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SUNDAY POST

HERE . NOW



Teen Litterateurs



P
3,4 COVER STORY



State Youth Award winning poet Pritidhara Samal, known for her poetry anthologies like *Diary*, *Khela* and *Darpana Re Nari*, prefers to take longer naps on Sundays



Being felicitated by Pratibha Ray

Late riser
I am a nightbird. As I stay up late reading books, I prefer to oversleep on Sunday mornings.

Fitness enthusiast
Being a working woman, I hardly get time to work out on a regular basis. Therefore, I make sure to do exercises and yoga on holidays.



RASHMI REKHA DAS, OP



With family

Literature is life
I eat, sleep and breathe literature. So, I often invite my fellow poets to discuss literature. Due to pandemic, we have stopped meeting but we discuss things over phone.

In nature's lap
On Sunday afternoons, I make sure to visit our coffee farm in my hometown Koraput. I go there not only to oversee the farming operations, I find solace in the lap of nature.

Donning chef's apron
I cook non-vegetarian dishes for my daughters on Sundays if they happen to be at home. They stay away from us owing to their higher studies.

GOOD SAMARITANS

Sir, Last week's cover story *Royal Patronage* in **Sunday POST** makes for an interesting read. Much like others, I too have been spending most part of the days watching films and web series on my smartphone without thinking much about the society. I was taken aback to learn about Meenal Singh Deo, the Royal Princess of Dhenkanal. At a time when the whole world is in Corona grip and millions of people are battling for survival, she has taken care of hundreds of artisan families. Thanks to the Singh Deos, the artisan family got an opportunity to market their products in other parts of the country and earn a few extra bucks. I would like to thank the royals for extending their helping hand to the needy.

SANJIV MISHRA, SONEPUR

GASTRONOME'S DELIGHT

Sir, I am a foodie and I read the food page of Sunday supplement every week. That's not all. I try my hands at all the recipes published in this segment and serve them to my near and dear ones with love. A few days back, I prepared dhokla after watching the preparation process on YouTube. But I couldn't cook it properly. After going through the procedure of dhokla published in your daily, I again went for it following the written instructions. Unbelievably, it came out yummy and spongy. I would like to urge Sunday POST to publish some Thai and Italian dishes for a change.

PRIYANKA SAHOO, SAMBALPUR

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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Teen Litterateurs

From creating scary monsters to penning some incredible romantic lines to writing science fictions, the new crop of budding writers often catches the readers by surprise with their rich content

RASHMI REKHA DAS, OP

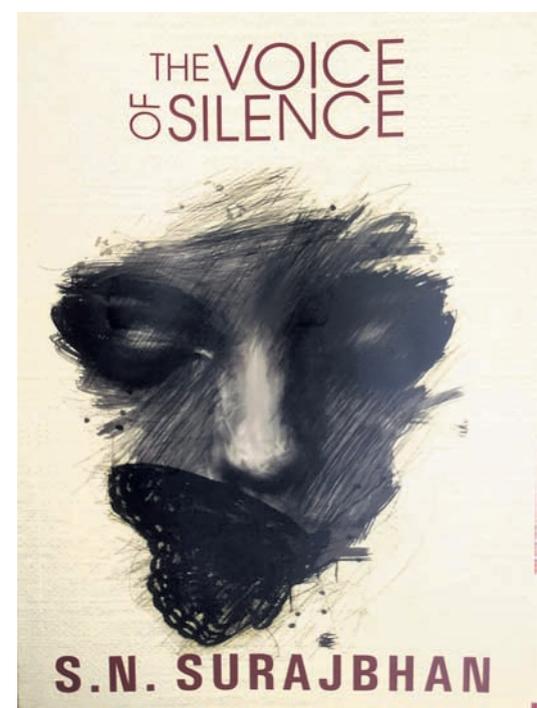


Surajbhan

Of late, Odisha has witnessed a surge in number of teen authors who, with their frank portrayal of life, have managed to create opportunities for themselves in state's literary circuit. At a time when many in their age group prefer partying or tapping smartphones, this new crop of writers are busy giving wings to their imaginations. By offering unique perspective, which often goes missing in the works of experienced authors, they compel the readers to read their poems, novels and short stories. From creating scary monsters to penning some incredible romantic lines to writing science fictions, these budding writers often catches the readers by surprise with their rich content. A few of them, in a candid chat with **Sunday POST**, reveal how they navigated into the world of literature and made their presence felt.

