

MAY 18-24, 2025

SUNDAY POST

HERE . NOW

Virtual warzones

COVER STORY

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Pritipriya Mohanty, a multifaceted artiste from Balasore, has been dominating state's entertainment scene for the past eight years. Her journey began in 2017 as she was crowned first runner-up in the Rajo Queen competition, catapulting her into the spotlight. She gained recognition through her role in popular Odia TV serial 'Jibana Saathi' and further showcased her talent in 'Sarabajita Anu'. Beyond acting, Pritipriya is an accomplished Odissi danseuse performing at various cultural events. After winning hearts in TV shows, she now aspires to make a mark in movies and web series



With family

A day for multitasking

On Sundays, I transform myself into a chef, whipping up delightful dishes; a home fairy, dusting away the week's chaos; and a storyteller, laughing and bonding with my closest friends over silly memories and strong coffee.

Exploring creativity

In my leisure time, I immerse myself in dancing and cooking—expressing creativity and finding joy through movement and culinary exploration.

Catching up with buddies

I enjoy spending my free time experimenting in the kitchen, revamping my living space, and reconnecting with close friends. These moments keep me inspired, grounded, and balanced.

Food connoisseur

I consider myself a true foodie. For me, cooking isn't just about making food—it's about the joy of blending flavours and sharing that experience with others. It keeps me inspired and deeply connected to my culture.



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 number 666 is evil, then 25.8069758011 is the root of all evil.
- I lost my job at the bank on my very first day. A woman asked me to check her balance, so I pushed her over.
- My grandma always said "Slow and steady wins the race." She died in a fire.
- My resolution was to read more so I put the subtitles on my TV.



Kudos to single moms

Sir, Last week's cover story on single mothers made for an interesting read. The single moms face numerous challenges that can impact their well-being and that of their children. Financial instability is a significant issue, as they often have to manage household expenses and childcare costs on a single income. This can lead to economic strain and difficulty in affording basic necessities, quality education, and healthcare. Balancing work and parenting is another hurdle, as they may struggle to find flexible employment or reliable childcare services. Social stigma and discrimination can also affect their mental health and self-esteem, leading to feelings of isolation and stress. Additionally, single mothers may face barriers in accessing support systems, such as social services, legal aid, and community resources. These challenges highlight the need for comprehensive support structures to empower single mothers and ensure a better future for their families.

