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SUNDAY POST

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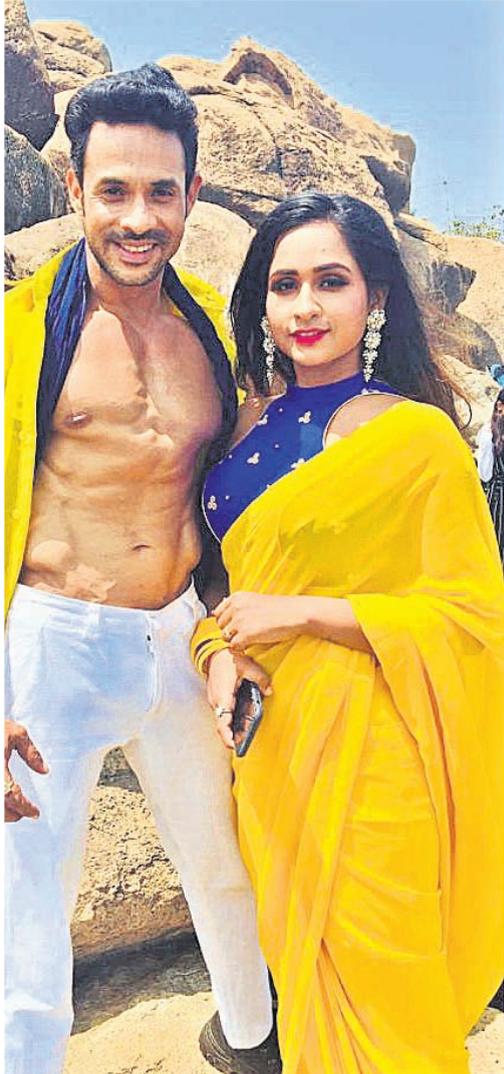
To Sir, With Love

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COVER STORY



Popular anchor and actress Ankita Mohanty who was the first runner up in Opera Miss India Global -2019 loves to learn something new on her non-working Sundays.



With co-artiste Debashis

Creative learner

I try to learn something new on Sundays if I don't have any shooting assignments.

Avid plant lover

I love all types of plants and spend generously to look after them. I have a small garden on my terrace. I often feel that gardening helps me relax when I am under stress.

Passionate cook

Tasty food is not only one of my weaknesses, I also love to treat my family and friends with sumptuous meals. Sundays offer me opportunities to showcase my culinary skills.



On her terrace garden

Movie buff

I enjoy watching movies, south Indian films in particular, on non-working Sundays. Good movies always works as energy booster. I manage to bust stress after watching my favourite movie.



CHAITALI SHOME, OP

MAINTAIN DECENCY

Sir, Almost 2 years back I had written to your newspaper requesting not to post semi-nude pictures of female actors, at least not on the front page. You had even published my letter (Attaching the paper clip for your perusal) and somehow I felt that my request was entertained. But recently I found the old trend coming back. I have young daughters who find it very distasteful and fold the newspaper to avoid others gazing at the pics. As the youth today is searching for new direction, positive vibes, they are more goal-oriented than the previous generation, I hope my request will be taken note of. I also express my heartfelt thanks for delivering news at doorsteps during this COVID era.

VP ACHARYA, BHUBANESWAR

COPING WITH LIFE MATTERS

Sir, Given the hectic life, work pressure and failures in conjugal and professional spheres, it is often found that people fall into depression. When it becomes chronic, the victim takes to the suicide course, as we read in newspapers almost every day. There are several other factors responsible for suicidal tendencies among people, particularly among the young generation. The cover story *Life worth living* in The **Sunday POST** is very relevant. I found it worthwhile at a time when many youngsters have developed a negative attitude towards life. Living life is always fraught with challenges and hurdles. But life can be coped with positivism to rise above all negativity.