Teen writing sensation SN Surajbhan wrote his first book when he was studying in Class VII. Hailing from Bhubaneswar, Surajbhan has a knack for writing short stories and poems. He also takes a lot of interest in horror genre. He has so far authored three books in English while his write-ups on science, literature and music regularly appear in national and vernacular dailies.

Asked what propelled him in this direction, the winner of Rajiv Gandhi Prativa Puraskar-2015, recalled an incident that can easily be termed as the turning point of his career as a writer. "I had been to Delhi a few years ago with my parents. In the hotel room, dad spotted me typing the lines from a story book in my laptop. So, he asked me to try putting up my own ideas



instead of copying someone else's story. I got motivated by his pep-talk and then there was no looking back."

Surajbhan wrote the first story on a ghost which was appreciated by his father. The latter encouraged him to write a few more ghost stories so that they can be published as a book. In next few days, he finished writing of four new stories. His uncle Nabakishore Pujari edited them and Surajbhan had his maiden story book *Dare To Enter* released in 2013.

Asked about some memorable moments of his career as a writer, he says, "Being felicitated by my school Buxi Jagabandhu English Medium School after the release of my first book was certainly the moments I would like to cherish forever. This apart, meeting legendary author Ruskin Bond at a literary festival will remain one of the memorable moments in my life. He even appreciated my effort. I also got the opportunity to speak to some celebrated writers of the likes of Jerry Pinto, Jnanapith awardee Sitakanta Mohapatra and eminent journalist Prabhu Chawla.

"Being conferred with Siddhirastu Samman 2014 for my works on science and literature will also remain one of those occasions to be proud of."



Surajbhan gifting his book to renowned author Ruskin Bond

Asked about how he maintains a balance between study and writing, Surajbhan says, "It is quite challenging to do. Being into a family of literature enthusiasts, I was expected to pursue a career in Arts after my Class X board examination. But to their surprise I opted for science. Expectedly, studies consume long hours leaving little time for me to work on literature. This compels me to write till late in night. Often, I can't go to bed before 3 am after working on a few ideas."

Putting his signatures on one of his books that he presented to Ruskin Bond was one his fondest memories, said the second year student of Electronics and Computer Science Engineering at KIIT. Surajbhan attributes his success to his teacher parents Subhashree Das and Naleenikanta Mohanty.

"Getting published is not the sole purpose of writing. I derive a lot of pleasure out of it. The works of a writer can inform, entertain, inspire, persuade, foster one's creativity and help people refine their thinking and reshape the views," feels young poet **Amlaan Akshayanshu Sahoo** whose poetry anthology *The Tiny Astronaut* has been published by Black Eagle

Book, a US-based publishing house which has published the works of eminent writers like Pratibha Ray, Phani Mohanty and Surendra Mishra.

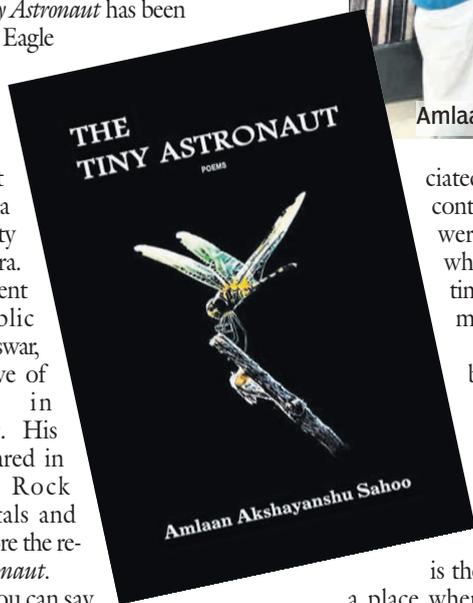
A Class XI student of Mother's Public School of Bhubaneswar, Amlaan is a native of Bhawanipatna in Kalahandi district. His poems had appeared in magazines like Rock Pebbles, The Petals and The Rainbow before the release of *Tiny Astronaut*.

Amlaan says "You can say I am a bibliophile who has set out to unveil the secrets of humanity. My maiden book is a tiny stride in that direction. I am an optimist who doesn't shy away from facing life's harshness. I get guided by several inspirations, both existent and extinct, stretched across space and time. I constantly strive for perfection, yet live by the theory that says imperfection is mankind's most precious attribute."