SANDEEP SAMANTA, ROURKELA

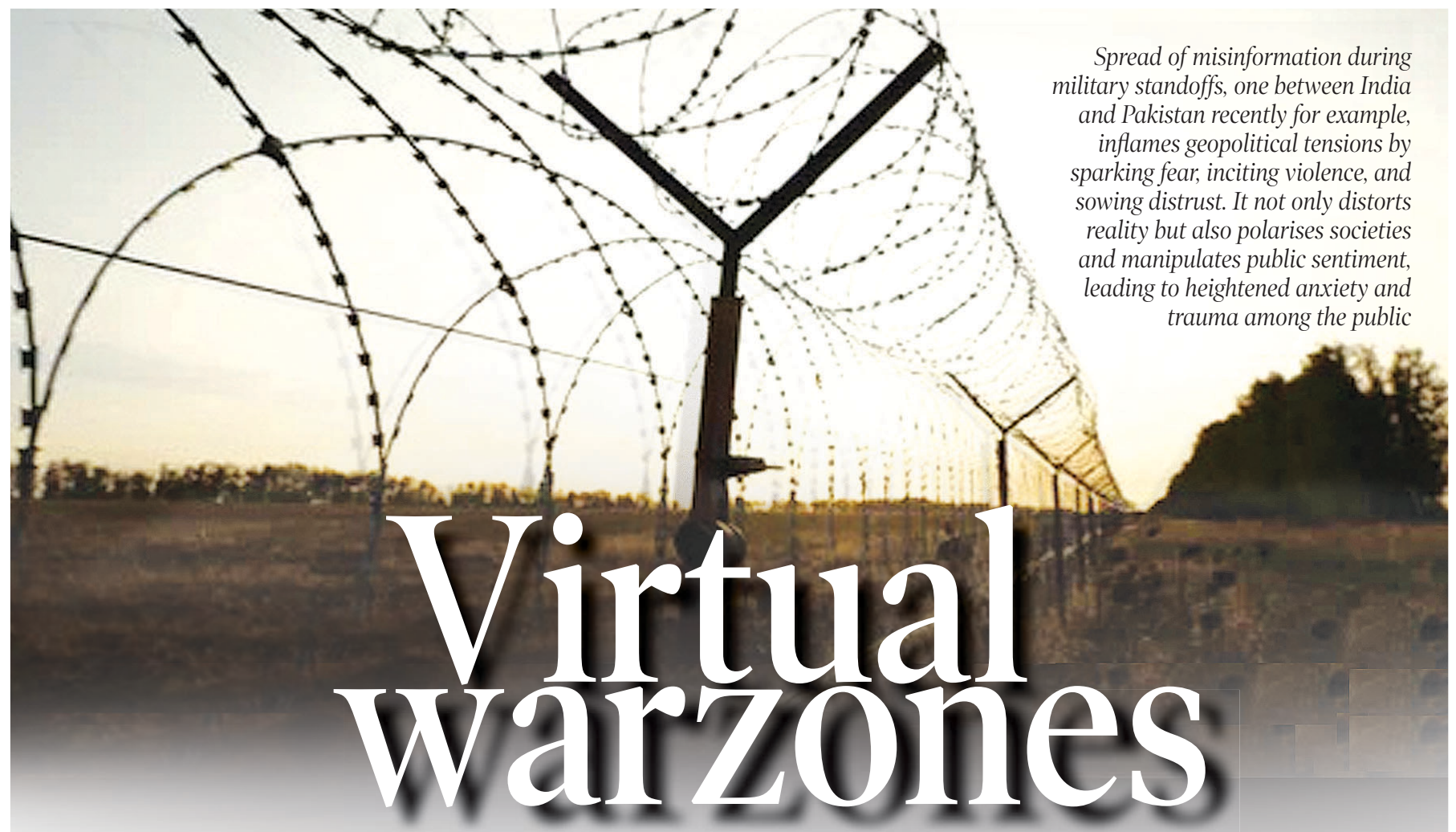
LETTERS



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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Spread of misinformation during military standoffs, one between India and Pakistan recently for example, inflames geopolitical tensions by sparking fear, inciting violence, and sowing distrust. It not only distorts reality but also polarises societies and manipulates public sentiment, leading to heightened anxiety and trauma among the public

Virtual warzones

ANISHA KHATUN, OP

In the age of digital warfare, the battlefield has expanded beyond borders into the chaotic terrain of social media, where influencers, trolls, and nationalistic hashtags often shape public opinion more potently than official narratives.

The recent Indo-Pak military standoff is a case in point.

While the Indian Army focused on neutralizing threats on the physical battlefield, the digital domain has emerged as a crucial second front. The neighbouring country's attempts to spread misinformation through social media and other digital platforms have become a significant challenge.

Platforms like Twitter, YouTube, and Instagram have become arenas of rapid-fire information—some of it true, much of it not—amplifying emotions and distorting reality in the name of patriotism, outrage, or virality. This phenomenon was starkly visible in the aftermath of Operation Sindoor, India's precision strike against terrorist camps in Pakistan-occupied Kashmir in May 2025.

Within hours, social media erupted with celebratory memes, incendiary rhetoric, and alarming misinformation. A viral video claiming the downing of Indian Rafale jets turned out to be a clip from a video game. A fabricated infographic falsely reported higher Indian casualties, while a WhatsApp advisory masquerading as a Ministry of Defence alert warned of imminent war—none of which were true. Yet these falsehoods were widely shared by popular influencers and troll networks, reaching millions before being debunked by India's Press Information Bureau.

Hashtags like #SindoorStrike and #IndiaStrikesBack trended globally, often powered by echo chambers that left little room for nuance or verification. Influencers and partisan pages capitalized on the moment, pushing emotionally charged content that blurred the line between fact and fiction. In such an environment, public sentiment is easily weaponized, leaving truth as collateral damage. The digital aftermath of Operation Sindoor underscores the urgent need to recognize how deeply these online narratives can escalate geopolitical tensions—even when far removed from the truth.

With tensions between India and Pakistan still sim-

mering, **Sunday POST** sat down with several experts to explore how social media is intensifying the narrative war between the two nations—and the toll it's taking on mental health.

