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SUNDAY POST

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COVER STORY

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Colossal Creations



RUPSHA MUKHOPADHYAY, A FAMILIAR NAME IN THE BANGLA FILM INDUSTRY, WILL PLAY THE FEMALE LEAD OPPOSITE TOP STAR ARINDAM ROY IN HER UPCOMING ODISIA MOVIE RAM. WHEN SHE ISN'T SHOOTING, THE ACTRESS, WHO IS MAKING A COMEBACK IN THE ODISIA FILM INDUSTRY AFTER NEARLY A DECADE, ENJOYS COSYING UP WITH OLD PALS



ARINDAM GANGULY, OP

No to a strenuous workout

Avoid vigorous weight training on Sundays, as it's a day for relaxation and when the body needs rest. I go for an early morning jogging near the lakeside to burn a few calories and do meditation.

Self pampering

On Sundays I spend as much time as possible with family and friends. Apart from that, I love to watch movies or web shows on streaming platforms and play indoor games with my pals. I also indulge myself at a nearby wellness centre and hair studio to pamper myself, which is a professional necessity.



Complete foodie

I am a food lover. So, on my non-working Sundays, I prefer to eat my mom's homemade mutton or chicken biryani. Besides, like all Bengalis, I also have a sweet tooth.

Canine companionship

When I have free time, I enjoy playing with dogs, particularly the stray canines in our neighbourhood. I constantly feed them and look after their health.

Cafe regular

I only have a tiny group of friends. I occasionally catch up with them at my favourite rooftop café in Kolkata.

WhatsApp This Week

Only on Sunday POST!

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

THE BEST MEMES OF THIS ISSUE

- How do astronomers organize a party? They planet.
One bird can't make a pun. But toucan.
What tea do hockey players drink? Penalteal!
What did the blanket say when it fell off the bed? "Oh sheet!"



FARNSWORTH - THE WONDER MAN

Sir, It's amazing to learn from last week's article 'The Forgotten Genius' that Philo Taylor Farnsworth, recognised as the actual Father of Television, isn't duly credited with the innovation that changed the course of human civilisation. Most people still recognise JL Baird as the inventor of television. I'd like to thank the Sunday POST editorial staff for bringing such fascinating historical incidents to light. This category also includes entries on extinct creatures such as Barbary Lions, historic monuments 'walking statues,' the Voyager-II (satellite launched by NASA nearly 50 years ago), and the descendants of Bengal's last independent Nawab Siraj ud-Daulah. In addition, the write-up on the current fashion trend in Bhubaneswar was an intriguing read. I'd want to take this occasion to urge that a few stories about the flourishing theatre scene in Bhubaneswar be published.

SANJAY BARAL, KENDRAPARA

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. Feel free to send in your opinions, queries, comments and contributions to

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Colossal Creations

Gone are the days when small idols of Lord Ganesha were worshipped in educational institutions and neighbourhoods. The Puja has now turned into a mass event with the size of the idols determining its splendour



MADHUSMITA SAHU, OP

Ganesh Chaturthi, also known as Ganesh Festival, is one of India's most prominent religious holidays.

Though the practice of worshipping the elephant-headed deity in community began in 1893 in Mumbai by social reformer Lokmanya Balagangadhar Tilak in order to mislead the British, Ganesh Puja has since become an intrinsic component of Hindu festivals in India and beyond. Previously, the celebration was a low-key affair, with the deity largely worshipped in educational institutions since 'He' is revered as the god of wisdom, understanding, and new beginnings. Those days, however, are long gone. It has now evolved into a major festival, complete with pomp and splendour. The grandeur of this festival is often measured by the size of the idols, with the one at Khairatabad in Telangana holding the record for the tallest Ganesh idol in India. The magnitude can be gauged by the fact that the organisers spent approximately Rs 1 crore to create the 61-foot idol in 2019.

While such large idols are popular in many places of India, particularly in the north, Bhubaneswar is not far behind.

The Temple City has seen a significant increase in the size of its Ganesh idols in recent years, making

Bhubaneswar a centre of interest during Ganesh Chaturthi.

Ahead of the celebration, **Sunday POST** made the rounds of pandals that put up some tall idols in the city.

Here are the highlights.