On being asked about his tryst with literature, Amlaan says, "Once I penned a few lines and showed them to dad when I was in Class III. He not only appre-



Amlaan with poet Sashibhusan Ratha



ciated my work, but also encouraged me to continue writing. Themes of my poems were based on flowers, fruits and animals when I was a kid. With the passing of time, the themes kept changing and made me write on broader aspects of life."

Amlaan, with 150 poems under his belt, owes his success to his doctor parents. "My parents Dinabandhu Sahoo and Nibedita Sahu are my inspirations. They have stayed with me through thick and thin. On the other hand, being in a good family helps you grow as an individual. Because, it is the cornerstone of a human society and a place where a child learns and re-learns a lot about life."

Amlaan who had topped Class X board examination scoring 98.2 per cent, never neglects his study for the sake of literature. "I enjoy literature. So when I get tired after studying long hours, I shift my focus to literature which helps refresh my mood and revitalise my body to start afresh. My father, a writer himself, buys me a lot of books," says Amlaan.



Amlaan



Sahil

Sahil Pradhan, a Class XI student of Doon International School, gets pleasure in writing short novellas and reviews on Goodreads. He loves to write and was chosen among top five writers in Times Litfest, a literature festival held in Kolkata. He reviews for many of India's major publishing houses such as Penguin India, Rupa Publications, Aleph Book Company, Simon and Schuster. His blog is currently among one of Odisha's fastest growing e-blogs according to Feedspot surveys and it has so far garnered 22.9K followers from across the globe. Besides, he has a collection of 836 books and each holding special places in his heart.

When did you start writing? To this query, he says "I was barely ten when I wrote my first story and it has appeared in one of the English dailies. I got motivated. Then, my uncle presented me a novel which helped me evolve as a writer. Secondly, my grandfather, Mihir Kumar Pradhan, was a famous Odia poet of his time in our hometown Jaleswar in Balasore district. Therefore, I believe, I had a writer in my gene."

Being felicitated by the Sahitya Akademi Trust on two occasions and once by Times Litfest motivated him to follow his passion. He was also among the top 20 participants of the Tata Building India Essay competition.

On his memorable moments, Sahil says, "Meeting renowned author Amish Tripathi of *Shiv Trilogy* fame in a literary festival and his words of appreciation will be etched on my memory forever. There is a video clip on the Internet of him bowing down to me in front of a huge crowd. That moment will be something I will cherish forever."

How you started reviewing books? To this question, he responds, "I have been a booklover since my childhood. Then I mostly read my childhood classics such as *Harry Potter*, Devdutt Pattanaik, Percy Jackson and a few others. I am someone who enjoys long conversations about bookish things over a cup of coffee. But when many of my close 'book-pals' moved out of the city, I became alone. It was then I found out a way where I could talk more about books. That is how my blog *A Hindu's View* took shape where I could talk about books, write about them and help out the real booklovers."



Sahil with eminent author Christopher C Doyle



Lesser known legends of Lord Ganapati

“VAKRATUNDA MAHA-KAAYA SURYA-KOTTI SMAPRABHA
NIRVIGHNAM KURU ME DEVA SARVA-KAARYESHU SARVADAA II

BUDDHADEV NANDI

Ganesh Chaturthi is observed every year across the country with gaiety to mark the birth day of elephant-headed Lord Ganesh, the deity of wealth, wisdom, prosperity and the annihilator of all obstacles. But the outbreak of coronavirus has robbed the festival, which kicked off Saturday, of its sheen. So much so, that the devotees in Maharashtra, the epicenter of 11-day Ganesotsavs, are organising health check-up and blood donation camps and raising funds for the treatment of Covid-19 patients calling off their routine celebrations this year.

Whether there is celebration or not, myriad mythological stories and anecdotes of Lord Ganesh continue to charm the devotees. Here goes a list of lesser known legends associated with the most-worshipped god of Hinduism without whom no 'puja' is accomplished.

Brahma Vaivarta Purana

According to *Brahma Vaivarta Purana* after Parvati giving birth to a refulgent baby, all the gods and goddesses including Shani (Saturn) were invited to bless the new born baby. But no sooner had Shani who is notorious for his cataclysmic gaze, beheld the baby than his head was decapitated from his torso. Then Lord Vishnu mounting on His divine vehicle Garuda fetched the head of a young elephant from the Pushpa Bhadra River and fixed it on the child's torso.

