

MARCH 30-April 05, 2025

SUNDAY POST

HERE . NOW

IMPERILED LEGACY

COVER STORY

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ANISHA KHATUN, OP

Jayjeet Das from Cuttack is one of the most promising talents to have graced Odisha's entertainment scene in recent times. His performance in TV show 'Manini' made him a household name, while his roles in movies like 'Bapa Tame Bhari Dusta' and 'Queen' earned him a substantial fan following. Jayjeet has also appeared in the web series 'Ete Bhala Pae Tate' and is eagerly looking forward to his Hindi release, 'Prachand.' When he is not shooting, Jayjeet enjoys exploring new places



With a co-actor

Famjam

For me, Sundays are all about spending quality time with family and friends, especially since my busy schedule leaves little room for it during the week.

Partying with pals

My ideal Sunday is all about partying with my closest friends, who are few but very special. I truly enjoy spending time with them.

Time to rejuvenate

My favorite way to relax is by visiting Konark and Puri—sitting near the beach and spending some peaceful time with myself helps me refresh.

Exploring new destinations

I love spending my holidays traveling and exploring new places. It helps me unwind, relieve stress, and rejuvenate for the week ahead. Exploring new destinations is something I truly enjoy.

Sleep matters

Given my work involves unpredictable shooting schedules, I make sure to catch up on sleep whenever I get the chance.



With family

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

If you put your left shoe on the wrong foot... it's on the right foot.

Every time someone calls me fat I get so depress I cut myself... a piece of cake.

I'm changing my name to 'Benefits' on Facebook. Next time someone adds me, It will say 'you are now friends with Benefits.'

When an employment application asks who is to be notified in case of emergency, I always write, 'A very good doctor'.

Folklore, not fact

Sir, I found the write-up Black Cat Facts, published last week, engaging. As mentioned, the notion that cats bring bad luck is a myth deeply rooted in superstition and misinformation. This belief primarily stems from historical contexts where cats, especially black ones, were unfairly linked to witchcraft and malevolent forces. During the Middle Ages, for instance, cats were often seen as companions of witches, leading to widespread fear and persecution. However, this association has no basis in reality. In fact, many cultures celebrate cats for their positive attributes. In ancient Egypt, cats were revered and considered sacred. Today, they are beloved pets known for their companionship and ability to reduce stress. The idea that cats bring bad luck is simply a relic of the past, perpetuated by folklore rather than fact. Moreover, adopting a black cat can be a rewarding experience and a way to give a loving home to a deserving animal.

Pramod Sahoo, BHADRAK

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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Imperiled legacy

From the appliqué work of Pipili to the stone carvings of Konark, many of Odisha's native handicrafts are now at a crossroads, thanks to the relentless march of industrialisation and shifting consumer preferences. Immediate and collective action is imperative to preserve these crafts and support the artisans who keep them alive

ANISHA KHATUN, OP

Odisha, a treasure trove of cultural richness and artistic mastery, is renowned for its exquisite handicrafts that have been passed down through generations. From the intricate silver filigree of Cuttack to the vibrant Pattachitra paintings of Raghurajpur, each craft embodies centuries of tradition, devotion, and storytelling. The appliqué work of Pipili, the stone carvings of Konark, and the ancient Dhokra metal casting are testaments to the state's artistic brilliance.

However, industrialisation, changing consumer preferences, and dwindling artisan communities have led to a sharp decline in the handicraft sector. Traditional craftsmen struggle with low wages, lack of market access, and competition from machine-made alternatives. As a result, many are abandoning their ancestral trades, putting these priceless art forms at risk of extinction. This not only threatens the cultural heritage of the state but also impacts its economy, as handicrafts contribute significantly to rural livelihoods and tourism revenue.

It is now more crucial than ever to take collective action to preserve and promote these exclusive handicrafts. If immediate measures are not adopted, these centuries-old traditions, woven with the dreams, sweat, and devotion of generations, may be lost forever.

To support these art forms and the artists, Sunday POST spoke with several artists and organisations to understand the reasons behind this decline and the efforts being made for their revival.