Bright Youth Association, Badagada (Idol size: 55 ft. Budget: Rs 25 to 30 lakh)

Sangram Martha, the Secretary of the Bright Youth Association in Badagada, elucidates, "Over the past 38 years, our organisation has been annually celebrating Ganesh Mahotsav, fashioning idols ranging in size from five to an impressive 50+ feet. This year, the idol stands tall at 55 feet, featuring a captivating centrepiece: a 10-kg silver Lord Ganesh foot accompanied by a 10-foot mouse as his divine mount."

Martha goes on to describe the painstaking craftsmanship involved, saying, "It has taken nearly a month to complete the work. We have used soil sourced from Trishulia Ghat in Mahanadi (near Cuttack) and eco-friendly materials to address

environmental concerns while avoiding synthetic colours. Manoj Kumar Kandi, the renowned idol maker from Jatni, along with his team of 15 skilled artisans, collaborated with artists from Kolkata to create the idol. They have also used spices such as chilli powder, turmeric powder, and maida for colouring purposes."

Regarding the lord's attire, Martha informs, "The traditional attire for the deity has been brought from Sonepur and meticulously crafted by eminent artist Amitabh Meher. It takes a month for Meher to weave the clothes."

Asked about other attractions, he adds, "In addition to the magnificent idol, festival-goers can enjoy four days of cultural events and a Meena Bazaar. The festival will also feature performances by various Ollywood singers, including Humane Sagar, Kuldeep Patnaik, Dipti Rekha, and Aseema Panda, throughout the week."

Sangram emphasises their practical approach to the immersion process, stating, "We have made provi-

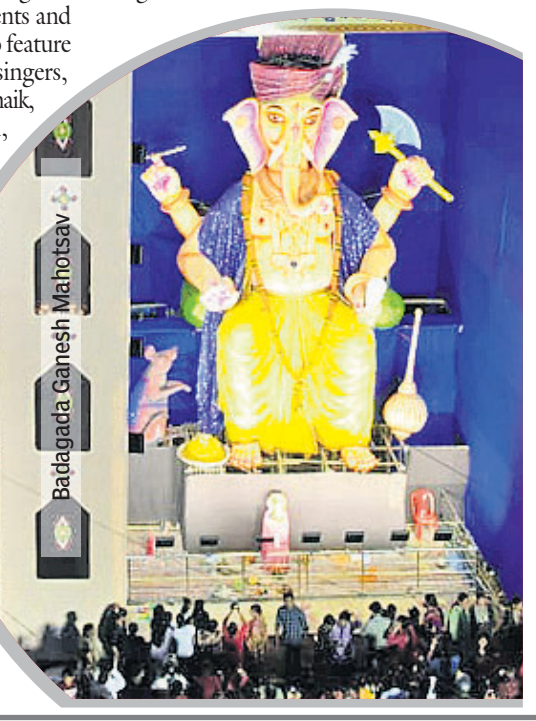
sions to sprinkle water on and immerse the idol right at the mandap due to the impracticality of relocating the idol. Following the immersion, a 50-kg boondi laddoo will be prepared and shared with the worshippers."

Winners' Association, Saheed Nagar (Idol size: 46 ft. Budget: Rs 16 lakh)

Reflecting on their remarkable journey, **Niroj Kumar Sahoo**, the Secretary of the Winners Association in Saheed Nagar, said, "Our tradition of crafting and commemorating Ganesh Puja began nearly 23 years ago, making us among the pioneers in creating towering idols. We started off with a 28-ft idol, and since 2014, we have consistently reached the astounding heights of 46 ft."



Bright Youth Association members



Badagada Ganesh Mahotsav



Nayapalli Ganesh Mahotsav

cultural connection within the community during the festive week, we have meticulously arranged traditional musical instruments.”

Here, the artisans procure black clay from Kolkata and supplement it with soil fragments from the Niali region. They use environment-friendly colours to adorn the deity, and it takes



Governor Ganeshi Lal at last year's aarti

for the worshippers, offering a unique entertainment experience. Our immersion process remains consistent with our cherished tradition, involving the ritualistic spraying of water on the idol at the pandal.”

Sri Sri Akhandalamani Seva Sansad, Nayapalli
(Idol size: 51 feet; budget: ₹20-25 lakh)

Sagar Balabantaray, the Secretary of Sri Sri Akhandalamani Seva Sansad (SSASS), Nayapalli, stated, “For the past 32 years, we have been celebrating Ganesh Mahotsav with great splendour and have been creating idols exceeding 25 ft in height



since 2019. This year, we are proud to announce the creation of a 51 ft idol accompanied by a 10 ft mouse, and we will be offering a 51 kg laddoo as an offering to the deity.”