Padma Purana

Padma Purana says, goddess Ganga is considered the foster mother of Lord Ganesh. Goddess Parvati out of the fragrant oily paste applied to her body moulded the figure of a boy with elephant head. The creation of strange figure out of Her caprice was later immersed in the river Ganga. The figure springing to life in contact with sacred water of the river was recognised as Lord Ganesh.

Brahmanda Purana

There are several stories on the broken

tusk of Lord Ganesha. According to *Brahmanda Purana*, Parashuram, the sixth avatar of Lord Vishnu, was overwhelmed with gratitude to Lord Shiva who empowered him to win the fight with Kartavirya Arjuna. He came to pay His obeisance to Lord Shiva at Mount Kailash. But Ganesh prevented him from meeting his father who was then sleeping. Then Parashuram hurled his axe. But Ganesh restrained himself as the axe was bestowed to Parashurama by his father Lord Shiva. He embraced the blow in his left tusk. The chopped tusk fell on the ground.

Myths about broken tusk

According to another popular legend, Ganesh lost his tusk while writing the manuscript of the Mahabharata. Advised by Lord Brahma, Maharshi Veda Vyas entreated Ganesh to write the manuscript of the great scripture. While writing the manuscript of the epic, the feather of his pen broke. Then Ganesh pulled out his left tusk to complete the assignment he was entrusted with.

There is also a funny story about

Ganesh losing his tusk. One full moon night while Ganesh was returning after relishing sumptuous dinner from Kubera's palace, he stumbled down on the ground. All the food he had eaten popped out of his belly. Noticing this, the god Moon could not restrain himself and burst out laughing. Ganesh being offended hurled his tusk and broke the god Moon into two and also cursed him to be invisible. He cursed the moon that if one sees the god Moon on the day of Ganesh Chaturthi, one will fail to attain 'moksha' (emancipation from the cycle of death and birth). Therefore, viewing Moon on Ganesh Chaturthi is considered inauspicious.

Lord's marital life

There are many interesting stories regarding Lord Ganesh's love and marital life. Goddess Tulsi enamoured by Ganesh's resplendent attire of yellow garment and sandal paste smearing all over His body in his ascetic form, sought him as her

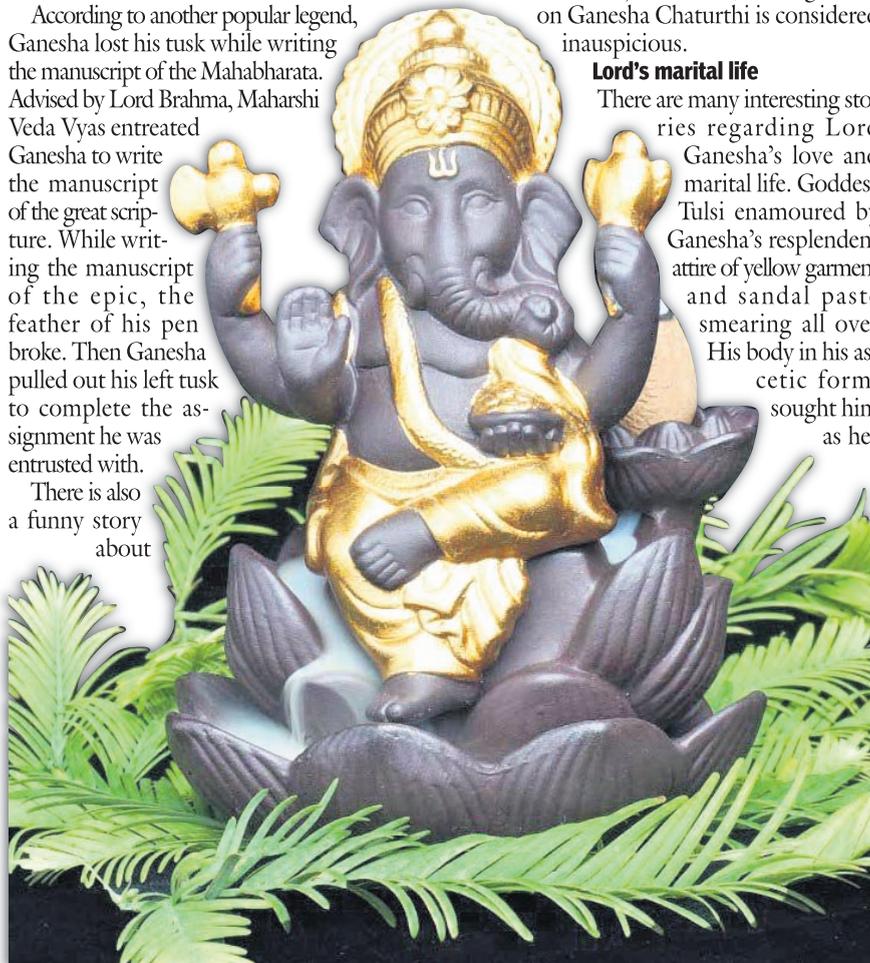
consort. But Ganesh politely turned down her marriage proposal. This humiliated Tulsi to the point of disappointment. She cursed Ganesh that he would be destined to accept a forceful marriage against his will. Ganesh also cursed her to be condemned to marry a demon. Therefore, Tulsi leaves are not offered to Ganesh because of their entanglement in mutual curses. In this story Ganesh is identified as a 'Brahmachari' (celibate) with no consort.