'Inadequate promotion and awareness killing crafts'

Prasanta Kumar Das, a Guest Faculty at the State Institute for Development of Arts & Crafts (SIDAC)



and District Pattachitra Training Center, Khurda, emphasises the deep-rooted significance of handicrafts, particularly Pattachitra, one of Odisha's most revered art forms. He says, "Pattachitra, a traditional scroll painting style known for its intricate details and mythological narratives, has been a vital part of Odisha's cultural identity for centuries. Created using natural colors on cloth or dried palm leaves, this craft embodies the rich artistic heritage passed down through generations. However, like many other handicrafts, Pattachitra is also facing challenges that threaten its survival. Unfortunately, many traditional art forms have already vanished, such as Singha (horn) craft due to the unavailability of raw materials and Batik craft due to a lack of promotion. The primary reason behind the decline in demand for handicrafts today is inadequate

promotion and awareness."

Discussing the challenges faced by artisans, Das points out, "One major issue is the lack of knowledge about market trends. Many skilled artisans excel in their craft but are unaware of social media platforms where they can showcase their work. They do not know about trending designs or online marketing, which limits their reach to potential buyers. To sustain themselves, they need to upgrade their skills and adapt to modern trends. Additionally, due to the declining demand, young artists do not see a future in this field. They learn the craft out of passion but hesitate to turn it into a profession, leading to a dwindling number of new artisans entering the market."

Asked about revival efforts, Das stresses the importance of modernisation and authenticity. "Artists should blend traditional designs with a modern touch to attract contemporary buyers. Understanding market trends and customer preferences is crucial, and artisans must leverage technology and digital platforms to learn new designs and expand their reach. Exhibitions play a significant role in promoting these art forms, creating awareness and appreciation among the public. However, one major concern is the rise of counterfeit items. Some individuals sell mass-produced duplicates under the guise of originality, which harms the reputation of genuine artisans," says Das.

He goes on to add, "The government must take strict measures to preserve the authenticity of this art form and protect the livelihoods of true craftsmen. With the right efforts in innovation, marketing, and quality preservation, handicrafts like Pattachitra can reclaim their rightful place in the cultural and economic landscape, ensuring they thrive for generations to come."



'Ensure financial and social security of artisans'

Priyaranjan Kar, Secretary of Odisha Shilpi Mahasangha, Bhubaneswar, highlights the crucial role of handicrafts and handloom in the state's economy. He says, "After the agricultural sector, the handicraft and handloom industry is the second-largest source of livelihood, employing nearly 10 lakh people. Despite its significance, artisans face numerous challenges that threaten the survival of this rich tradition."

One of the biggest hurdles artisans encounter is the lack of access to quality raw materials. Kar specifically points out the difficulties faced by stone sculptors. "For stonework, artisans struggle to get the right quality of stone required for intricate sculptures. The government-run Utkalika does provide stones, but these are often of poor quality, essentially wastage stones, yet they are priced at 11,000 per cubic meter. This is a steep cost for artisans, and given the inferior quality of the material, the final sculptures also lack the desired finesse. If an artist wishes to craft a larger statue, the price jumps to 40,000 per cubic meter, which is an unrealistic investment, as they rarely receive that much for their work."

Due to the high cost and scarcity of raw materials, many artisans are unable to sustain their craft. "When artisans don't





get the necessary materials at an affordable price, how can they continue their work? Why would they pass this art form on to the next generation? This is a major reason for the declining demand and diminishing interest in traditional crafts,” Kar laments.

Another pressing issue is the financial and social security of artisans. “While handloom workers are covered under special government pension schemes, handicraft artisans are left out. They do not receive the same level of attention or financial aid from the government. Moreover, there is no insurance coverage for them, leaving them vulnerable. The budget allocated for this sector is minimal, making it impossible to manage such a large number of artisans and their needs,” he explains.

When asked about possible solutions, Kar lays emphasis on the importance of focusing on three key areas: raw materials, design, and marketing. “If we work on these aspects, the handicraft sector will flourish,” he claims.

He emphasises that Odisha has at least 20 handicraft items, including stone carvings, silver filigree, Pattachitra, terracotta, and tribal jewelry that have immense potential for

export. However, there are no well-structured initiatives from the government to facilitate this. “To support artisans, the government must provide raw materials at an affordable rate. Training programs should be organised to teach upgraded designs and modern techniques. More training centers should be established to enhance artisans’ skills. Additionally, artisans need proper platforms to showcase their work. Exhibition spaces should be allocated for them, and marketing efforts must be improved. Government initiatives should focus on e-marketing, enabling artisans to reach a wider audience and sell their products online. With the right steps, we can ensure that Odi-

sha’s rich handicraft heritage does not just survive but thrives in the modern era,” Kar concludes.

