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SUNDAY POST

HERE . NOW



FESTIVAL OF RAKSHA BANDHAN

PROMISE OF PROTECTION

P
3,4 COVER STORY



After making her debut in critically acclaimed Odia movie 'Drustikona', actress Leeja Naik managed to win the hearts of viewers in popular TV show 'Sabitri'. She has worked in the Bengali entertainment industry also. Leeja loves to spend time in Puri when she gets a break from her shooting schedule



A relaxing day

On getting a window of extra time, I sleep a little more. I also take a break from workout to spend time with my friends at my place.

Health-conscious

I am committed to fitness, therefore, I stick to healthy eating habits. I avoid the junk and take greens in my diet. My diet chart includes salad, boiled veggies, broccoli for nutrients and the essential proteins which I follow on Sundays also.

Craving for ice cream

On halt from work, all I crave for is ice cream. I am living in Kolkata, a city known as a hub of sweet delicacies. I treat myself with 'Sondesh' and also visit cafes for a bon appetite of authentic Bengali dishes.

Exotic Puri

My favorite destination in Odisha is Puri. Anytime I find a day off, I visit the Holy City and enjoy its peaceful ambience that soothes the soul.

ARINDAM GANGULY, OP

WhatsApp This Week

Only on Sunday POST!

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

THE BEST MEMES OF THIS ISSUE

- You have to be ODD, to be number ONE.
- When nothing goes right..!! Go left.
- AwesoME ends with ME and Ugly starts with U.
- Alcohol may be man's worst enemy, but the bible says love your enemy.

BEACON OF HOPE

Sir, *Let's Not Play Dirty*, the cover story on workplace harassment published in the last edition of Sunday POST is quite insightful and makes us aware about some interesting cases where workers' harassment by their colleagues or superiors post Covid pandemic is on the rise. However, the workers should never submit to such bullying and maintain their composure so that they will be able to try to find a way out of toxic attacks as one day the truth will surely prevail and establish the real identity of the honest worker. Hope, this story turns out to be a beacon of hope for scores of workers working in various sectors of the country. The victims should also come forward to report their cases to media which may trigger a movement to end workplace harassment.

DR SUBHASHMITA NAYAK, 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



FESTIVAL OF RAKSHA BANDHAN

PROMISE OF PROTECTION

The festival of Raksha Bandhan is not just a celebration of sibling love; the sacred thread is often used as a symbol of goodwill, nationalism and for promotion of communal harmony

SMRUTI REKHA BARIK, OP

India remains an incredible destination for the rest of the world for its countless attractions such as colors, tradition, mountain peaks, lakes, rivers, forests, oceans and the list never ends. This apart, it is also known as a land of colorful festivals. People here celebrate festivals like no other nation on the planet do. Each and every festival on this land is celebrated to spread happiness and harmony and Raksha Bandhan is no exception.

It's a festival where a frail thread is considered stronger than iron chains. A sister ties a sacred thread on the wrists of a brother believing that he will be protected from all evils and will protect her all life.

But there is more to it than the celebration of brother-sister bonding.

With just a few days to go before the festival, **Sunday POST** takes a look at a few legends and facts behind Raksha Bandhan, an occasion that not only fortifies sibling bond but also promotes universal brotherhood and communal harmony.

When it all started

According to Bhavishya Purana, a religious text, a war broke out between the gods and the demons. The gods led by Indra were about to lose the battle to demon king Brutra. It was then that Indra approached Guru Brihaspati, the counselor of the gods to find a solution for the situation. Brihaspati created a sacred thread uttering specific mantras on the day of Shraavan Purnima and asked Indra to tie it on his wrist. Indra's queen

Sachi empowered the thread and tied it on to his hand on the decided day. The power of the sacred thread called Raksha helped the gods to victory. The tradition, a gesture of goodwill, still continues.

