

DECEMBER 24-30 2023

SUNDAY POST

HERE . NOW

Centuries-old cake mixing tradition

Ring in Yuletide joy

COVER STORY

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MY SUNDAY



With co-star Abhishek (C) and director Subhendu Biswal

Reading, painting, music and dance

Reading new novels is one of my favourite pastimes. I also appreciate painting as a means of expressing myself. I enjoy listening to music and dancing on occasion. If I have time, I will also go on a solo date.



With crew members of Ae Akasha Tale

SAMPARITA DAS, WHO RECENTLY MADE HER ACTING DEBUT IN AE AKASHA TALE, WEARS MANY HATS. ACTING APART, SHE ALSO HAS PROFICIENCY IN DANCE AND MARTIAL ARTS. IN HER SPARE TIME, SAMARPITA ENJOYS READING NOVELS



With sister and friends

Fitness nut

Sundays are reserved for my fitness routine. I start my day with an intense workout, followed by a leisurely stroll through a nearby park with a friend. This has been a habit for me, and I make a concerted effort to avoid work on my days off.

Day of rest & relaxation

On vacation, I indulge in activities that allow me to rest and revitalise. I use meditation and yoga to relax both my mind and body.

Celebrating friendship

I have my own distinct way of appreciating friendship. My buddies are my support system, and when we get together, we love trying out new street foods.

Guilty pleasure

I indulge in the guilty pleasure of tuning in to *Koffee With Karan*. I've actually seen every single episode of the show, and I thoroughly enjoy watching the show.

MADHUSMITA SAHU, OP

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 construction workers party? they raise the roof.
- How does a farmer count cows? with a cow-calculator.
- What does Santa say when he is sick? OH OH NO!
- How does broccoli use a cellphone? He cauliflower.



LEGEND IN THE MAKING

Sir, The interview with four-time National Award-winning documentary filmmaker from Odisha Lipika Singh Darai made for an interesting read. Winning a National Award is certainly a great achievement, no matter which category one wins. In this context, bagging four such trophies on the trot by a woman filmmaker speaks volumes about the enormous talent Darai possesses. I would also like to congratulate the prolific filmmaker for being selected among the 10 Indians to be part of the BAFTA Breakthrough Initiative. While I applaud her initiative to document mundane stuff for generations to come, I wish she spent some time making a few fictional and content-driven movies for fiction lovers. Nonetheless, the promise she has shown at such an early age will surely put her in a league of her own.

DEBENDRA MEHER, BARGARH

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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Centuries-old cake mixing tradition

Ringling in Yuletide joy



THE TRADITION OF CAKE MIXING BEGAN IN EUROPE. THE WHOLE FAMILY USED TO COME TOGETHER FOR THIS ACTIVITY, WHICH SYMBOLISED UNITY AND HARD WORK

MADHUSMITA SAHU, OP

As the crisp winter air envelops us and the streets sparkle with festive lights, we once again find ourselves on the threshold of the most enchanting time of the year—Christmas. Beyond the glittering decorations and the anticipation of gifts lies a deeper essence that makes this season truly special. Christmas is a celebration of joy, love, and togetherness, a time when hearts are warmed by acts of kindness and the world seems to be wrapped in a magical glow.

Imagine a symphony of laughter, the tantalising aroma of spices, and the clinking of mixing spoons—a prelude to the grand celebration of Christmas. As the city dons its festive attire, it welcomes one



and all to partake in a culinary symposium that transcends tradition—the Christmas cake mixing event. This isn't just a ritual; it's a spirited overture that heralds the arrival of yuletide joy, inviting participants to dance with the ingredients, creating a harmonious blend that will resonate through the holiday season.

Several hotels and malls host cake mixing



ceremonies, where people from all walks of life participate to mix cake ingredients together. The ritual is not a contemporary practice but an old one dating back to the 17th century.

What is cake mixing?