‘Collaborative effort is important for revival’

Priyabrata Sahoo, a young graphic designer and terracotta artist from Bhubaneswar, passionately speaks about the cultural and historical significance of handicrafts, especially terracotta art. “These are not just products; they are stories molded in clay, carrying the essence of our traditions, heritage, and craftsmanship. Dating back to ancient civilisations, terracotta art has played a crucial role in temple architecture, home décor, and everyday life. The intricate designs and delicate craftsmanship reflect generations of skill and dedication, making each piece unique and valuable.”

Shedding light on the challenges faced by the handicraft industry today, Sahoo highlights the

struggles artisans endure. “Despite its rich legacy, the terracotta handicraft industry is facing severe challenges. One of the biggest issues is financial instability. Unlike mass-produced factory goods, terracotta items require time, effort, and precision. Unfortunately, with the rise of machine-made alternatives, the demand for handmade crafts has declined. Modern consumers often prioritise convenience and affordability over authenticity, making it difficult for traditional artisans to sustain their livelihood. Moreover, the younger generation is hesitant to take up this craft due to low earnings and lack of recognition. I once planned a career in this art, but now I pursue it purely out of passion, as the financial returns are minimal. With fewer artisans willing to continue this tradition, the risk of terracotta art fading into obscurity is growing. Additionally, limited market exposure, restricted access to raw materials, and insufficient government support further accelerate the decline of this industry,” he shares.

On his thoughts to effect a turnaround, Sahoo says, “Despite these challenges, I firmly believe that with the right initiatives, terracotta art can be revived. Firstly, greater awareness and appreciation for handicrafts are essential. Schools, cultural organisations, and media platforms should actively promote terracotta art to educate people about its significance. Encouraging consumers to choose handcrafted products over mass-produced ones will help sustain the industry. Secondly, artisans require better financial support. Strengthening government schemes, subsidies, and fair trade initiatives will provide them with the resources they need. More handicraft fairs, exhibitions, and online marketplaces should be organised to connect artisans directly with buyers, eliminating middlemen and ensuring fair pricing. Furthermore, blending traditional craftsmanship with modern designs can make terracotta art more appealing to contemporary consumers.”

He adds, “Collaborations between designers and artisans can lead to innovative creations that retain cultural authenticity while catering to modern tastes. Lastly, skill development programs and training workshops should be conducted to inspire young artists to pursue this craft. If given the right opportunities, terracotta art can thrive once again, preserving our heritage and providing sustainable livelihoods. We must act now to save this priceless treasure before it disappears forever.”



Odia Rap: Rise & potential

Rap scene in Odisha looks quite promising with the growing popularity of artistes like Big Deal, Phoenix and Addyction. Despite challenges such as low literacy in rap and lack of infrastructure, the genre holds immense potential to impact both national and international music scenes

ARINDAM GANGULY, OP

Rap fever has swept across India like never before, following the super success of Big Dawg and Run It Up by Hanumankind, the new sensation on the rap scene. His ability to blend regional identity with global hip-hop culture has inspired a fresh generation of artistes, especially from states like Odisha, where the genre is just beginning to find its distinct voice.

Hanumankind's success demonstrates that there is an exciting opportunity for Odia rappers to carve out their space by combining local culture with universal themes.

With more youngsters planning careers in Rap, **Sunday POST** caught up with a few popular names in the industry to get their perspectives on the rap scene in the state and explore what needs to be done to achieve success.

Samir Rishu Mohanty, aka **Big Deal** is an emerging star whose music often delves into themes like identity, culture, and racism. His multilingual approach—using Hindi, English, and Odia—broadens his appeal, allowing him to connect with audiences from different cultural backgrounds. Tracks like *Mu Heli Odia* and *Puri Toka* showcase his strong connection to Odia culture, while his songs also tackle pressing social issues such as racism against North-East In-

dians and violence against women, striking a chord with listeners from diverse backgrounds.

According to him, what sets Hanumankind apart is his innovative approach to music videos. These visuals, he believes, play a pivotal role in drawing attention and adding depth to the music. Big Deal acknowledges that the attention Hanumankind pays to production and presentation is something that Odia artistes can learn from, especially as they look to present their culture in a way that resonates globally.

"I always try to represent my roots and culture in every song and remain authentic," he adds.

To improve the rap music climate, Big Deal stresses the importance of prioritising Odia rap in the same way that Punjabi and North-East rap artists have done with their own regional languages. He believes the Odia rap scene has the potential to make a significant impact on both the national and international music scenes, provided the right steps are taken. "Never forget your roots," he advises.

Big Deal is also planning to collaborate with

artists from other parts of Eastern India to create something unique that combines regional styles in innovative ways.