PREETIPADMA ROUT, BHUBANESWAR

LETTERS



A WORD FOR READERS

Sunday POST is serving a platter of delectable fare every week, or so we hope. We want readers to interact with us. Please send in your opinions, queries, comments and contributions to features.orissapost@gmail.com
B-15, Industrial Estate, Rasulgarh, Bhubaneswar - 751010, Orissa.
Phone (0674) 2549982, 2549948

Instead of seeking stardom in Bombay, NSDian Ajit Das chose to deal with the raw talents back home and make them shine on state's culture firmament.



To Sir, With Love

BIJAY MANDAL, OP

Not too many people who get seats in the National School of Drama (NSD), one of world's finest theatre training institutions, can ignore the lure of getting a break in films or at least in national television. However, legendary artiste Ajit Das, who by a quirk of fate succumbed to COVID-19 last week leaving lakhs of fans in a state of shock, had other things in mind.

Actors Raj Babbar and Ajit Vachani, among his close buddies from NSD, even booked a train ticket for him to shift to Bombay in 1976. Ajit was tall, fair and had an urbane look. After undergoing rigorous training under hard task master like Ebrahim Alkazi at NSD, he could easily have been the next big name from Odisha after Sadhu Meher in the Hindi film industry. But he preferred not to sever tie with his routes.

Instead of seeking stardom in Bombay, he chose to mould the raw talents back home and make them shine on state's culture firmament.

"My students, who are like my children, are across all platforms – films, TV serials, Jatras. I really couldn't have asked for more," he would often take pride while speaking about his decision to stay back. In a career spanning 45 years, Ajit had acted in more than 60 films and directed over a hundred dramas but his passion lied in theatre and grooming generations of actors. "The love and respect of the fraternity would remain my lifetime earnings,"

he would say.

He along with actor Bijay Mohanty, who almost compelled him to join NSD, are said to be the founder members of Utkal Sangeet Mahavidyalay (USM)'s Drama department which has produced a galaxy of stars of the likes of Hara Patnaik, Minaketan, Raimohan, Dhira Mallick, Antaryami Panda, Ashrumochan Mohanty, Harihar Mohapatra, Pragyan Ranjan Khatua to name but a few. While the fans were yet to come to terms with the loss of Bijay Mohanty, the sudden demise of the *Hakimbabu* actor came as a rude shock to them. Though Ajit's students, about 20 years back, had formed a theatre troupe named Abhinaya Jagruti Institute of Theatre (AJIT) to celebrate the birthday of their favourite

Guru, he remained an institution in himself all his life.

Here is what some of his celebrated students had to say about the role Ajit played in their life and career.

Director, scenographer and theatre academican Satyabrata Rout is a faculty member of the NSD. The winner of Kendra Sangeet Natak Akademi award said, Ajit Sir and his wife Maya Das groomed him at a time when he was no body in the medium of theatre.

"It was like a dream for me to stay with them, get their love and blessings and learn theatre from a Guru like him. I can proudly say, what I am today is because of these two-great souls. I know, I cannot pay back their debts in this life," said Rout.



Ajit Das explaining scenes to his students during a rehearsal session



A proud teacher surrounded by his students in the 1990s after the staging of play *Sabahakamane*

that he was an ocean and we have managed to collect a few drops of water from that ocean.”

Ajit Das was a man of discipline and all students would admit that taking admission in Utkal Sangeet Mahavidyalay was like joining the Indian Army as long as he was at the helm, said eminent actor Ashrumochan Mohanty.

“Bijay Mohanty was certainly one of the founders of drama department, but it was Ajit Sir who nurtured it like a child and groomed hundreds of artistes under this roof. Sir was a great aficionado of Odishan art and culture and tried to inject all ingredients in his students that require to get success in life. He was not finished yet and had a long to-do list which remained incomplete,” added Ashru.

Chhabinani actor Aman, a member of AJIT troupe, was at a loss for words when asked about his Guru.