The practice of cake mixing begins quite early, mostly in the first week of December itself. It is an age-old tradition where loads of dry fruits, nuts, grains, and spices are combined together to form a mixture. This mixture is then soaked in alcoholic blends for some days to let them soak up all the flavours and aromas. Lastly, it is divided into parts, which go into the cake batter, from which further Christmas fruit cakes are baked.

What goes into delicacy?

For cake mixing, almonds, cashews, raisins, dates, figs, dried cherries, pistachios, cinnamon, cloves, nutmeg, dried ginger, candied fruits, prunes, walnuts, sugar, eggs, and all-purpose flour are mixed in the right ratio. Once combined well, this mixture is then soaked

in rum, brandy, wine, or a combination of fruit juices and alcohol. The cake mix is filled in airtight containers and allowed to soak for at least a week. Since alcohol is a preservative, the mixture is preserved for a long time. It is said that preserving the cake mix for a year can attract good luck and harmony.

History of cake mixing

Back in the 17th century, cake mixing was done to mark the arrival of the harvest season. The procedure followed currently is the same as before. This tradition used to be an intimate family affair back in the day, but now it is not just reserved for Christian households. Nowadays, many hotels organise community cake mixing ceremonies where one can register and participate.

The tradition of cake mixing actually began in Europe. The whole family used to come together for this activity, which symbolised unity and hard work. The final mixture was then soaked in alcohol and preserved for weeks. Do you know that cake mixes were



Swosti premium cake mixing

also considered Christmas gifts in the olden days? People used to present their own unique cake mixture recipe to their friends and family with great pride.

Celebration in Bhubaneswar

The cake-mixing ceremony is celebrated in many hotels and malls and by food bloggers in the state capital ahead of Christmas.

Swosti Premium

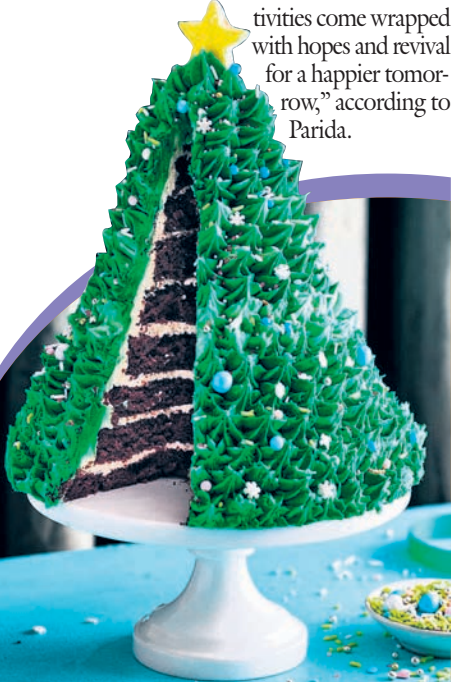


Sumanta Kumar Parida, manager of Swosti Premium, shared, "Each year, we arrange a cake mixing ceremony at our venue. The event is attended by our hotel staff, owners, guests, members of the media, and influential individuals."

Hosting a cake-mixing ceremony on the premises can be a fantastic idea for several reasons, said Parida.

"Such events add a unique and festive touch to our hotel, creating a positive and memorable experience for our guests. It allows us to engage with both our in-house guests and the local community, fostering a sense of community and celebration," he added. "Although the cake mixing ceremony is a warm-up to the festive holiday season, it has far more significance in the current times. The underlying essence of the ceremony is also a reminder of the cross-cultural impact

of celebrations. The festivities come wrapped with hopes and revival for a happier tomorrow," according to Parida.





The Crown

Sharing her insights about the event, Swaha Patnaik, Assistant Catering Sales Manager of Hotel The Crown, said, "The joyous cake mixing ceremony, orchestrated by the hotel, brings together our staff, hotel executives, owners, media representatives, food bloggers, and in-house guests. Held in early December, this well-received event



the past month, we've dedicated ourselves to orchestrating this event for a lasting impression. Our seasoned team guarantees a smooth and unforgettable experience, leading participants through the artful blending of ingredients for the upcoming celebrations. This presents a distinctive chance for guests to immerse themselves in our hotel's welcoming hospitality, crafting enduring memories in the process."

