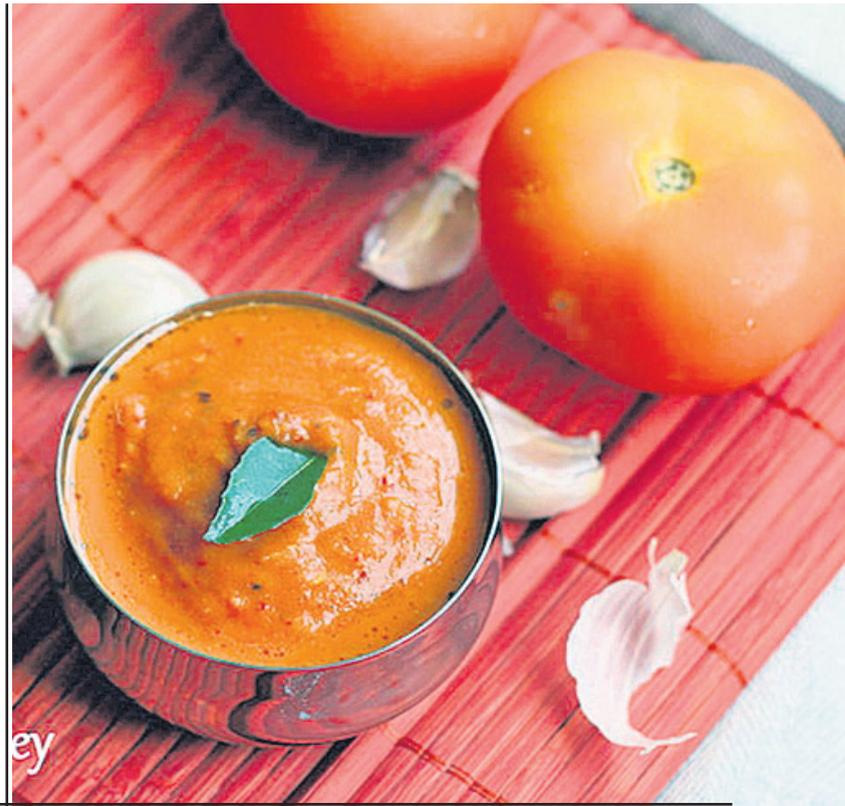
TOMATO CHUTNEY

INGREDIENTS

- Ripe tomatoes - 2 nos
- Onion - 1 no
- Green chillies - 2 nos
- Large garlic cloves - 3 nos
- Coconut oil/sesame oil as required
- Asafetida - ½ tsp
- Chilli powder - 1 tbsp
- Salt as required
- Water - ½ cup

FOR THE TEMPERING:

- Coconut oil - 1 tbsp
- Mustard seeds - 1 tsp
- Fenugreek seeds - ½ tsp
- Dried chillies - 3-4
- Curry leaves



PROCEDURE

Heat oil in a pan and sauté diced tomatoes, garlic, green chillies and onion. Then add asafetida and mix them well. Add chilli powder and sauté until the raw smell is off. Now, turn off the flame and allow the mixture to cool down. Grind the mixture in the small jar of a mixer (two pulses would be enough). To prepare the tempering, heat coconut oil/sesame oil and splutter the mustard and fenugreek seeds. Add the dried chillies and curry leaves and roast. Now add the ground tomato paste and water as required. Heat up the chutney a bit, but do not allow it to boil.

INGREDIENTS

- Grated coconut - 1 cup
- Small piece of ginger (optional)
- Shallots - 3 nos
- Salt as required
- Green chilli - 1 pc
- Water - ½ cup

FOR TEMPERING

- Mustard seeds - 1 tsp
- Dried chillies - 2 nos
- Shallots - 3 nos
- Ginger as per requirement
- Coconut oil - 1 tbsp

COCONUT CHUTNEY

PROCEDURE

Procedure Put grated coconut, ginger, shallots, chilli powder and salt into the small jar of the mixer. First grind without water. Then grind into a fine paste by adding water. Add the green chilli and grind again. For tempering heat coconut oil in a pan and splutter mustard seeds. Add shallots and roast. Now add dried chillies and curry leaves and roast



P
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PHOTO: KUMAR SHARAT