Narrating the plan, he continued: “Crafted as a Bal Ganesh, the idol will be worshipped for 11 days, and the clothes that will be adorned by the idol have been made by weavers from Kolkata. A 60 ft high gate has also been erected at the entrance, with a replica of a palace being built inside the pandal. There will be cultural programmes for the devotees in the evening, with celebrities set to attend the events. We have installed various CCTV cameras for security in the area. The whole area will be illuminated with sparkling lights and toranas of beautiful designs.”

Like other organisers, SSASS also hires idol-makers from Kolkata, who bring out expertise with them to make the deity look appealing.

“While the chief architects are from Kolkata, artisans from the Old Town area also joined them to create the idol, which takes nearly two months to complete. We also use clay from the Nimapara area of Puri district in the idol-making. The makers use only chemical-free colours in creating the idol. Like every year, several water tankers will

INDIA'S TALLEST



The Khairatabad Ganesh in Hyderabad, Telangana, will once again be the tallest Ganesh idol in the country, standing at 63 feet tall and weighing over 50 tonnes. Since 1954, when a one-foot-tall idol was put here for the first time, the organisers have followed a tradition of raising the idol's height by one foot every year. The practice could not be followed during the COVID-19 epidemic and on several unavoidable occasions. This year, the makers have employed approximately 35 tonnes of Rajasthani clay and about 20 tonnes of iron for fabrication. The idol has been created by artists from Tamil Nadu, Telangana, Andhra Pradesh, Maharashtra, Bihar, and West Bengal, in addition to skilled clay sculptor Joga Rao from Koraput in Odisha. Every year, between 30 and 40 lakh devotees visit Khairatabad Ganesh during the 10-day festival, and massive crowds gather for the procession to Hussainsagar Lake for idol immersion on the 11th day. The organisers intend to extend the height to 70 ft for the next year.



Proposed design of Ganesh idol of Winners Association Saheed Nagar

Revealing their exciting plans for 2023's celebration, he informed, “This year, we are embarking on the creation of a magnificent 46-foot idol centred on the theme of ‘Kaliya Dalana.’ This awe-inspiring structure will be seated atop a majestic seven-headed snake. Furthermore, we have an intriguing addition for our devoted worshippers: a remarkable silver hand of the Lord, weighing an impressive 3.2 kilogrammes, and a 70-kilogram laddoo as an offering to the deity.”

about 50 days to complete the project, informed Sahoo.

Highlighting the collaboration and local involvement, he added, “The skilled artisans who infuse life into the idol are from the Old Town. However, they only execute the concept of the designers from Kolkata. Similarly, we collect the garments from local weavers who use lycra material to make them attractive.”

Speaking about recreation and immersion, he says, “We have planned a Meena bazaar

Sahoo further said, “To foster a deep

With growing environmental concerns, some communities have started incorporating eco-friendly practices into Nuakhai celebrations. This includes promoting sustainable farming methods, reducing waste, and emphasizing the importance of preserving nature's resources



MORE THAN A FESTIVAL

OP DESK

A vibrant and age-old custom that unifies people and celebrates the agricultural cycle thrives in the heartlands of India's eastern state of Odisha. This unique celebration, known as Nuakhai, celebrates the start of the rice harvesting season and is a time when farmers, families, and communities gather to express gratitude to Mother Earth for the abundant crops that nourish them throughout the year.

Nuakhai, which translates to 'New Rice,' is more than just a festival; it reflects the people of Odisha's deep connection to their soil. It represents the attitude of thanksgiving and recognises farmers' exhausting efforts in the fields, nurturing crops from seed to harvest.

Sunday POST explores the significance of Nuakhai, its customs and the changing face of celebration.

Ancient practice

Nuakhai was tradi-



Villagers would offer the first grains of the newly harvested rice crop to the presiding deity, Maa Samaleswari or a local village deity, dressed in their bright traditional clothing. The thumping of traditional drums, melodious folk songs, and aroma of exquisite rice-based foods drifting through the air would accompany the ritual.

The worship of animals, particularly ploughing oxen, was another important feature of Nuakhai. Farmers would decorate their cattle with fresh flower garlands and perform ceremonies to show their gratitude for the important role these animals played in the farming activities.