What does it need to make the event a success? To this end, Swaha revealed,

owed its success to the spirited engagement of our valued guests. The venue buzzes with warmth, laughter, and a collective community spirit. Enhancing the festive atmosphere, we arrange live Carol singing by local Catholic clubs on the premises. Our hotel takes pride in fostering such delightful occasions that not only celebrate the holiday season but also unite our diverse community in joyous revelry."



"Choosing ingredients and cakes is pivotal for crafting a memorable ceremony. The perfect blend of flavours and aesthetics enhances the overall experience. In our cake preparation, we incorporate elements such as wine, edible flowers, various sugars, diverse nuts, dried fruits, berries, and fresh fruits as foundational components. Additionally, we include secret ingredients to elevate the cake's taste, ensuring a delightful and unforgettable culinary aspect to complement the special occasion."

Talking about this year's preparation, she continued: "For



Mayfair Lagoon

Hrudaranjan Kar, a food blogger, shared his experience of attending a cake mixing ceremony at Mayfair Lagoon. He said, "Recently, I had the pleasure of attending a cake mixing ceremony at Hotel Mayfair, and it was nothing short of a culinary spectacle. The anticipation began as I walked into the hotel, where the air was filled with the sweet aroma of vanilla, cinnamon, and various other festive spices. The hotel had transformed its elegant courtyard into a bustling arena for the grand event. Tables adorned with an array of ingredients, from nuts and dried fruits to candied ginger and chocolate chips, awaited the eager participants."



grew. The hotel staff ensured that everyone felt involved and engaged."

Talking about the main attraction of the event, he said, "The highlight of the ceremony was the addition of spirits, as we took turns pouring generous amounts of rum and brandy over the mixture. The aromatic blend of alcohol and spices filled the air, creating a heady and festive ambiance. It was a sensory delight, and the anticipation of the delicious treats to come only heightened. The hotel's commitment to creating memorable experiences for its guests was evident in every detail, from the quality of ingredients to the warmth of the staff. As a food blogger, it was a privilege to be part of this whisked affair, and I eagerly wait for the moment when I can savour the fruits of our collective labour."

He went on: "The ceremony started with a warm welcome from the hotel staff, who explained the tradition of cake mixing and its historical significance. The attendees, a mix of hotel guests, were handed chef's hats and aprons, instantly making us feel like part of an exclusive culinary club. The atmosphere was filled with laughter and excitement as we eagerly gathered around the tables, ready to dive into the colourful array of ingredients. The executive pastry chef guided us through the process with infectious enthusiasm. From premium nuts to exotic dried fruits, every element promised to contribute to the creation of a decadent and flavorful cake. As we meticulously measured, mixed, and blended the ingredients, the sense of camaraderie among the participants



DECK UP HALLS

Christmas tree serves as the centerpiece of holiday decorations, and adorning it with a variety of accessories adds an extra layer of festive charm to your home. From traditional ornaments to modern technological innovations, Christmas tree accessories come in a wide range of options to suit every taste and style.

Sunday POST explores the delightful world of Christmas tree accessories and how you can make your tree truly stand out during the holiday season.

Classic Ornaments

No Christmas tree is complete without a collection of classic ornaments. These timeless decorations come in various shapes, sizes, and materials, ranging from delicate glass baubles to handcrafted wooden figures. The classic ornaments often hold sentimental value, with families passing them down from generation to generation. These cherished decorations capture the essence of tradition and create a nostalgic atmosphere in the home.



Tree Toppers

The crowning glory of any Christmas tree is the tree topper. Traditionally, an angel or a star graces the highest point, symbolizing hope and the guiding light. However, modern tree toppers come in a myriad of options, including whimsical angels, snowflakes, and even personalized toppers that reflect the unique personality of your family.