Rapper **Phoenix**, known for his contributions to the movies *Karma* and *Baida*, echoes Big Deal's sentiments, emphasising that Hanumankind's success lies in his cultural authenticity and how well he represents his roots. Like Big Deal, Phoenix is deeply involved in Odisha's rap scene and stresses the importance of integrating Odia culture and language into their work. He believes hip-hop is a

powerful tool for expression that has the ability to unite

people, regardless of language.

Phoenix, who started his career in 2016, adds that in comparison to traditional Odia music, the local audience has yet to fully embrace rap. He believes that more music makers need to focus on creating rap music to familiarize the audience with the genre and help it gain popularity.

Rap has also become a platform for discussing social and political issues, from racism to poverty and political oppression. Phoenix says rap, whether in Odia or any other language, can provide a voice for marginalised communities. He incorporates both Odia and Hindi in his songs, which helps him reach a broader audience while addressing a variety of important topics.

Despite the promising signs, there are significant challenges on the road to success.

Adarsh Mishra, better known as **Addyction**, is a veteran in Odisha's rap scene. His recent track *Samaya Chakra*, which touches on spirituality, resilience, and transformation, has garnered attention for its thematic depth. He believes that the level of literacy and understanding of rap music in Odisha is comparatively low. He also acknowledges the lack of infrastructure and support systems that artists in other states, like Hanumankind, enjoy. The team behind Hanumankind's success, particularly, has played a crucial role, and Addyction highlights that replicating this model in Odisha is currently a significant challenge.

Another issue is the lack of recognition for hip-hop in Odisha, where traditional music tends to dominate and social media trends—such as viral dance reels—often overshadow more serious music genres like rap. As Addyction observes, there is a gap in terms of the support available for regional rap artists. This creates a barrier for budding talent looking to gain visibility and make a mark.



Phoenix

Big deal

Addyction

MELBOURNE CONCERT FIASCO

Neha recounts ordeal

Playback singer Neha Kakkar, who faced a lot of criticism for arriving late at her Melbourne concert, has now issued a statement sharing what went down ahead of her performance, and what led to her late arrival, and early pack-up.

Thursday, the actress took to her Instagram, and shared a long note in which she spoke about how she and the sponsors were duped by the organisers, and despite being ghosted by the organisers, she performed her set.

She wrote, "They said she came 3 hrs (sic)n late, did they even ask once that What happened to her, what did they do to her and her band? When I spoke on stage I didn't even tell anyone what happened to us coz I didn't want anyone to get harmed coz who am I to punish anyone but now that it's come on my name, I had to speak up. So here it is. Do you all know that I performed absolutely Free for my Melbourne audience? The organisers ran away with my money and others too".

The singer said that her band was not given food, hotel and even water. Her husband and his boys went and provided them with food. She further said that the organisers stopped picking her calls; they apparently ran away from the sponsors and everyone.

She also expressed her gratitude to the people on social media who came out in her support, and painted the complete picture.

IAN S

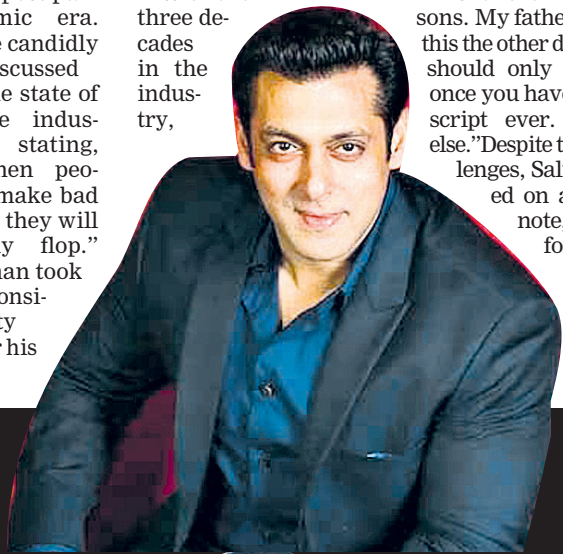


Salman owns up his 'bad' movies

Salman Khan is currently promoting his upcoming film *Sikandar* and recently opened up about various aspects of his career and the challenges facing Bollywood in the post-pandemic era. He candidly discussed the state of the industry, stating, "When people make bad films, they will surely flop." Salman took responsibility for his

own films, adding, "If my film doesn't work, it is a bad film. If it works, it's a very good film." He emphasised that stars are often to blame when films flop, noting, "The star is the one seen on the poster and in the theater. The blame would be on him too."