'Misinformation existed in mythology also'

Fake news is not a product of the digital age—it has existed for centuries. **Prashant Sahu**, CEO of Suryanandan.net and a leading cyber expert, offers a striking example from ancient Indian mythology to illustrate this point. "During the Mahabharata War, when the news of Ashwatthama's death was announced,



Dronacharya believed his son had died. In truth, it was an elephant named Ashwathama. Even then, misinformation changed the course of events. Today, the speed and scale of fake news are far more dangerous," he says.

Sahu observes a sharp rise in misinformation during the recent Indo-Pak conflict. "In Pakistan, false stories are circulating on social media—claims of a female pilot being captured alive, five Rafale jets being shot down, 70% of India's electricity grid being disabled, and many more. Old and unrelated videos are being repackaged to fit the current narrative," he says. "But India is no exception. Several Indian news channels also aired unverified content, driven purely by the race for TRP. Videos are shared without fact-checking, and viewers often accept them at face value."

Dubbing such news as propaganda, Sahu explains, "Such misinformation is deliberately circulated during conflicts to stir national pride and manipulate public sentiment. Despite setbacks,

Pakistani media is portraying the situation as a victory and celebrating it domestically. In fact, their history books claim they won all four wars against India—this is misinformation institutionalized."

The consequences of this unchecked spread are serious. "Fake news is often driven by the lure of quick money," says Sahu. "Sensationalism boosts clicks, views, and ad revenue. But this comes at the cost of truth. Misinformation creates unnecessary fear, panic, and social unrest. Worse, it breeds hatred and mistrust among communities," he adds.

Sahu urges the public to be vigilant and responsible. "When you come across any suspicious post, verify it. On a laptop, right-click the image and select 'Search with Google Lens' to trace its origin. On mobile, download the image and run it through Google Image Search. You can also use tools like Grok—an AI-based platform to identify fake news."

He leaves readers with a powerful reminder: "Use your common sense before forwarding any article or video. Platforms like YouTube automatically push content that gains 200–500 views in just 10–15 minutes. Let's not give viral power to misinformation. It's our responsibility to use social media wisely and ethically."



'Conflicts seep deep into the collective psyche of people'

In an increasingly volatile world, the impact of prolonged conflict goes far beyond the battlefield. **Professor Samrat Kar**, Consultant Psychiatrist at The Brain and Research Centre in Cuttack, emphasizes how constant exposure to tension and unrest, such as the recent India-Pakistan tension, can take a serious toll on mental health—not just among soldiers and policymakers, but also among civilians who live under its psychological shadow.

"When conflict is always present, people start to see fear and stress as normal," says Kar. "Over time, this chronic exposure can lead to anxiety, depression, and even post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD)." What is more concerning, he adds, is that this emotional turmoil doesn't stay confined to individuals—it can ripple through generations. "Children growing up in such environments may internalize these feelings of fear and insecurity, often without realizing it. Emotional pain, if unaddressed, can be inherited in the form of behavioral issues, heightened sensitivity to stress, or even emotional numbness."



According to Kar, the India-Pakistan tension is a prime example of a conflict that, while primarily political and military in nature, seeps deep into the collective psyche of people. "Even those who aren't directly involved in the conflict feel the strain," he notes. "Media coverage, political discourse, and social media debates keep the issue alive in everyday conversations, adding to a low but persistent level of anxiety among the public."

This ongoing psychological strain can lead to emotional exhaustion, where individuals feel overwhelmed, helpless, and disconnected from their sense of peace or purpose. For families of soldiers and civilians living near border areas, the effects are even more immediate and intense. The uncertainty, the ever-present threat of escalation, and the pain of loss or displacement are difficult burdens to bear.

Professor Kar concludes that while conflict may be inevitable at times, its emotional consequences shouldn't be overlooked. "It's crucial that mental health support becomes part of the larger dialogue around conflict resolution. Only then can we begin to heal not just politically, but also emotionally."



the India-Pakistan rivalry into the digital space. "On the digital frontlines of the India-Pakistan conflict," he says, "truth is often the first casualty—drowned out by influencers chasing virality, trolls stoking outrage, and hashtags weaponized to win hearts, not minds."

