

JANUARY 1-7, 2023

# SUNDAY POST

HERE . NOW

# 2023

HAPPY NEW YEAR!

NEW YEAR RESOLUTIONS

P 3,4  
COVER  
STORY

# Rising to challenge

New Year's Resolutions  
for ~~2009~~ ~~2011~~ 2012

1. Lose <sup>more</sup> weight again
2. Get fit next year  
~~and cigarettes!~~ drink  
less

# MY SUNDAY

Gwalior boy Vishal Mourya didn't think twice before quitting his job as a software developer to turn a filmmaker. After the success of 'Daman,' he, along with his partner in direction Debi Prasad Lenka, became a household name in Odisha. Mourya looks forward to the OTT release of his next project 'B for Bundelkhand'



### Family's day out

Sundays have always stood out for me since school time. Because I always knew that my Sundays should differ from other days. While in IT and preoccupied with work, we only had Sundays for escape that we needed. Now that I am with my family, we spend it together at Puri.

### Thrill seeker

There was a time when films excited me. But since making movies has become my full time job now, my interests have shifted. I love to explore haunted and thrilling spaces. I also have a YouTube channel 'Ghost world TV' where I post all sorts of 'ghost' videos.

### Cook by choice

For my go-to-cuisine, I love having poha. It connects me with the memories back during hostel days when we used to cook for 20 hostelites anytime we were hungry. Whenever I find time I indulge in making chicken biryani.

### Workaholic

All my days have become pretty creative after I switched from an IT company to finding a career in films. A filmmaker has always to be on 24\*7 work mode and I'm no different. But I enjoy my work.

### True adventurer

I am an avid traveler. Give me a backpack and I'll tour around the world. I am a travel enthusiast and I love bungee jumping, screaming my heart out on ferry wheels.



On the shooting set of Odia movie Daman

SMRUTI REKHA BARIK, OP

## WhatsApp This Week

### Only on Sunday POST!

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

THE BEST MEMES OF THIS ISSUE

- I gave up my seat to a blind person in the bus. That is how I lost my job as a bus driver.
- Alcohol is a perfect solvent: It dissolves marriages, families and careers
- I started out with nothing, and I still have most of it.
- eBay is so useless. I tried to look up lighters and all they had was 13,749 matches.



## A CHRISTMAS GIFT

Sir, Last week's cover story 'Standing in for Santa Claus' is nothing less than a Christmas gift for me from the Sunday POST team. The story goes really well to highlight a few living 'Santas' among us who have the best to offer to mankind. It was very inspiring to learn about Gouri Prasad Dash. When many of us barely care about others, people like Dash, who is on a mission to save lives by donating platelets, are angels. Minting money by making the most of the technology might be the priority for many. But Dr Abhijit Upadhyaya is on a unique mission to save lives by ensuring affordable ECG services at doorsteps through his startup. At a time when youth are leaving no stone unturned to bag cushy jobs, 32-year-old civil engineering graduate Alok Samartha has been taking care of strangers as if he is a parent to them. The author's painstaking efforts to give justice to the story were really praiseworthy.

CHINMAYA DEHURY, 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](mailto:features.orissapost@gmail.com)  
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NEW YEAR RESOLUTIONS

# Rising to challenge

A study suggests that only eight per cent people actually live up to the commitments they make ahead of the New Year as the resolutions dissolve as quickly as they are made

SMRUTI REKHA BARIK, OP

Every new thing brings with it a newer excitement, so does a year. It is that time of the year when we look forward to start things afresh. No wonder, many of us set some goals and make resolutions. But as the saying goes, New Year's resolutions are great but they are essentially made to be broken. A study suggests that only eight per cent people actually live up to the commitments they make ahead of the New Year as the resolutions dissolve as quickly as they are made.

However, Sunday POST caught up with a few committed individuals from various areas of work who have managed to complete the resolution.

**'Made resolution when I was 3'**

Ananya Sristi Satpathy needs no introduction. A few weeks back she narrated how she worked hard to be among the first three positions in the list of successful candidates who cracked Orissa Public Service Commission.

Ananya took the resolution to become a civil servant a bit earlier when she was all but three years of age.



"I was three years old when I was mesmerised seeing Anu Garg ma'am (erstwhile collector of Bargarh district). That was the day I decided to be a civil servant. I didn't even know what actually the work entailed but as I grew up I witnessed first-hand the travails of my single mother in her tryst in getting her share of justice in the world. I had realised how pivotal is the role of civil servants in not only redressing the sundry grievances of a common man but also in making their mundane lives better. As a student of Development Studies I also



had an opportunity to learn about the functioning and the challenges of the society and watch civil servants working tirelessly towards building a better world for us to live in reaffirming my decision each passing day," says Ananya.