Lord Krishna paid it back

As the legend goes, Lord Krishna had promised his aunt Shrutasubha that he would pardon her



son Shishupal's one hundred offences and beyond that he won't be spared. Accordingly, when Chedi king Sishupal committed his 101st offence at Yudhishtira's coronation ceremony, Krishna released his Sudarshan Chakra killing him on the spot. However, while wielding the divine weapon, he accidentally hurt his finger. Everyone present in the royal court saw his bleeding finger, but it was Droupadi who tore her clothes and used it to stop the bleeding. Krishna then

promised to help her out when she needed it. Several years later, Krishna paid it back by coming to Droupadi's rescue when Dushasan tried to undress Draupadi at Kurusabha.

A goddess tied thread on the wrist of a demon king

Demon king Mahabali, also known as Bali, had gained immortality by consuming 'amrita' and managed to conquer both heaven and earth. So, Lord Vishnu incarnated as the Vamana or a dwarf Brahmin to bring invincible Bali under control. While Bali was performing a Yajna to celebrate his victory and giving away gifts to everyone, Vamana requested him 'three steps of land'. The former then metamorphosed into Vishnu's colossal Trivikrama form, the first foot encompassing all of heaven in one step and the earth with the second foot. With no space left, Bali offered his own head to Vamana to take his third step. Vishnu pushed Bali to Pataal Lok to restore natural order but not before granting the latter's wish that he will remain in front of his eyes all the time leaving his abode Vaikunth Dham. After learning about it, a worried Laxmi approached Bali as a Brahmin woman and tied a rakhi on his wrist. That was a full moon day of Shraavan. Later, she revealed her identity and asked Bali to free her husband. Moved by the devotion of the Goddess, Bali obliged to her request.

Roxana & king Porus

Alexander the Great invaded India in 326 BCE. But he couldn't have annexed the land without conquering over the kingdom ruled by king Porus, who was known as a powerful ruler of his time and a master strategist. He was almost invincible. Meanwhile, Alexander's wife Roxana was worried about her husband's safety.





Women tying rakhis to BSF jawans in Rajasthan

Being aware of Indian tradition and culture, she sent a rakhi to Porus asking him not to hurt her husband on the battlefield. During the battle of the banks of River Jhelum, which is called Hydaspes by the Greeks, Porus saw the rakhi on his wrist. This reminded him of Roxana's request. He then stopped himself from attacking Alexander. Though Porus lost the battle, he won Alexander's respect and honor. Alexander reinstated Porus as a governor of his own kingdom. He also allowed him to rule over last to the south-east of his kingdom

When a thread saved a kingdom

Rani Karnawati, the widow of Rana Sanga of Mewar, once realized that she was unable to protect her kingdom from the invasion of the Sultan of Gujarat, Bahadur Shah. She then sent a Rakhi thread to Mughal Emperor Humayun seeking his assistance to protect her subjects from Shah's wrath. The Emperor was overwhelmed at the gesture. Though he was in the middle of another war, he started off towards Chittor with his troops without wasting time. However, he couldn't reach in time and the Rajput army was defeated by Shah and Karnavati performed Jauhar, setting herself on fire, to protect her honor. Later, Humayun reached the battle field with his troops, forcing Shah to leave Mewar. The kingdom was restored to Karnavati's minor son Vikramjit. Humayun won the hearts of millions of Rajputs by honoring the gesture of Karnavati.

How an early partition was prevented

Uprising in Bengal partition was at its peak in the beginning of 20th century. Left with little choice, the British



government passed an order to partition Bengal in August 1905 to thwart the protest. The move was fiercely opposed by leaders across party lines including litterateur Rabindranath Tagore. It is that time of the year when the festival of Raksha Bandhan is celebrated by the Hindu community. Tagore decided to use the 'the thread of protection' as a tool to unite people of both communities. Following Tagore's call, hundreds of Hindus and Muslims in Dhaka, Sylhet and Kolkata tied Rakhi on each other's wrists. This is how Tagore used a tradition to resist Banga Bhanga (Partition of Bengal). After the vehement protest, the British government had little choice than withdrawing their decision of dividing Bengal in 1911.