The changing face

The celebration has experienced major changes over the years. While the festival's spirit remains unchanged - expressing thanks for a successful harvest - the manner in which it is commemorated has evolved to reflect changing lifestyles and modern sensibilities.

Urban influence: As cities have grown in popularity, many individuals have relocated from their ancestral villages to cities in quest of better possibilities. As a result of this migration, urban and rural cultures have merged. Urban inhabitants now commemorate Nuakhai in their own distinct ways, frequently by initiating community activities or charity drives to demonstrate their ties to their roots despite living in cities.

Technological advancements: With the introduction of technology and social media, people may now share their Nuakhai celebrations with a larger audience. Traditional customs are now frequently photographed and videotaped and posted on various social media platforms, allowing individuals from all walks of life to observe and appreciate the celebration.

Culinary evolution: While traditional rice-based foods such as Nabanna (new rice) and Enduri Pitha (a rice cake) continue to be important in Nuakhai celebrations, newer adaptations and fusion dishes have arisen. Chefs and food aficionados play with old recipes, adding modern tweaks to meet changing palates.

Environmental awareness: As environmental concerns have grown, several communities have begun to incorporate eco-friendly practices into their Nuakhai celebrations. This involves promoting sustainable farming methods, decreasing waste, and emphasising the need of protecting nature's resources.

Youth participation: The Nuakhai celebrations are being actively participated in and shaped by younger generations. They bring new energy and ideas to the celebrations while keeping the festival's essential ideals and traditions intact.



Maa Samaleswari Temple, Sambalpur

Kareena to teach kids about gender issues

Kareena Kapoor Khan, who is quite active on social media, often loves sharing glimpses of her day-to-day life with Saif, Taimur and Jeh. In a recent interview, Kareena said that she would teach them about homosexuality and same-sex marriages.

In a recent interview she was asked, "How would you tell your child why Uncle Jack is married to a man?" Without a moment's hesitation, the Ra.One actress replied, "Because he loves him. Love doesn't come in any particular gender or size or form. We can't try to just put it in the fact that Amma has to love Abba. It's fine. Sometimes, Jack can love John and Trisha can love Prisha. That's just the way it is and he has to know that love has no boundaries."

Earlier, the actress said, "We are one. That's the whole idea. Why are people even saying that 'this is different'? No. We're all the same with our hearts, lungs, and liver so why are we seeing them in any other way? That's the way I think and that's the way I'll always bring up my boys to think also."

On the work front, Kareena will be seen next in Jaane Jaan, co-starring Jaideep Ahlawat and Vijay Varma. AGENCIES



Parineeti, Raghav's 'Pearl White Indian wedding'

Actress Parineeti Chopra and Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) leader Raghav Chadha's wedding card has gone viral on social media, who are all set to tie the knot in Lake City Udaipur this month.

A picture of the wedding card has gone viral on social media. The wedding date reads September 24 on the card, which is white in colour. "Divine Promises: A pearl white Indian wedding... Leela Palace Jaimala: 3:30 p.m. Pheras: 4:00 p.m. Vidai: 6:30 p.m.," read the card.

The card has beautiful sketches of the landscape of Udaipur.

The wedding festivities will start from September 23 with Parineeti's Chhori ceremony at 10 a.m. at Maharaja suite. A 'Fresco Afternoon' will be held on the terrace near the ballroom September 23 from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m.

September 24, Raghav's 'Sehrrabandi' will take place in Taj Lake Palace at 1 p.m. Then 'Baraat'- The Royal Procession will move from Taj Lake Palace at 2 p.m.

The reception gala, which has a theme of 'A night of Amore' will happen in Leela Palace Courtyard, at 8.30 p.m.

IANAS

Yami hails makers who trusted her ability

Yami Gautam has not had the conventional way to success: she started with television, and then successfully switched to films with Vicky Donor (2012). And after facing a lull, she even went on to play lead roles. Her latest, OMG2 is a big hit. So, one can say Yami has been on a successful streak in her career lately. Recently, in an interview with a leading daily, Yami expressed gratitude to the makers who trusted her potential as an actor. The 34-year-old, who has starred in films such as Kaabil, A Thursday and Bala, is thankful to the makers who saw the potential in her. "They trusted that I can carry a film on my shoulders. I take it as a huge responsibility, it becomes my job to make sure it's worth. That's the kind of mindset I come from. I am conditioning myself to it," she adds.