Tree Skirts and Collars

Don't forget about the base of the tree! Tree skirts and collars not only serve a practical purpose by hiding the tree stand but also add an extra layer of style to your holiday display. From traditional velvet skirts to trendy woven baskets, there are plenty of options to suit your decor preferences.



DIY and Handmade Touches

For a personal and heartfelt touch, consider incorporating DIY and handmade accessories into your tree decor. Handcrafted ornaments made by family members, personalized baubles, or even photo ornaments that capture cherished memories can make your tree a unique reflection of your family's history and traditions.



Lights and Garlands

Lights and garlands are the unsung heroes of Christmas tree decor. Twinkling lights transform a tree into a magical spectacle, casting a warm glow that illuminates the room. Traditional string lights, and even smart lights that can be synchronized to music are popular choices. Garlands, whether made of tinsel, or pine, add texture and depth to the tree, creating a cohesive and visually appealing look.



Themed Decorations

Adding a theme to your Christmas tree can turn it into a storytelling masterpiece. Whether it's a winter wonderland, a rustic cabin retreat, or a coastal Christmas, themed decorations bring cohesion and creativity to your tree. Consider incorporating ornaments, ribbons, and even figurines that adhere to your chosen theme for a truly immersive holiday experience.



27 years on

Rani talks about her motivation

Actress Rani Mukerji, recently shared what motivates her to keep going even after a successful career span of 27 years.

The *Mardaani* actress said, "So, I think to be in touch with reality and also to understand what the audience really wants today, I think that is very important for every artist. We can't be delusional, we can't stay in a world of our own. We have to see what the generation today wants out of actors. So, that's very important."

Being in the industry for four decades, witnessing the era of 90s, 2000s, 2010s and now 2020s, and delivering hit films one after the other, she said, "Understanding audience expectations and aligning roles with one's age are crucial aspects for me. Starting with *Kuch Kuch Hota Hai* at 19, progressing to films like *Saathiyaa* and *Chalte Chalte* at 24, and later exploring mature roles at 30 with *No One Killed Jessica*, *Mardaani*, and *Mrs. Chatterjee Vs Norway*, each phase of my life has influenced my evolution." She lastly mentioned that people tend to notice and appreciate certain nuances or elements in a performance, character, or film, and they carry these impressions into their personal lives. This often leads to significant changes for them.

AGENCIES

Meera on acting sans makeup

Actress Meera Chopra, who will be seen in Sandeep Singh's film *Safed*, says that being sans makeup in a film is the most challenging part for any actress.

Talking about how challenging the role was for her, Chopra candidly said, "Without hair styling and makeup, we become conscious about our looks in front of the camera. When I started shooting for this film, I tried to put a base on my face, but my director,

Sandeep, sent me back to wash my face. It was refreshing for me to be like that. I used to just get up, wash my face and go for the shoot. It enabled me to play Kaali in an easier, natural way."

Safed which features Meera Chopra, Abhay Verma and Barkha Bisht, will premiere on ZEE5 December 29.

On the personal front, Meera is not single any more. For a while now, she has been dating someone who is not from the film or TV industry. It's exclusively learnt that Meera has decided to take the plunge into matrimony.

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Dear Purusha music out; set to hit screens Jan 12

The music for the upcoming Odia film *Dear Purusha* was released at a city hotel recently in the presence of several team members.

Made under the banner of Jhilik Motion Pictures, the movie is set to take the viewers on a journey through the lives of six couples, offering a compelling exploration of the challenges and triumphs faced by men in society and relationships. The film's protagonist, Chitrangada, played by producer Jhilik Bhattacharjee, emerges as a valiant warrior fighting for justice in the face of societal norms.