What do they have to say....



Asisha Behera, aka Ayesha, a transgender activist, a trans-model and a make-up artist, speaking about the relevance of her life, shares, "A brother should always take care of his sisters and this is the day that binds both of them together to always take a stand for each other and have each other's back. Rakhi is not just a thread; it is soaked in colors of emotion and concern."

even in modern times. Moreover, the scale of celebration is growing every year and people across religions and communities are actively participating in the festival, a good sign for the unity and integrity of the nation. Earlier, the



priests were seen visiting every household to tie the sacred thread on people's wrist, a good will gesture of yore, which is missing these days."

"While I was a boy, my sisters tied rakhi on my wrist. I would always promise to protect them and be there for them. But after my transformation into a woman, I started tying rakhi on my brother's wrist, just like I always wanted to. But the sentiment remained unchanged. For protecting them I need not be their brother. Raksha Bandhan is for everybody who cares for the other. People should fuel relationships from their heart, not their mind", Ayesha adds.

Apart from promoting universal brotherhood and communal harmony, Raksha Bandhan is also a part of Srimandir tradition as it is celebrated with much fanfare at Puri with Devi Subhadra tying rakhi to Lords Jagannath and Balabhadra. The day is also observed as the birth day of Lord Baladev, informs Mishra.

Eminent educationist Dr Sony Parhi, sharing her view on this mass festival, says, "A thread or the Rakhi is a symbol

Sisir Mishra, a renowned priest of Bhubaneswar, speaking to Sunday POST, says, "I am quite happy that the festival of Rakhya Bandhan hasn't lost its sheen, like several other Indian festivals,



of timeless connection and strength. It symbolizes trust and love. It's nothing but our tradition that elevates a simple thread to such heights of deep faith. Raksha Bandhan is a bond between brother and sister, who are not necessarily related by blood. A brother promises to protect his sister always and stand by her, come what may. Raksha Bandhan is the bond that crosses all limits of caste, creed and religion."

A noted lecturer of Central University Odisha adds, "This festival makes me a proud Indian and it makes my life happy and fulfilling. The sense of belief is rooted in the heart and mind of our people as this festival is ingrained in our culture. A culture changes forms, like today a sister too promises to protect and stand by her brother at all times".



'I love my culture, land and the people around me'

NATIONAL AWARD WINNING FILMMAKER HIMANSHU SEKHAR KHATUA IS THE FIRST ODISIA TO BE APPOINTED BY GOVERNMENT OF INDIA AS THE DIRECTOR OF THE PRESTIGIOUS SATYAJIT RAY FILM & TELEVISION INSTITUTE, KOLKATA



BIJAY MANDAL, OP

Noted filmmaker Himanshu Sekhar Khatua made his directorial debut with a bang after his first film *Shunya Swaroopa* bagged a National Award followed by several international recognitions in countries like Russia, Netherlands, Spain and Sweden. Then he went on to make a number of content-driven movies such as *Kathantara*, *Matira Bandhana*, *Krantiidhara*, just to name a few. Most of the movies directed by him bagged multiple state and national awards. Khatua has not just carved a space for himself in the film industry he also has created a pool of talents as the head of Sound department at Biju Pattanaik Film and Television Institute, Cuttack. This apart, he played pivotal roles in the success of organisations like KIIT Schools of Film, Fashion and Mass Communication and Kalinga TV. Little wonder then that the Government of India has recently picked him as the Director of Satyajit Ray Film & Television Institute, Kolkata to groom the budding talents at national level.

Sunday POST sat down with the award winning director for a candid chat where he spoke on how he almost became a monk, secret behind his success as multitasker and future plans, among other issues.

Excerpts:

Direction, administration and teaching are quite different from each other. How do you manage all three with same panache?