On the work front, the actress will be next seen in the movie, Dhoom Dhaam, among other unannounced films.

AGENCIES

Follow your heart: Sara to Ibrahim

Actress Sara Ali Khan who debuted with the romantic drama Kedarnath and had made a name in the industry, is finally in a position to pass on the baton to her little brother Ibrahim Ali Khan who is soon to make his debut.

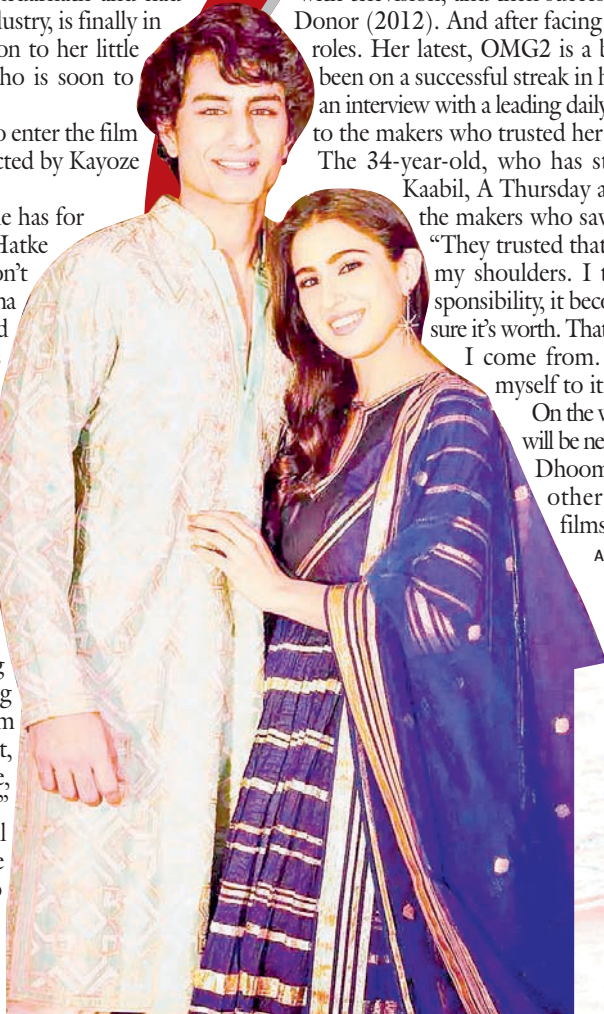
Ibrahim Ali Khan is all set to enter the film industry with Sarzameen directed by Kayoze Irani, son of Boman Irani.

When asked what advice she has for her little brother, the Zara Hatke Zara Bachke actor said, "We don't chat much about work and cinema at home, but the advice I would give him is what my parents gave me, follow your heart because there is a truth to that. There will be a lot of noise around you, but you have to stay honest and follow your path because that other person's path you admire already has his/her own journey."