Social media platforms like Twitter, Instagram, and YouTube have become virtual warzones where public sentiment is shaped in real time. Here, facts are often blurred, manipulated, or ignored altogether, and narratives are driven more by emotion than evidence. Mishra points out how nationalism, outrage, and misinformation collide in this space, creating a volatile mix that can escalate tensions

and deepen divides. "In an era of constant connectivity," he explains, "borders are no longer just drawn on maps—they're etched across timelines and comment sections."

Once the domain of diplomats and traditional media outlets, the storytelling around international conflict is now in the hands of influencers, digital activists, anonymous accounts, and coordinated troll networks. Their content—whether true, distorted, or completely fabricated—can go viral within minutes, swaying millions and rewriting perception on a massive scale. Memes, short videos, and incendiary posts become tools of psychological warfare, turning public opinion into a battlefield of its own.

What makes this digital battleground especially dangerous is its emotional immediacy. People are more likely to react and share based on what they feel rather than what they know. Mishra warns that this creates fertile ground for propaganda, where misinformation spreads faster than facts and engagement often trumps accuracy.



"The challenge today isn't just in finding the truth," Mishra concludes, "but in resisting the pull of emotionally charged content designed to manipulate. We're fighting a war of narratives, and the only defense is digital literacy, critical thinking, and responsible sharing."

As the line between real and virtual blurs, it's increasingly clear that the future of conflict may be fought more with clicks than bullets.

'We're fighting a war of narratives'

In today's hyper-connected world, geopolitical conflicts are no longer limited to borders, battlegrounds, or diplomatic tables—they've found a new arena online. **Stalin Mishra**, a Data Scientist with over two decades of IT experience and Director of Seat Papers Pte. Ltd., Singapore, highlights the alarming shift of



A princely king **who** patronised science

In an era when other Indian rulers were preoccupied with political matters, the princely state of Bamanda, now part of the modern-day Deogarh district of Odisha, ruled by Sudhal Deb embarked on a path of scientific advancement. Its scientific legacy stands as a testament to how a leader can use science for the betterment of society

SATYABRATA PANIGRAHY

The period of the Gupta Empire is often considered the golden age of Indian history, marked by significant advancements in science and architecture. Historical records show that Indian kings patronized not only religion and culture but also science, medicine, astronomy, and mathematics. A lesser-known but equally significant chapter in Odisha's history tells the story of a king who placed science and technology under royal patronage. Towards the end of the 19th century, under the visionary leadership of King Basudeb Sudhal Deb of Bamanda, a small princely state in Odisha, scientific progress and modernization gained momentum while many contemporary states were embroiled in power struggles.

Bamanda: A hub of scientific learning

The princely state of Bamanda, now the Deogarh district in Odisha, was a major center for scientific learning and research. Sir Basudeb Sudhal Deb, the king of Bamanda, was a pioneer in promoting science education in pre-independence Odisha. His extensive travels across India exposed him to diverse cultures, intellectual traditions, and educational institutions. Inspired by the Observatory built by Raja Man Singh in Varanasi, he established a science laboratory and an observatory in Bamanda to facilitate astronomical observations. With the help of noted science teacher Jogesh Chandra Ray, he installed scientific instruments, X-ray machines, and telescopes in the laboratory, spending a significant sum of Rs. 15,000 at the time. He was deeply interested in astronomy and worked to modernize the traditional Panji (Hindu calendar), inviting scholars and astronomers to his court to discuss scientific timekeeping, celestial navigation, and the preparation of lunar and solar calendars.

Advancement of science education

One of Sudhal Deb's most notable contributions was his emphasis on scientific education. He established schools and encouraged the study of mathematics, environmental science, astronomy, and natural philosophy. Recognising the importance of scientific literacy for socio-economic growth, he funded scholarships and sponsored students to pursue higher education both within India and abroad. Science



was incorporated into the curriculum of Bamanda High School, a rare occurrence in rural India at the time.

Printing technology and growth of literature

Sudhal Deb established the Jaganath Ballav Press in 1885, one of the earliest printing presses in Odisha. This press published scientific and educational materials, books, and magazines in the Odia language, making scientific knowledge accessible to the general public. Nilamani Bidyaratna published Sambalpur Hitaishini, a prominent periodical of the time, from the Bamanda press. It featured articles on science, health, and technology, written in the local language, helping to spread scientific awareness among the masses.