“It is believed that Sir had the uncanny ability to spot talents. He doesn’t encourage a student unless he sees that rare sparks in him/her. A few years back, I was a nobody in the theatre circuit of Bhubaneswar. But he cast me as the lead in *Jayadeva Geetagovindam* without having a second thought. I was under tremendous pressure. At the beginning, I developed cold feet and even failed to live up to the expectation of a guru like him. But he reposed his faith in me and extracted the best. No one can repay the debts of a real Guru and I am no exception.”

Like many other disciples, Aman too believes that he would have remained just a face in the crowd had he not been mentored by his Guru Ajit Das.



With Satyabrata Rout

Popular actor Raimohan Parida, known for his villainous roles in films and jatras, also owes his supreme success in movies to Ajit Das.

“If today I boast of having more than a hundred films in my filmography, all credit goes to Ajit Sir. I can proudly say that he has built me brick by brick. He was the inspiration behind my joining USM. He was a complete artiste for me – actor, director, stage and light designer, music expert. There are many drama directors in Odisha but none catch match his stature and charisma. He was the banyan tree for all of us. On many occasions, he has spent from his pocket to feed his students. You won’t find any guru like him. We became

orphan in his absence,” said Raimohan.

Odisha Sangeet Natak Akademi award winning artiste Antaryami Panda feels much the same saying he has lost his father yet again after the death of Asim Basu and Bijay Mishra.

“Bijay Mishra picked me up from my village in Balasore and handed over to Ajit Sir. While Dada (Asim Basu) took care of my livelihood, Ajit Sir ensured that I acquired the skill to stand on my own feet. I have been an integral part of all his productions. He is the one who has made me what I am today. We all have become poorer with his departure,” added Panda in choked voice.

Eminent actor Choudhury Bikash Das, one of the favourite students of Ajit Das who essayed many crucial characters in his classic plays, said, “He was a strict disciplinarian when it comes to training but was extremely soft at heart. His residence was like a *gurukul* to all his students. I couldn’t have established myself as an actor without his teachings.

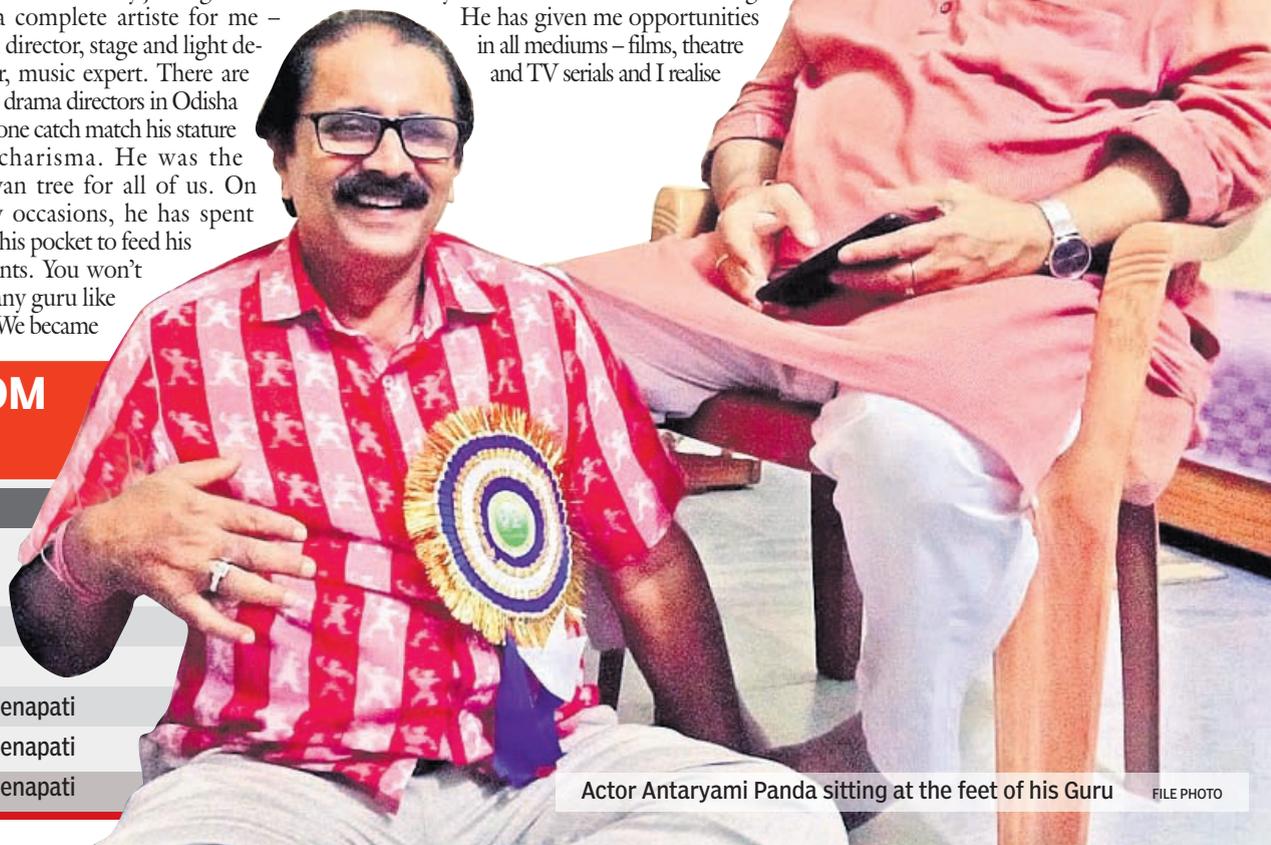
He has given me opportunities in all mediums – films, theatre and TV serials and I realise