See, administrative ability is essential to become a successful film director while teaching is a part of my life. Before becoming a filmmaker, I was a teacher. So, I love

teaching. That way, I don't differentiate between teaching, direction and administration. So, I want to pass on whatever experience and expertise I have gained throughout my life to my next generation.

Which of the above three is your favourite and why?

As I have already stated that I was a teacher first, so, I love teaching. At the same time I don't think direction is different from teaching because a filmmaker also guides his cast and crew. On the other hand, I believe teaching is nothing but sharing your knowledge and expertise with others.

Do you ever feel that these three somehow meet each other at one point? Please explain.

Yes, I always think these three are intertwined. Whenever somebody directs, he is a teacher there. Whenever he keeps discipline on the sets or leads a team as a director, he is an administrator.

The subject of your first movie *Shunya Swaroopa* was quite unconventional and didn't stand a chance to get commercial success. How did you select such a subject?

I am not a born filmmaker but a turned filmmaker. I joined Film and Television Institute of India (FTII), Pune as a Science graduate and studied sound engineering. However, my perspective towards life changed completely after I was exposed to world

movies there. Then I realised that the world is bigger than my imagination.

That created a different sensation in my mind, heart and soul. A few months after coming out of FTII, I wanted to become a Sanyasi.

So, for that I visited Joranda in Dhenkanal, the religious headquarters of Mahima Dharma, to get an idea of how Sadhus live in modern days. After spending a few days there and interacting with them I thought I should make a movie on the

The *Kathantara* director almost became a monk after having a degree from FTII, Pune. He went to Joranda (Dhenkanal), the religious headquarters of Mahima Dharma, to have an idea on how Sadhus live in modern days but ended up making an Odia film *Shunya Swaroopa* on the subject that fetched him several nat'l and int'l honours

Shunya or void philosophy of Mahima cult. I believe that a filmmaker should react to his surroundings and that's the whole idea behind the making of *Shunya Swaroopa*.

Then, I studied the characters and formulated an idea. How that idea was transformed into a film is a different story.

Most of your movies are based on facts; they are like a docu-feature. What makes you pick up such subjects and focus on facts?

A filmmaker should be sensitive towards the things happening around him. I normally do thorough research on the subjects I like around me. After that I make my movies. Most of my movies are based on facts. But at times, I need to add some fictional elements to engage my viewers.

Being cool and soft spoken, how do you handle a situation when you have to take some harsh decision as an administrator?

I am cool, soft and at the same time I am also bold. You can't make a film unless you show some boldness. Once I am at a location, I don't pack up till the objectives set for the day are achieved. Sometimes, I forget my

home also; my wife, kids and all. Often, you have to take some strong decisions according to the situation. That way, you have to be bold. So, I am quite clear when I approach a task, be it filmmaking, teaching and administration. If I get confused, the concerned project and the people involved will also get confused. I don't hate people, I love people and that's what makes me execute my ideas effortlessly. When you lead a team, you have to be compassionate to your team members instead of being rude and abusive.

You have dealt with students having different skill sets and natures. You focus on which aspect of students during their grooming?

Fortunately, most of the students I have handled so far are much matured. If you can channelise their energy they can do wonders. So, I always try to assess the strengths and weaknesses of a student. Depending upon the assessment, I put them on track. Besides, I try to make my students feel as much comfortable as I can. So much so that they don't hesitate to share with me their private lives. That's the way I deal with my students many of whom have scaled greater heights in their career.

People who have been instrumental in shaping your career?

There are so many who can be credited for whatever I have achieved in life. But I would like to remember Professor late Sagir Ahmed for almost forcing me to take admission in FTII, Sushanta Mishra for giving me a break to work as an audiographer in his film *Indradhanura Chhbi*, film producer Alaya Mohanty for backing me as a director for *Shunya Swaroopa* and Dr Achyuta Samanta & Dr Itirani Samanta for their constant support during my association with KIIT group of institutions and Kalinga TV.

Will the posting at SRFTI take you away from Odia cinema? What is your future plan?