In another mythological story, Siddhi (power of spirituality) and Riddhi (power of prosperity), the daughters of Prajapati Vishwaroopa, are the two consorts of Lord Ganesh. They are blessed with two beautiful sons Khema (protection) and Labh (profit). The wives and sons of Lord Ganesh are the divine incarnations of the qualities that are attained worshipping the elephant-faced god.

God of symbolism

The idol of Lord Ganesh entails a lot of symbolism. Different people interpret differently. Trunk like that of the elephant symbolises strength and strong sense of discrimination to differ good from evil. Two big ears suggest the power of listening and concentration that one needs to acquire knowledge. The pot belly is the symbol of a huge container that can absorb everything gracefully. His single tusk signifies the weariness of the mundane world and true knowledge beyond dichotomy. The sitting posture of Lord Ganesh with one leg resting on the ground and the other folded up symbolises dilemma between material and divine world.

Besides, the hands of Lord Ganesh are adorned with some common things. In one hand He holds lotus, the symbol of enlightenment. The laddu in one of his hands stands for the sweet result of spiritual elevation attained after penance. The noose or hatchet symbolizes delusion of material world. One will escape the noose only when one attains true salvation. Another hand with blessing posture suggests assurance bestowed to the devotees by Lord Ganesh.



Don't see format, content changing in TV: Hina

Actress Hina Khan, who has been a part of television for over a decade, says she does not see the format and content of the medium changing because this is what the audience demands.

At a time when the web space is booming with content driven projects, why are the audience still watching shows on the small screen that seem regressive?

Hina, who essays the title role in the fifth season of the superhit TV show, *Naagin*, feels the audiences does not like to watch shows on small screen that are a 'little progressive'.

"OTT platforms are there, and I am a fan of OTT platforms. I do watch a lot of shows on OTT platforms. I don't see the content changing (in television). I don't really see that happening because people like what they watch and this is why we get ratings — because they are happy. Is it regressive? Our show (*Naagin*) is completely different," Hina said.

IAN S



Gurmeet excited to get back to work

Actor Gurmeet Choudhary has resumed shooting for his upcoming film, *The Wife*.

Shooting of the urban horror film has started here adhering to all government-mandated safety guidelines. Starring Gurmeet and Sayani Datta, the film, written and directed by Sarmad Khan, went on floor March 1, but shoot was paused owing to the national lockdown.

The entire shooting floor of the Zee Studios facility in the city has been divided among different teams to maintain social distancing. Each team member has been assigned a colour-coded card where each colour indicates the amount of access to the shooting floor to avoid any sort of crowding.

Talking about resuming shoot after lockdown, Gurmeet said: "I am extremely excited to get back to work, after this unfortunate hiatus. With only about 40 percent of the shoot schedule left, I'm pumped and full of energy to go back to sets in this new normal."

IAN S

Madhuri dishes out Sri Lankan cuisine

Actress Madhuri Dixit Nene has been honing her skills at dishing out Sri Lankan cuisine during the lockdown.

The veteran star took to Instagram and shared that she has been putting to practice at home what she learnt at cooking class last year.

"The Sri Lankan cooking class we took last year has definitely come in handy during this

lockdown. #ExperiencesOverThings," she wrote. Along with it, Madhuri also shared a throwback picture with her family from their vacation in Sri Lanka. In one image, we see Madhuri, her husband and elder son posing along with chefs. She even asked her followers to mention their favourite cuisines in the comments section.

Madhuri has been trying various arts during the lockdown. Recently, she made her debut as a pop singer with her single, *Candle*. She dedicated the song to Covid-19 frontline workers.