Just married!

AJIT'S ADAPTATIONS FROM LITERARY CLASSICS

NOVEL	AUTHOR
Budha Sankhari	Kantakabi Laxmikanta Mohapatra
Mala Janha	Upendra Kishore Das
Shasti	Kanhu Charan Mohanty
Chha Mana Atha Gunth	Vyasa Kabi Fakir Mohan Senapati
Mamu	Vyasa Kabi Fakir Mohan Senapati
Revati	Vyasa Kabi Fakir Mohan Senapati



Actor Antaryami Panda sitting at the feet of his Guru FILE PHOTO



Reflections and ruminations

WHEN THE AGEING PARENTS BECOME WHEELCHAIR-BOUND OR BEDRIDDEN, CHILDREN'S VISIT TO THEM, THOUGH FOR SHORT SPELLS, WORKS AS ENERGY BOOSTERS AMIDST THEIR LONELINESS AND INFIRMITY

K J RAO

The old age rumination is a steady pointer of a slow seeping weakness and ill health in human beings and immunity sliding down consistently, leading to a state of dependence or helplessness of a child under parental care.

What the old parents need is kindness, sympathy and compassion from their children. The parents, as per their might, take all possible care to bring their children up with proper education and get them settled at jobs, married off, thus getting to locations and cities wherever opportunities lead them. The gradual disintegration of the joint family system has left scores of old parents in the lurch. They are often left uncared for and, at times, deprived of due concern and nourishment. Though the children fully feel and are accountable, they, by virtue of the education and professional skills, have held positions far away from homes and parents. It is not easy on their parts to leave their jobs or go on long leaves and return to their parents to take care of them. It is set as a natural process. Since ages, children have been parting from their parents to settle with their own families.

Contextually, Khalil Gibran's lines are apt to be remembered, 'Children come through you/But they do not belong to you.' The plight of the old parents is quite an unimaginable and unsolvable saga as to who is to take care of them in their old age, frailty and infirmity. Needless to say, the old parents are mostly reluctant to join their children, for longer spells, thrusting their unwanted intrusion and presence among their children as a breach of freedom and privacy on either side. From time to time, a short stay they spend that suits them when they are able to travel by air or rail. Occasionally, for lack of the feasibility and facility the parents are helplessly left to fend for themselves at their homes and villages.