I chose SRFTI (Kolkata) over FTII (Pune) to stay in the neighbourhood. I will not be away from Odisha at all. I love my culture, land and the people around me. Odisha can't be away from me wherever I work. Rather, I will try to do something for the state even as my workplace has shifted to Kolkata.

'Theatres are like temples'

Actor Prabhas, who was at the pre-release event of the upcoming Dulquer Salmaan-starrer *Sita Ramam*, spoke highly of the movie and the entire film industry.

While gracing the event as the chief guest, he said: "The trailer looks incredible. One of the nation's most attractive heroes is Dulquer. What a fantastic movie Mahanati is, and Dulquer in the movie is just so flawless."

The Baahubali actor, requested all of his fans and other movie lovers to watch *Sita Ramam*, and said, "Even though we all have deities in our households, we still visit temples to pray to the God. For me, theatres are like temples. Despite the OTT releases, a true movie lover can only watch such great movies at the theatre only."

Sita Ramam stars Mrunal Thakur and Pushpa actress Rashmika Mandanna as the female lead opposite Dulquer Salmaan.



When Janhvi was overconfident

Janhvi Kapoor marked her entry in films with 2018 release *Dhadak*. The actress stunned in this film, which was a remake of blockbuster Marathi movie *Sairat*. Speaking about the pre-release pressure, Janhvi recently revealed that she felt overconfident about her debut film's success.

The *Gunjan* actress said she was unaware about the Friday release pressure during *Dhadak* and that she was overconfident that people will definitely come to watch her first film.

Janhvi is currently basking in the success of her latest OTT release *Good Luck Jerry* and the actress added that with direct to digital release there is no pressure of box office numbers.

She recently returned to Mumbai after wrapping *Bawaal* with Varun Dhawan in Warsaw. Penning a note after the film's wrap, the actress thanked director Nitesh Tiwari and producer Sajid Nadiadwala for giving her the opportunity.

Rakul ups glam quotient

Rakul Preet Singh took to Instagram and posted some photographs in a stunning red dress with a matching overcoat.

The *De De Pyar De* actress has established her status as a fashionista with her every look. This time as well, the star has left the fashion police awestruck with her latest outfit of the day. She took to Instagram and posted a string of stills in a smoldering red dress, paired with a matching overcoat. Her blazing ensemble was tied up with hoop earrings, a small pendant and copper-coloured

stilettos.

Recently, the actress was asked about which genre of films she would like to explore next, to this the *Attack* star replied that she would like to be a part of a historical drama and a biopic, "I don't know, but anything. Biopics are great stories that must be told. They are stories of achievers which we must tell." She further added, "I'd love to do an out-and-out love story. I haven't done too much. It's just the beginning, I feel. When I say love story, I mean like *DDLJ*. I'm a sucker for romance and so I really want to do an out-and-out *Yeh Jawaani Hai Deewani*, *DDLJ*, *Jab We Met*, something like that."



Sushmita shuts trolls with quirky caption

Sushmita Sen has been making headlines since her association with the first chairman of the Indian Premier League, Lalit Modi was made public. She has been a victim of constant trolling. From being called a 'gold digger' to the subject of various memes, she has been on the radar of trolls.

Meanwhile, giving it back to the trolls, the former Miss Universe, a while ago, posted throwback pictures from her Italy vacay. In the pictures,

the actress is seen wearing an animal-print kaftan and sunglasses as she strikes poses from her boat in style.

In her new post, however, the former pageant winner seemed to subtly mock people who are calling her out for her association with Modi. Sharing the pictures, the actress wrote: "The woman's got an attitude!!! Yeahhhh, a really good one!!! #strikea-pose #clickclick I love you guys!!! #duggadugga #yourstruly."

Sushmita separated from model Rohman Shawl last year. She entered the entertainment world after she won Miss India and Miss Universe pageants in 1994. She started her film career a couple of years later. She last appeared in the Disney+ Hotstar series *Aarya* and received the Best Actor Female award at the Filmfare OTT Awards for her performance in the first season of the show.