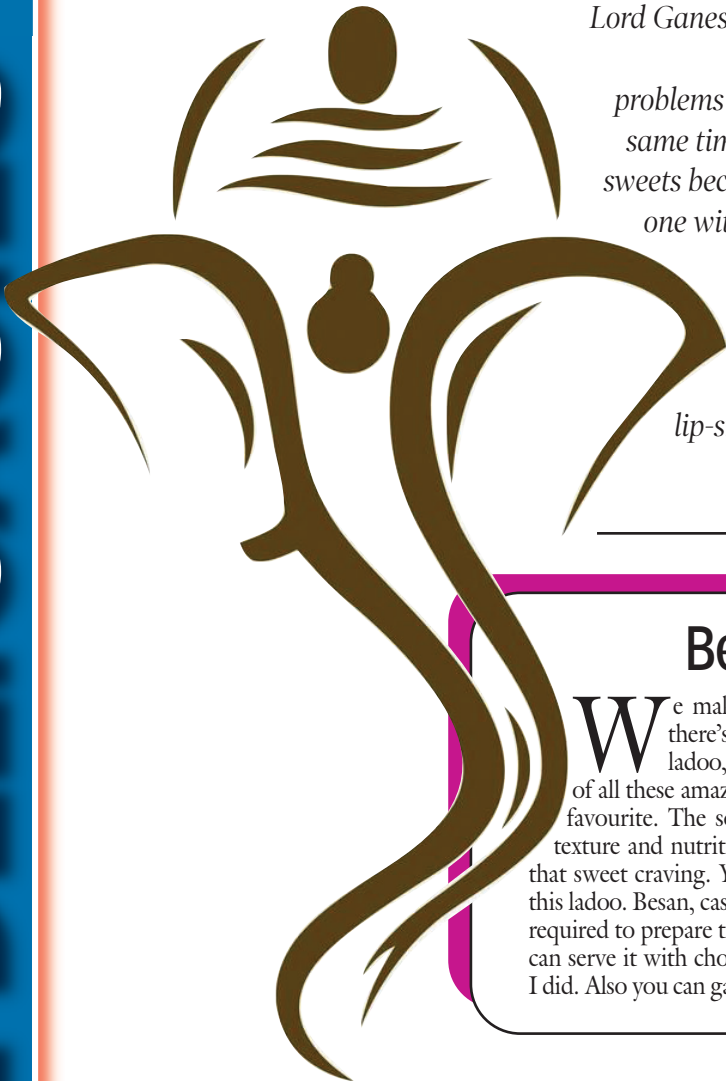
The actress further added, "Don't lie, because the camera will catch it and that is something I have learned. For me, being myself comes easy. Even Ibrahim is a different person, he is honest, and his heart is in the right place, and that is what he really needs."

On the work front, Sara will be next seen in the film Ae Watan Mere Watan expected to be released later this year.

AGENCIES



DELICIOUS DELICACIES



Lord Ganesha is one of the few Hindu Gods whose holy presence is claimed to solve all kinds of problems and affect all elements of human life. At the same time, we all know that 'Bappa' enjoys exquisite sweets because he is also known as Lambodara, or the one with a big stomach. He adores all things sweet, as evidenced by his large belly. There isn't a single idol or artwork of him that doesn't have a laddoo on one of his four hands. On his day, followers prepare a variety of lip-smacking laddoos to delight him. This Ganesh Puja, **Sunday POST** lists a few of them



PRITHISHA DAS

Besan Ladoo

We make laddoos out of so many ingredients, there's motichoor laddoo, aata laddoo, coconut laddoo, rava laddoo, and this list is endless. Out of all these amazing laddoos, besan laddoo is my absolute favourite. The soft and creamy besan laddoo is rich in texture and nutrition, making it a perfect snack to quell that sweet craving. You just need four ingredients to make this laddoo. Besan, caster sugar, ghee and cardamom are what required to prepare this mouth-watering delicacy. Then you can serve it with chopped nuts and rose petals just the way I did. Also you can garnish with edible gold and silver leaves.



Dryfruits Ladoo

There's no need to skip dessert when you're trying to cut sugar out of your diet. All your sweet tooth needs is a wonderful sugar-free dessert recipe. You love sweet Laddoos but are worried about calories? Try this healthy avatar of Protein Laddoo. Since there is no added sugar is required to prepare it, even diabetics can have it and satisfy their sweet craving. To make this Protein Laddoo, I have taken the old fashioned oats like the course one, white sesame and some almond. For sweetness I have used jaggery powder and for fragrance took some cardamom. No ghee, butter or oil. You really don't need to add any fat to make this laddoo. Most importantly, these energy laddoos can be easily stored in a dry or moist free container with a shelf life of more than a week. You may serve these for morning breakfast with a glass of milk, or as an evening snack with a choice of fruit juice.

Motichoor Ladoo

A mere glimpse of this orange-coloured soft dish can be profoundly soothing to the eyes and soul. However, few people are aware of the link between Lord Ganesha and Motichoor Laddoos. According to legend, Lord Ganesha once fought Lord Parshuram. Ganesha's tooth had broken in the conflict, and he couldn't eat anything since it hurt. Motichoor Laddoos would melt in his lips when they were made for him. Since then, it has been Lord Ganesha's favourite meal, and it is served to him as prasad. The primary ingredients of Motichoor Laddoo are gramme flour, sugar, and spices. The gram flour batter is first cooked into little balls called 'boondi' and then combined with sugar syrup, nuts, or seeds and later shaped into balls.

THE AUTHOR IS A POPULAR FOOD BLOGGER OF ODISHA



Vaanya



PHOTO: KUMAR SHARAT, OP