With over three decades in the industry,



Salman criticised the lack of quality work in Bollywood, pointing out that directors and producers are more focused on outdoing each other than creating films for the audience. "You need to make films that people can enjoy, without assuming they won't get it," he said. Salman Khan further claimed that people make films today when they have the actor's date, or funding. "Our directors and producers are making films for the wrong reasons. My father told me this the other day. A film should only be made once you have the best script ever. Nothing else." Despite these challenges, Salman ended on a hopeful note, wishing for Hindi cinema to overcome this phase.

AGENCIES

LAAPATAA LADIES

Aamir drops unseen audition tape

Superstar Aamir Khan has once again surprised fans by sharing an unseen audition tape of himself in a police uniform, casually chewing paan.

The clip from a rejected audition clip for *Laapataa Ladies* showcases a never-before-seen side of the actor. While the role didn't make it to the big screen, the video has sparked excitement among fans, who are fascinated by Aamir's effortless transformation.

In this audition clip, Aamir can be seen performing a scene from the film. In the video, the 3 Idiots actor appears as a police inspector, casually chewing a betel leaf while delivering his lines in a distinct rural accent.

The audition clip features Aamir in a police uniform, sporting

slicked-back hair and chewing paan—a signature trait of the character. Seated behind a desk, he delivers lines from the film, experimenting with different mannerisms and body language to shape the role of Shyam Manohar. The reel also includes some amusing bloopers, offering a glimpse into Aamir's creative process.

Director Kiran Rao had earlier revealed that Aamir was initially keen on portraying Shyam Manohar and even auditioned for the part. However, after watching Ravi Kishan's screen test, he felt that Kishan was a better fit and gracefully stepped aside, allowing him to take on the role.

IAN S



Patralekha's transformative experience

Actress Patralekha has opened up about the emotional journey of portraying Savitribai Phule in the upcoming biopic *Phule*.

Describing it as a transformative and deeply inspiring experience, Patralekha shared how stepping into the role of the pioneering social reformer came with immense responsibility as she strived to capture her struggles, strength and legacy on screen.

She told the news agency, "My thoughts were clear from the moment I was approached for the role. When I first spoke to Anand sir, he sent me the script, and it was quite thick. But he reassured me, saying that they would refine it further. After a year and a half, I received the final script, and it was beautifully written. It was a human drama, and I couldn't say no. From there on, it felt like a journey, and I just knew I had to be a part of it."

Patralekha also opened up about her initial reaction to being cast as Savitribai Phule, admitting that she was both excited and anxious about taking on such a significant role. "Honestly, I was immediately drawn to the character. It wasn't just about playing a historical figure; it was about telling her story, a story of courage and resilience. It was challenging, but once I stepped onto the set, the nerves disappeared." Patralekha mentioned. IAN S



Burgeronomics

SHIVAJI MOHINTA

I imagine you have \$12 in your pocket. In the **United States**, where a Big Mac costs around \$6, you can buy **two burgers**. But if you take that same \$12 to **India**, where the **Maharaja Chicken Burger** (India's Big Mac equivalent) costs approximately ₹250, and the exchange rate is ₹86 per USD, your \$12 converts to ₹1032—enough to buy 4 burgers!

So, what does this mean?

It tells us that one U.S. dollar buys more in India than in the U.S., implying that the **Indian Rupee (INR)** is **undervalued** in purchasing power terms. This fun yet insightful concept is measured by the **Big Mac Index (BMI)**, introduced by The Economist in 1986 to compare **Purchasing Power Parity (PPP)** across different countries. If 1 Dollar buys more in one country then it is said to have more purchasing or buying power.

Now let's evaluate the Big Mac Index based on Big Mac Prices: India vs. United States

■ **United States:** A Big Mac costs \$5.69 (excluding sales tax).

■ **India:** The Chicken Maharaja Mac is priced at ₹247 (excluding GST & other charges).

■ **Exchange rate (March 24, 2025):** ₹86 per USD

Big Mac Index Formula:

Big Mac Index = (Implied Exchange Rate / Actual Exchange Rate) * 100

Implied Exchange Rate = Price of Big Mac in India (INR) / Price of Big Mac in US (USD)

WHAT THE BIG MAC INDEX REVEALS ABOUT YOUR WALLET POWER!

$247/5.69=43.4$
 $BMI=(43.4/86-1)*100$ which is -49.53%

Interpretation:

The Indian Rupee is undervalued by approximately 50% against the U.S. Dollar.