It is quite natural that our parents, too, left their parents in the course of time and started having their own families with children, so are the cases with sons and daughters in the present times and the times to

follow. The idea of independence and privacy plays a pivotal role in a nuclear family, leading to the disintegration of the joint family structure and the influence of the modern values. Sons and daughters should not be held accountable as their decision of taking care or leaving their parents depend primarily on their spouses with whom they live and sometimes give in for a harmonious life with their children. These contingencies may not happen in all cases of the old parents while in most cases they undergo the trials, adversity and grief they have to live with. A British proverb, in this regard, should be recalled, 'A son is a son until he gets his wife/Daughter is a daughter throughout life.' The said quote is not foolproof because of the sway of one of the spouses in a family and things change under different situations and circumstances leading to a transformation while the Indian culture, traditions, morals and values embedded should always stand as a strong bond between children and parents.

When the ageing parents become wheelchair-bound or bedridden, children's mere visit to them, though for short spell, works as energy boosters amidst their loneliness and infirmity

The societal experts and specialists frame numerous duties and responsibilities for the children to ensure love and affection for the old parents. Those under the care of their children, are fortunate and blessed ones while those who are not, are, sometimes, admitted to the old age homes, nursing homes or under the care of NGOs. The educational system that imparts to children all the essentials of moral and value education is very important.

However, the role of both the educational in-

stitutions and that of the parents is no less important and valuable which helps pave the way for the children, who later in life, become responsible citizens, occupying important and high positions and who, sometimes, do not come up to the expectations of old parents.

Sometimes, the old infirm parents initiate themselves with their own financial efforts and get enrolled in the old age and nursing homes, for care and survival without any sort of assistance coming from anyone. Nevertheless, in the absence of the personal care of children, affection and love, parents in old age homes survive just for the rest of life, maintaining a friendly bond with the others. An old couple without offspring finds it tough to survive as near and distant relations, now and then, admit them to free old age home.

Therefore, a directory of the senior citizens and old age parents is a safeguard for the safety, security and well-being of the old parents in the event of not being taken care of by children or left to be uncared for. It will also help voluntary agencies or kind hearted persons to come to the rescue if they meet with a road accident or a mishap.

The author is a retired principal of Jawahar Navodaya Vidyalaya and can be reached at kjrao_12@rediffmail.com / koradajrao@gmail.com



Kamal announces his 232nd film

Chennai: Tamil film icon Kamal Haasan had good news in store for fans. He announced his 232nd film, with Lokesh Kanagaraj as director and Anirudh Ravichander as composer.

The untitled project is tentatively called *KamalHaasan232* for now.

"Another journey begins," the veteran actor-filmmaker tweeted.

He also shared a poster that says: "Once upon a time there lived a ghost." It features the face of a man, made of guns.

Anirudh, too, shared his excitement on the social media platform and wrote: "Excited to be scoring for Ulaganayagan @ikamalhaasan sir in a @Dir_Lokesh directorial #KamalHaasan232."

Fans were quick to express excitement.

"Many many congratulations sir ! Looking forward," a user tweeted.

"This would definitely be a great industry hit," wrote another fan. IANS



Bhojpuri actress slams Anubhav for his 'derogatory' remarks

Patna: Prominent Bhojpuri actress Akshara Singh has slammed director Anubhav Sinha for his 'derogatory' remarks on the Bhojpuri film industry.

Sinha had reportedly made a statement about the Bhojpuri film industry in which he used the phrase 'nanga naach' (vulgar dance). Sinha's statement came soon after BJP MP from Gorakhpur and Bhojpuri actor Ravi Kishan pointed out during Zero Hour in Parliament that drugs are frequently smuggled from borders connected with China and Pakistan and the drug mafia has strong connections in Hindi film industry. Akshara said Anubhav Sinha comes from Varanasi in Uttar Pradesh and still doesn't respect his mother tongue. "People know you as an intellectual. How could you insult your mother tongue by using the phrase 'nanga naach' when talking about the Bhojpuri film industry?" Akshara asked.