The star-studded cast also includes Choudhury Jayprakash Das, Mahashweta Ray, Sidhant Mohapatra, Nitu Singh, Samresh Routray, Pinky Pradhan, Bobby Mishra, BM Baisali, Devasis Patra, Anuradha Panigrahi, Dipanwit Dashmohapatra, Divya Mohanty, Parthasarathi Ray, Himagni



Dutta, and Ananya Mishra.

The film's music, composed by Gaurav Anand, adds another layer to its narrative with soulful tracks like *Purusha Jojana*, *Adha Kahe*, *Adha Sune*, *Sunyata*, and *Bedum Barsha*.

Dear Purusha will hit theatres on January 12, shared the makers. PNN

Charu shares plight of a single mother

Actress Charu Asopa, in a recent interview with media, made shocking revelations about her house hunt journey as a single mother.

Narrating a distressing incident, Charu shared, "I finalised a house and even gave token money. They held a society meeting. I took a break for one hour between shoots to attend it. The members of the committee were mostly males, and there was only one female. She asked me about who all will live in the house. I told her that it would be me, my daughter, and two maids. She then told me that they don't rent out the property to single mothers. I asked her the reason, but she said she doesn't want to go there or entertain any further discussions on this."

The *Yeh Rishta Kya Kehlata Hai* fame actress got so disheartened after this incident that she couldn't control her tears. She shared, "It seemed to me that it's a crime to be a single mother. If tomorrow, someone buys a house and then gets divorced, would you kick them out of the house?"

Charu was married to Sushmita Sen's younger brother, Rajeev Sen. The couple tied the knot in 2019. However, they got divorced in 2023. Amidst their on and off relationship, the duo welcomed their first child, Ziana, in 2021.

AGENCIES





Remnants of the British-laid railway iron bridge near Talbandh

Ruins from the Raj

IN 1920, MAHARAJA SRIRAM CHANDRA BHANJA DEO BUILT A RAIL STATION AT TALBANDH, A FIRST INSIDE THE SIMILIPAL FORESTS IN MAYURBHANJ, THAT HELPED TRANSPORTING SAL SLEEPERS TO OTHER PARTS OF ODISHA

JANAKI BALLAV DASH

Just as the state observed 153rd birth anniversary of Maharaja Sriram Chandra Bhanja Deo, one of founders of modern Odisha last week, a rail station set up by him deep inside Similipal National Park in Mayurbhanj district over a century ago remains in ruins.

In May 2023, a Superfast train was launched to connect Bangiriposi block of Mayurbhanj district with Holy City Puri. But not many know that much before the plying of Bangiriposi-Puri Superfast Express, a rail station was established at Talbandh by the Maharaja under Mayurbhanj State Railway (MSR of British India).

The 52-km stretch from Rupsa to

Baripada opened for traffic January 20, 1905, and was eventually extended to Talbandh, about 60 km from Baripada.

Unfortunately, rail connections to Talbandh were discontinued following the merger of MSR and Eastern Railway in 1952. The ruins of a British-built railway iron bridge remind onlookers of the past.

Talking about Talbandh, it's a scenic spot inside Similipal Sanctuary where rail services were launched by Maharaja to transport Sal sleepers from inside the jungle. Wagonloads of slippers, collected from different regions of the forest, were first taken from Talbandh to Bangiriposi, Baripada, and Rupsa. Then they were carried to several other places.

During the British India regime, these sleepers were used for laying rail tracks, says Purnachandra Bindhani, a centenarian photographer from Baripada.

The Barooah Timber Company of Assam was roped in by the Maharaja to collect, cut the sleepers, and load them at Talbandh, adds Bindhani.

The 27-km journey from Bangiriposi to Talbandh offers visitors an experience that is no less exciting than that of travelling

in the Kanchenjunga or Darjeeling regions due to the long stretch of forests, falling flowers, and overall splendour.

Dhobanisole, Shyamsundarpur, Ghatkuanri, and Ghatikia are a few other scenic villages one needs to pass through from Bangiriposi to reach Talbandh. Till a few years ago, Talbandh's dilapidated railway station, a quarter for station master, and the British-laid tracks were still there. But they were ultimately stolen due to a lack of proper upkeep, alleges Ksitish Behera, a staff member at Ghatkuanri Church.