NOT MANY ARE AWARE THAT CATS WERE WORSHIPPED AS GODS IN ANCIENT EGYPT AND THERE ARE INSTANCES OF THEM BEING SAVIOURS AND PROTECTORS OF THE SOCIETY

INTERNATIONAL CAT DAY

LOVE THY FURBALLS

SMRUTI REKHA BARIK, OP

They are arrogant and selfish, they love pampering, they are not as faithful as dogs and to top it all they are inauspicious. No matter how much hatred is spread about them, cats are one of the most loved of the feline species. And to raise awareness for cats and learn ways to help and protect them, the International Fund for Animal Welfare has been celebrating International Cat Day since 2002 August 8 every year.

You may not know that having a feline friend can also help you relieve stress and improve your heart health.

A study suggests that cat owners are less likely to die of heart attacks than people who have never owned one. The latter group was 40 percent more likely to die from heart attacks and 30 percent more likely to die from cardiovascular disease. Other studies confirm that cats can lower the blood pressure and release dopamine and serotonin, which reduce stress and improve immune functioning.

Like other pets, cats also teach their parents about selflessness in a more profound manner than humans. For those who don't love these tiny animals should know that cats were worshipped as gods in Egypt and there are instances of them being saviors and protectors of the society.

Ahead of Int'l Cat Day, a couple of cat parents shared with Sunday POST about their thoughts on feline love.



Popular actress of Odia film and television industry Usasi Misra has been fostering cats for nearly three decades. Sharing her experience, she says, "It started when I was a student. Now, I have 15 adults, 13 kittens and 10 visitor felines. I have never believed in the negative myths circulated all around. I love them because they're a gift from God. All of them are my babies and I am greeted by them whenever I come home. A few silly ones beg for little treats whereas the tiny ones try to climb up my dress and the older ones start meowing at the top of their voices."

It is therapeutic to come home and spend time with them as they perfectly de-stress me. Alisha Binakar, another cat lover, shared how a cat helped her overcome depression during the Covid-19-induced lockdown.

"I always love to be surrounded by friends but the isolation put me under severe stress. Then

I decided to search for a four-legged friend. I was desperate to have a pet and fortunately got to know about a kitten in a household. The moment I learnt about it, a bond was created between us. However, they were reluctant to part with her as she was a member of their family. But, I somehow managed to get her back assuring them that she would be properly taken care of."

"I had never handled any cat and the kitten was in trauma. However, I was fortunate that she trusted my love. I can't forget the moment when she climbed up to my chest and lied down without any fear," recalls Alisha talking about her feline friend Dhanamani.

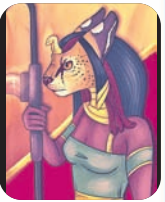


On lessons learnt from the animals, she says, "She is my best friend. I am grateful to her for making me patient. She has made me learn how to read the mind of a voiceless. Dhanamani has made me responsible. I can say, she has made me a better person."



Amazing Cat Facts

Mafdet was the first known cat-headed deity in ancient Egypt. During the First Dynasty, she was regarded as the protector of the pharaoh's chambers against snakes, scorpions and evil.



The oldest cat ever lived for 38 years. Creme Puff of Austin, TX was born in August of 1967 and passed away in August of 2005. He still holds the Guinness World Record for oldest cat ever.

A cat braved the great unknown to make a trip to space. Felicette, also known as 'Astrocat' was the first and only cat to go to space October 18, 1963.



It is thought that Egyptians had domesticated the cat. But in 2004, French archaeologists discovered a 9,500 year old cat grave in Cyprus. This makes this the oldest known pet cat and it predates Egyptian art about cats by over 4,000 years.



The richest cat in the world according to Guinness World Records is Blackie. When his millionaire owner passed away he refused to recognise his family in his will and instead gave his 7-million-pound fortune to Blackie.



Shomiya



ODISHA FASHION VILLA