The Bhojpuri industry has been up in arms against nepotism in Hindi film industry since popular actor Sushant Singh Rajput died in mysterious circumstances in Mumbai.



Holmes' new beau 'can't get enough' of her

New York: Actress Katie Holmes reportedly texts her rumoured boyfriend, chef Emilio Vitolo Jr., all day long and he cannot get enough of her attention.

The actress has been spotted with the chef in New York, and now a source says the two have been talking almost non-stop, reports people.com.

"Emilio is very charming, flirty. It's easy to see how Katie fell for him," the source said, adding: "She seems very into him. She keeps texting Emilio all day long and he loves it. He can't get enough of her attention."

The two were recently seen kissing here Sunday. They were first seen together at a dinner early this month.

Holmes was previously married to actor Tom Cruise and they have a daughter, Suri. The actress was also linked to actor Jamie Foxx for several years before they split in 2019. IANS



Kangana's shocking claims about film industry

Mumbai:

Actress Kangana Ranaut recently made shocking claims, saying all that the film industry ever offered her were two-minute roles, item numbers and a romantic scene -- that too in return of sleeping with the hero.

Kangana's comments came after veteran actress and Samajwadi Party MP Jaya Bachchan, in a recent Parliament speech, criticised people who were tarnishing the film industry by badmouthing it.

Reacting to Jaya Bachchan's parliamentary speech, Kanagna tweeted: "Kaun si thali di hai Jaya ji aur unki industry ne? Ek thali mili thi jisme do minute ke role, item numbers aur ek romantic scene milta tha, woh bhi hero ke saath

some ke baad. Maine iss industry ko feminism sikhaya, thali deshbhakti naripradhan filmon se sajayi. Yeh meri apni thali hai, Jaya ji, aapki nahi (Jayaji, what plate you are referring to? The one that was offered to me had two-minute roles, item numbers and a romantic scene, that too in return of sleeping with the hero. I taught the industry feminism. This is my own plate, Jayaji, not yours)."

Kangana had earlier alleged that 99 per cent of the industry consumes drugs and asked top stars Ranveer Singh, Ranbir Kapoor, Vicky Kaushal and director Ayan Mukerji to take blood tests to prove they are clean. IANS

Baked meals



Badam Cashew Cake

INGREDIENTS

2 SERVINGS

- Almonds- 15 nos
- Sugar- 150 gm
- Ghee- 2 teaspoon
- Dark chocolate- 100 gm
- Cashews - 20 nos
- Powdered green cardamom- 1/2 teaspoon
- A handful grated coconut

PROCEDURE

To prepare this delicious cake, soak the almonds and cashews in water until they become tender. Peel the almonds skin and keep them aside. Using the double boiler method, melt the chocolate. Grind the dry fruits and make the sugar syrup. Grind the almonds and cashews in a mixer. In a pan, dissolve some sugar in water by boiling them together. Once the sugar has dissolved, add the cashew-badam paste, melted chocolate, cardamom, and ghee in the same pan. Mix well until you get a thick consistency. Transfer to a greased plate and allow it to cool in the refrigerator. Once chilled, garnish it with grated coconut. Cut into slices and serve



Almond Cake

INGREDIENTS

6 SERVINGS

- Blanched almonds- 2 cups
- Vegetable oil- 1 teaspoon

FOR DOUGH

- Sugar- 1/3 cup
- Rose water- 1 teaspoon
- All purpose flour- 1/2 cup
- Whites- 3 eggs

PROCEDURE

Place blanched almonds in a food processor and process until finely ground. Add sugar and flour to the ground almonds, process until blended. Add rose water and egg whites in the mixture and process until well-blended (the mixture will be very thick). Grease the baking tin with vegetable oil and spread the mixture (you can also use cooking spray, if available). Bake at 325 degree Celsius for about 28 minutes or until crisp on the outside and soft on the inside. When its cooled down, serve.





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PHOTO CREDIT: KUMAR SHARAT