According to locals, the Christian preachers were allowed by the Maharaja to build small churches and conduct community services in these interior areas of Similipal Sanctuary.

"Maharaja was tolerant and had no religious biases, as he didn't object to the construction of Krishnachandrapur church, which is located at a place en route to NH 18," adds Ksitish.

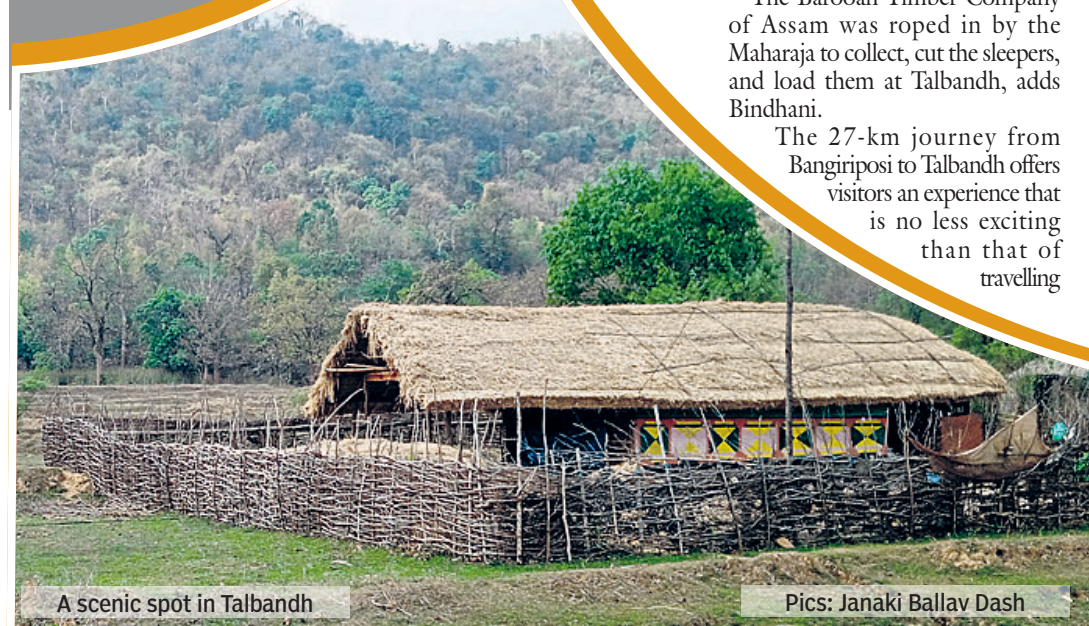
A few isolated wells that used to serve as the source of drinking water for the station staff, remains of walls, and some wooden signal posts are what left to remind the

rail stoppage that once used to be abuzz with activities, say a few locals, adding that the place where Sal sleepers were stacked can also be identified.

Speaking about the presence of the scenic site, the state government has recently granted 34 crore for the expansion of the 27-km-long road connecting Talbandh with Bangiriposi. The foundation-laying ceremony was attended by the local MLA as well as the Cabinet Minister for Revenue Department.

This has raised hope that Talbandh can feature in Mayurbhanj's tourism map, said Ranjan Mohapatra, a local who wrote to the President of India and other dignitaries demanding a facelift of the area, which boasts several attractions, including waterfalls, streams, a stretch of green forests, and a scenic mountain range.

The local MP, Bisweswar Tudu, who is also a Union Minister, has been urged to tap the tourism potential of various scenic spots, with Talbandh as a core tourist destination. The move will be a tribute to Maharaja Sriram Chandra Bhanj Deo, a benevolent king and one of the founders of modern Odisha.



A scenic spot in Talbandh

Pics: Janaki Ballav Dash



Bina

PHOTO: KAMAL PHOTOGRAPHY