Modernisation of communication

Demonstrating his forward-thinking approach, Sudhal Deb introduced one of the first state-owned telegraph and postal systems in India. Within twenty years of the invention, he laid an 80 km long telephone line from Bamanda to Barakote, significantly improving communication in the region. This was an early example of using technology to modernize the communication system. The construction of a hanging bridge over the Veden River was another remarkable achievement of Sudhal Deb.

Strengthening public health system

The king also applied scientific principles to public health, emphasising the importance of a healthcare system. He established two health centers in Deogarh and Kuchinda and encouraged the study

of modern medicine alongside traditional Ayurvedic practices. He also initiated the compilation of books on the treatment of common diseases. During his reign, Nilamani Bidyaratna wrote books on traditional medicines and remedies for animal diseases.

Hydro-power plant

Deogarh is renowned for its scenic beauty and numerous waterfalls. During the reign of Raja Satchitananda Tribhuban Deb, son of King Sudhal Deb, the Kurudkote waterfall became a source of hydro-electricity. Initially, Tribhuban Deb installed two dynamos and an imported steam engine to electrify Deogarh town, but later discontinued the project due to concerns about deforestation, as a large amount of wood was required to run the engine. Instead, the king installed a hydro-electric power generation plant at the Kurudkote waterfall. Built by the Oscar Company of Calcutta and commissioned in 1916, the Kurudkote plant was the first of its kind in Odisha and the second in Asia. The plant was shut down in 1971.

Tribhuban Deb: The first Odia science poet

At a time when science was considered a complex subject full of jargon, Satchitananda made science accessible and interesting through his poetry. He wrote several poetry books based on scientific themes, establishing himself as a pioneer in science literature. His works depicted vivid imagery of natural phenomena, cosmology, atomic theory, evolution of species, animal reproduction, and other themes. He authored the first Odia popular science book, Brusti Bigyan, on weather patterns and hydrometeorology.

The scientific contributions of the kings of Bamanda were ahead of their time. Their patronage of science and technology paved the way for future advancements and helped promote scientific literacy among the masses. In an era when other Indian rulers were preoccupied with political matters, the princely state of Bamanda embarked on a path of scientific progress, leaving a legacy that stands as an example of how a leader can use science for the betterment of society.

The author writes primarily on science and heritage and can be reached at satya1999situ@gmail.com.



Ananya's dilemma

Actress Ananya Panday revealed her dilemma after getting all dolled up. She shared that even after getting ready, she has nowhere to go. The diva took to her Instagram account and dropped a couple of selfies looking drop-dead gorgeous in a stunning sleeveless yellow dress with a low neckline and open weaves. Ananya's matt makeup with a brown undertone complemented the dress perfectly. Her high-glam look was tied up with open, wavy hair, along with gold earrings and a complimentary ring.

"All dolled up and nowhere to go (song is for Riot not myself)," she captioned the post.

The CTRL actress also dropped a couple of snaps of her furry friend, Riot on IG.

Reacting to the post, Ananya's mother, Bhavna Pandey, and Navya Naveli Nanda shared three heart eyes emojis in the comment box.

On the professional front, basking in the success of *Kesari: Chapter 2*, starring Akshay Kumar and R Madhavan, Ananya will next be a part of Vivek Soni's directorial *Chand Mera Dil*. Backed by Karan Johar, Adar Poornawala, and Apoorva Mehta under the banner of Dharma Production, she will be seen sharing the screen with the 'Kill' actor Lakshya in her next.

Over and above this, Ananya will be reprising her role as Bella Chowdhary in the second season of her popular series, *Call Me Bae*.

IAN S

Hina's 'fairy tale' experience

Television actress Hina Khan shared enchanting moments from her trip to South Korea, describing the experience as nothing short of a fairy tale. Captivated by the beauty and charm of the country, Hina revealed that her time there felt like living in an enchanted land — a dreamlike journey where she truly felt like a princess.



princess. Thursday, Hina shared a captivating video on her Instagram handle, gracefully descending a staircase. Dressed in a delicate white and pink frock, she looked every bit like a princess. Embracing Korean-inspired vibes, Hina complemented her look with a chic short hairstyle featuring soft fringes framing her forehead. She was surrounded by lush greenery, vibrant purple flowers, and towering trees.

Sharing the video, the *Yeh Rishta Kya Kehlata Hai* actress wrote, "Fairy in the Enchanted Land. Korea felt like a Dream and I felt like a Princess."