She continues: "It isn't an exaggeration when I say there was never a single day when I wavered from wanting to be anything other than a civil servant. I am extremely grateful to the almighty for giving me the opportunity to be and do what I wanted to be and do. There were challenges of-course; the lure of working for a reputed MNC or pursuing studies abroad instead of embarking on a nerve wrecking journey of appearing for civil services. But that was nothing as compared to the satisfaction that I felt I would achieve by directly being able to impact people's lives. The fear of failure also stood no chance in front of the joy I believed I would get by working in the sphere of governance, policy planning and implementation."

Ananya says her mother's life gave her the certainty, not of the results or success but of the fact that noble intentions, determination and hard work have the power to herald positivity not only in one's own life but also be transformational for the community and the society as well.

Her rise from being a single mother and a domestic abuse survivor to being the first woman in the district to crack the judicial services was the testimony of the indomitable courage and potential, she further adds.

Talking about her resolutions she recalls, "I was critical in the ICU. Having barely escaped death from close quarters just before writing the exam, my resolution was to be watchful of my physical and mental health. The sheer unpredictability of the exam tends to take a toll on the mental health for any civil service aspirant and I thus had resolved not to give in to fears but to embrace and spread positivity in life."



Staying fervent and optimistic despite failures and losses is easier said than done. But I had decided to take one day at a time and face my fears head on. Writing a journal consistently, sending positive affirmations to self and meditation helped me achieve my goals and stay calm in troubled times," concludes Ananya who was in third position in OPSC examination.

**'Love to upgrade goals time to time'**

Odisha's Satyapira Pradhan claimed to have registered his name in Guinness World Records for delivering the most number of punches with one hand in one minute breaking the previously held record by



Pakistan's Muhammad Rashid. Satyapira, a physiotherapy student, punched 393 times with one hand in a minute surpassing 377 full punches struck by Pakistani martial arts student. The Odisha boy is now waiting for confirmation from Guinness World Records. Not only in punching, Satyapira is also a successful mountaineer. Talking about his unattained goals, Pradhan said that he never settles for just one goal. "I am fully

workaholic; my passion and profession both are filled with enthusiasm for adventure sports and about setting new benchmarks. I love to upgrade goals from time to time". A continued and unbreakable amount of discipline is required to be both mentally and physically fit for any kind of sport. On mind level, mountaineers require unwavering focus, determinations and the ability to overcome failure. Talking about his future aspirations, Satyapira said, "I want to start a sports academy. Nowadays I am guiding boys and girls across the country to register their names in Guinness World Records in their respective skills. My 13 students already enlisted their name in the Guinness World Records. Our club Kalinga Daredevils is also bringing talents to limelight and helping them to achieve."

**A major goal achieved, few more to follow**

Atri Prasad Rout, a Post Graduate student of Utkal University says, "In March 2021, I lost my grandfather, and then a month later, my grandma. Because it was Covid that took their lives, I couldn't help but think of the pre-existing illnesses that aided the process. Then the life I was living wasn't a healthy one, my Body Mass Index was all messed up, I was almost

20kgs overweight in comparison to my height." The 22-year-old continues: "So I made a resolution to lose weight. It started with dieting, with all kinds of oily foods, fast foods, snacks, and fizzy drinks off my plates. The temptation of these foods is hard to avoid, but you have to make the alternative choice each and every time. So in the morning and evening, instead of snacks I chose to take sprouts and fruits rich in fibres. But that wasn't enough, because fat accumulates in parts of the body that you can only get rid of through metabolism. So I started working out, going for a run at least three times a week, on alternate weekdays. For me waking up early was hard, so I created a new rule, that I would run whenever it suits me, just with an empty stomach and a water bottle in my hand."