IAN S



ELLIE doesn't remember much of her 20s

Singer Ellie Goulding, now 33, says she spent her twenties pretty much in chaos.

"The past five years have been really poignant in my life. I spent my twenties pretty much in mad chaos. I don't remember much of it. I think I blurred a lot of it out," she told *etonline.com*.

"I've been around the world a few times. I played so many shows. I've been to cities I can't even remember. I can't even think of all the countries I've been to at this point. I was on a constant roll. I was taking it for granted because I assumed it would just be my cycle forever, touring," she added.

After her *Delirium World Tour* ended in 2017, though, the singer 'went through quite a few changes' that led her to take 'a bunch of time off'.

"I parted ways with my management, I moved to New York. I went through quite a few changes," she recalled.

IAN S



HOT 'N' SPICY



Bengali Doi Maach

Machha Patrapoda

INGREDIENTS

FOR MASALA:

- Ginger: 1 tsp
- Garlic: 1 tsp
- Cumin seeds: 1 tsp
- Mustard seeds: 1 tsp
- Dry red chillies: 4

FOR MAIN PREPARATION:

- One whole fish
- Salt: 1/4 tsp
- Green chillies, chopped: 1 tsp
- Turmeric powder: 1/4 tsp
- Curry leaves: seven pieces
- Coriander leaves, chopped
- Sliced onion
- Mustard oil: 1 tbsp

PROCEDURE

For the masala, grind together some ginger, garlic, cumin seeds, mustard seeds and whole red chillies. Clean the fish and cut into small pieces. Add the prepared masala along with salt, green chillies, turmeric, curry leaves, coriander leaves, onions, mustard oil and mix well. Leave this to marinate. Wrap the marinated fish in a banana leaf and tie it up with a thread. Place the sealed banana on coal for 15-20 minutes and serve hot.



Machha Patrapoda

INGREDIENTS

Rohu or rawas or any freshwater fish (cut into steaks or pieces, washed)

FOR MARINATION:

- Turmeric powder: 1/2 tsp
- Red chilli powder: 3/4 tsp
- Salt as per taste
- Mustard oil: 2 tsp

FOR CURRY:

- Mustard oil: 2 tbsp
- Bay leaf: 1 piece
- Cassia: 1/2 inch
- Cloves: 4 pieces
- Green cardamoms: 4 pieces
- Cumin seeds: 1/2 tsp
- Turmeric powder: 1/2 tsp
- Hot red chilli powder: 1 tsp
- Ginger garlic paste: 2 tsp
- 1 Onion (ground to a paste)
- Curd (whisked): 1/2 kg
- Salt according to taste
- To garnish Coriander leaves

PROCEDURE

For marinating, put the pieces of fish into a bowl and add the turmeric, chilli powder, salt and a teaspoon of mustard oil to help the spices adhere to the fish. Gently massage the spices into the fish. Cover and keep aside to marinate for 15 minutes. Now, whisk the curd well in another bowl and add the turmeric and red chilli powder. Keep aside. For frying the fish, heat a medium sized frying pan till hot and add the 2 tablespoon of mustard oil. Heat well till the oil is smoking to burn off most of its pungency. Once hot, add the marinated fish pieces and fry them for a couple of minutes on each side till they are a golden brown around the edges and richly colored. When the fish is golden and 3/4 cooked through, remove them to a plate and keep aside. Heat the same pan with the lovely fishy mustard oil once again and when the oil is hot, add the bay leaf and cumin seeds, saute on a medium flame until they are wonderfully fragrant and change colour. Now add the onion paste and saute it till it's a light golden brown in colour, add the ginger and garlic paste and cook the aromatic spice base with a little water until it's a rich but light golden in colour and the oil has surface to the top. Turn down the heat to medium low and add the whisked curd and spice mixture to the pan, stir gently and simmer the curd gravy for 10 to 15 minutes or until the oil surfaces and the gravy is a lovely rich mustard-golden-yellow in colour. Add some salt and stir through to combine well. Now, simply add the pieces of fried fish, along with all their resting juices in the plate to the gravy and simmer it for another 10 minutes to gently poach the fish to perfection. Once the oil has risen to the top and the fish is cooked perfectly, turn off the heat and check for a balance of flavor. Squeeze over some lime juice to lift the flavours with a real citrus kick for a lovely contrast of flavours along with a generous garnishing of fresh coriander leaves. Serve the doi maach with hot steamed rice.

Arpita



PHOTO: CHANDAN