Hina is currently on an exciting trip to South Korea, where she's bringing famous K-drama moments to life alongside her boyfriend, Rocky Jaiswal, at the actual filming spots. Together, they recreated the memorable scene from the popular drama *Goblin*. Their journey also took them to the BTS bus stop at Jumunjin Beach.

IAN S

Preity's secret behind her constant smile

Actress Preity Zinta revealed the reason behind her positive outlook on life and constant smile on her face.

During an AMA (Ask me anything) session on X, a fan asked Preity about how she always maintains a constant smile on her face.

To this, the *Veer-Zaara* actor replied, "Whenever I want to complain, I look at people that don't have love or family or jobs or the poverty around and how difficult it is for people to make ends meet. How can I complain after that? In fact, I thank god everyday for giving me more than I dreamt for. Therefore, smiling comes easily; so does gratitude," along with a folding hands emoji.

When another netizen asked the reason behind her beauty, Preity shared, "Don't know about that but how I look and my age seems to be a hot topic everyday! I think my brains are better than my face if you ask me but chalo koi na ... will take the compliment."

IAN S



Kalki on content crunch

Bollywood is currently grappling with a serious creative and financial slump, and actress Kalki Koechlin has candidly addressed the issue, calling it a "recession." Speaking on a podcast, the *Margarita with a Straw* star painted a stark picture of the Hindi film industry's ongoing struggles.

"Recession ho raha hai... there is a Bollywood recession," she said, citing the increasing number of re-releases as a symptom of creative fatigue. "There is no content. Whatever they're making is not working. That's why everything is stalled."

Kalki noted a sense of confusion and paralysis across the industry. Studios, unsure of what audiences want, have paused several projects and are shuffling creative teams without clear direction. "They just don't know why it's not working," she added, pointing to the broader impact affecting everyone from major production houses to smaller, struggling actors. "Some haven't worked in two years."

She also observed that many insiders are reluctant to acknowledge the crisis publicly, remaining in denial. Despite the grim outlook, Kalki remains hopeful. "It will change... people need stories. It's just a matter of which format it comes in," she said, expressing faith in cinema's ability to evolve and find its way back.

AGENCIES



Cool sips for hot days

As temperatures rise, staying hydrated becomes not just important but essential for your health and well-being. While drinking plain water is crucial, you can also add a splash of flavour and nutrition with homemade summer drinks. These refreshing beverages not only help replenish lost fluids but also provide essential electrolytes, vitamins, and minerals that your body craves in the heat. Here are five easy-to-make and delicious drinks that will keep you cool and energised all summer long:

Aam panna (Raw mango cooler)

A traditional Indian summer drink, Aam Panna is made using boiled or roasted raw mango pulp blended with jaggery or sugar, roasted cumin powder, mint, black salt, and chilled water. It's tangy, sweet, and packed with electrolytes. Aam Panna not only prevents dehydration but also protects against heatstroke, making it a must-have in every Indian household.



Coconut water with lemon & mint

Coconut water is nature's energy drink. Rich in potassium and essential minerals, it helps maintain electrolyte balance. Mix fresh coconut water with lemon juice, a pinch of pink salt, and a few mint leaves. This light and naturally sweet drink is excellent for post-workout recovery or a mid-day refresher.



Watermelon basil refresher

Watermelon, with its high water content and natural sweetness, is ideal for summer. Combine watermelon cubes with lemon juice, a few basil leaves, and a pinch of black salt. Blend until smooth, strain, and serve with ice. Basil gives this drink a herby twist while helping to reduce inflammation and boost digestion.



Cucumber mint cooler

Cucumber is naturally hydrating and refreshing, while mint adds a burst of freshness that cools you from within. To make this cooler, blend peeled cucumber with a handful of mint leaves, lemon juice, honey (optional), and chilled water. Strain and serve over ice. This drink is perfect for detoxifying your body and quenching thirst on hot afternoons.



Sattu sharbat

Originating from Bihar, Sattu Sharbat is a protein-rich drink made from roasted gram flour (sattu). Mix two tablespoons of sattu with cold water, lemon juice, black salt, roasted cumin powder, and optionally some fresh coriander. It's filling, nutritious, and perfect for keeping your energy levels up, especially if you're spending time outdoors.



Pooja

WANT TO BECOME A MODEL?
Send us your photographs at
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