In simple terms, based on burger prices, the INR should be ₹43.4 per USD instead of ₹86 if purchasing power were equal. In that case, both the currencies are equally valued, in perfect balance! As per BMI, the Indian currency is undervalued & therefore 12 USD can buy 4 Burgers in India instead of 2 in USA

Where is the Big Mac Most Expensive?

Some countries pay more for a Big Mac than in the U.S., indicating that their currencies may be **overvalued** relative to the U.S. dollar. Those

countries are as below:

Switzerland (\$8.07)
Norway (\$6.92)
Uruguay (\$6.86)
Sweden (\$5.82)
Euro Area (\$5.80)

These higher prices suggest that currencies in these countries are **stronger**, meaning their residents **pay more** for the same burger than Americans.

Is the Big Mac Index Always Right?

The Big Mac Index is a fun way to compare global prices, but it has **limitations**:

- It does not account for **labour costs, ingredient sourcing, or local demand**.
- It ignores **taxes and trade restrictions** that affect pricing.
- Some countries **adjust Big Mac pricing** based on market strategies & affordability.

While the Big Mac Index is a great way to spark economic discussions, real exchange rates depend on broader factors like inflation, interest rates, and trade policies. Think of it as a fun reality check, not a serious yardstick!

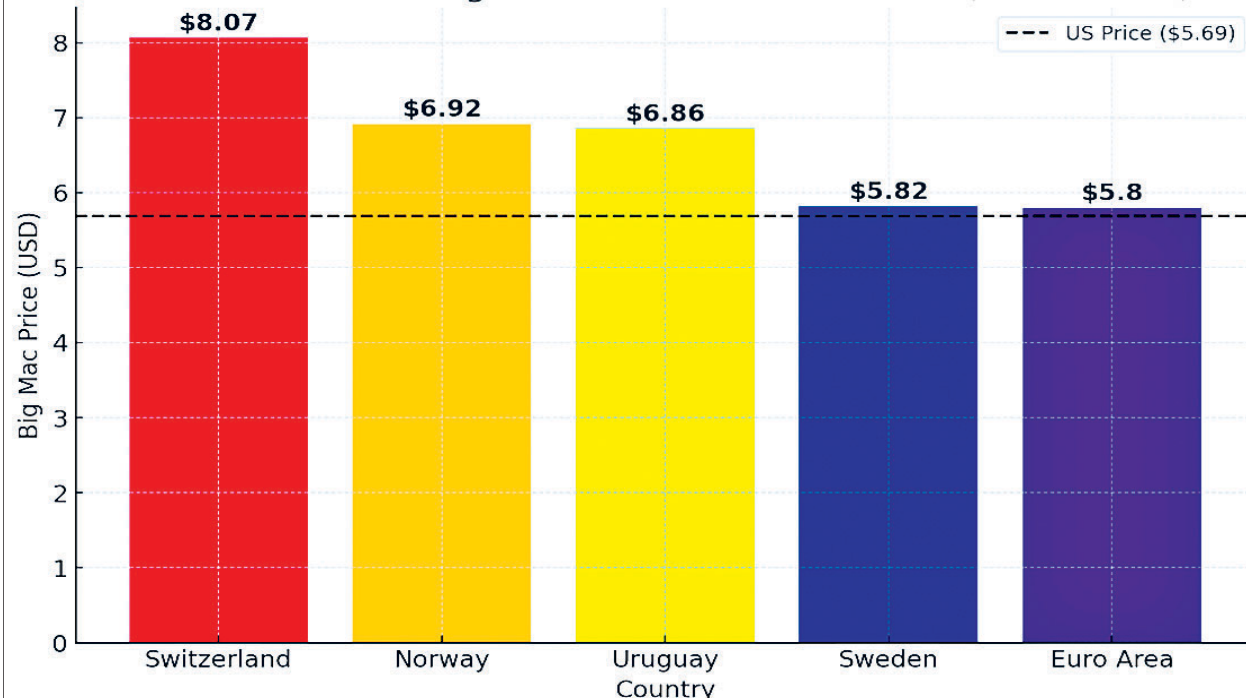
Bite Size

Next time you travel, check the price of a Big Mac—it might just tell you your wallet power & Bite size!

The author is a Business Consultant



Countries Where Big Mac is Costlier than the US (March 2025)



Dipshikha



PHOTO : KESHAB

WANT TO BECOME A MODEL?
Send us your photographs at
features.orissapost@gmail.com