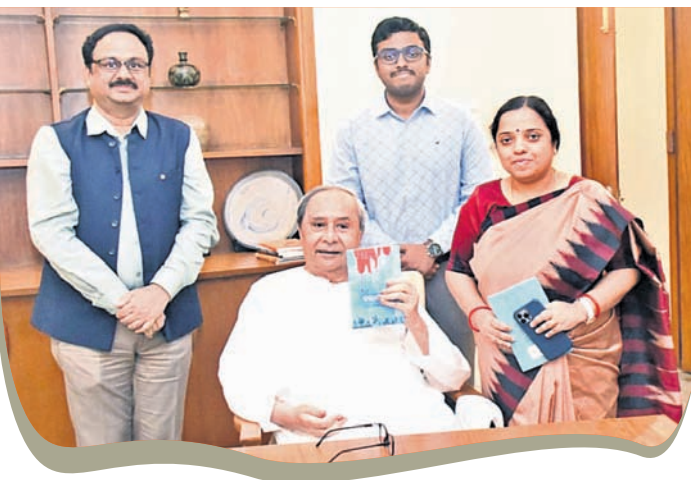
"For me, that has been kind of the thing about resolutions. We all have some habits and patterns of behaviour that we repeat. There are some choices we make every day, unconsciously, day after day, for years. It could be a choice about food, clothes, expression, anything. When you are making a resolution, you're sort of saying to yourself that this is a choice I'm making passively everyday but from today onwards I'm going to be active and choose something different. And then you commit to it. After a certain period of time, hopefully, it will become a new habit," he quips.



Asked about 2023, he reveals, "I've three resolutions in mind. First, I'm planning to watch 250 foreign films and write about them. I'm calling it Project 250 and I'll make the writing online for people to follow. The second resolution is re-



lated to health. I'm very inconsistent in my food habits. So the agenda is to eat two meals a day, lunch and dinner, on time, everyday. And the third one is about family. The cousins I used to know as kids have all grown up now and I feel that there is a distance between us. So the goal is to know them better, understand the issues they are going through. Let's see how that goes."



**EMINENT POET GAYATRIBALA PANDA, WHO HAS 12 POETRY COLLECTIONS IN ODISIA, FIVE IN HINDI, TWO IN ENGLISH, TWO ODISIA SHORT STORY COLLECTIONS, ONE SHORT STORY COLLECTION IN ENGLISH, FOUR ODISIA NOVELS AND AN ESSAY COLLECTION TO HER CREDIT, HAS RECENTLY BEEN HONOURED WITH SAHITYA AKADEMI AWARD FOR HER FAMOUS POETRY ANTHOLOGY *DAYANADI***

# 'A poet can't change society overnight'

POST NEWS NETWORK

She was honoured with Sahitya Akademi Yuva Purashkar in 2011 for her poetry anthology *Gaan* and has recently been selected to receive Sahitya Akademi Award for her another poetry anthology *Dayanadi*. She became the first Odia to achieve the rare feat of getting both the awards. She is none other than GayatriBala Panda, a respected name in literary circuit, who has been honoured with several state and national level awards during her journey as a poet and novelist. She also has participated in a number of international conferences held in India and abroad. In a tête-à-tête with **Sunday POST**, the prolific poet, who has 12 poetry collections in Odia, five in Hindi, two in English, two Odia short story collections, one short story collection in English, four Odia novels and an essay collection to her credit, spoke her mind on a host of topics.

*Excerpts:*

- **After getting Sahitya Akademi Yuva Puraskar, you have now been selected for Sahitya Akademi Award which is quite unique. What role does an award play in the career of a creative person?**
- In my opinion, love and recognition of the readers are more important than any award. However when one gets institutional recognition like this, it inspires to push boundaries and offers new challenges. It encourages a creative person to set up new benchmarks.
- **As a homemaker, how easy or difficult is it for you to practice literature?**
- First of all, there is no difference between woman and man as far as literature is concerned. But yes, women in Indian families take more responsibilities; therefore, it is challenging but not at all impossible. A woman can practice literature despite all her responsibilities towards her home, family and children.
- **Your book *Dayanadi*, based on history, got the Akademi honour. How challenging was it to write poems on a historical backdrop?**
- See, not just history, poems can be written on any other subject also. They can be on mythology, society, women issues or the economy. The idea should come automatically. When a writer decides to write on history, the subject should be there in his/her subconscious mind which finds its way in the form of a novel, short story or a poem.

- **The theme of most of your poems is feminism. Do you believe that women are the second gender in our society?**
- I don't find any difference between a woman and man or I don't write from gender perspectives. But being a woman, I get disturbed and feel the pain when a woman is tortured or she faces harassment. Then, I don't hesitate to express myself through poems. This could be a reason feminism often gets highlighted in my poems. And I don't believe that women are the second gender of our society.
- **Being a working woman, how do you balance your literary career, and workplace challenges?**
- Things become easy if we work in a disciplined manner. Every day, I spend some time with my family, with my associates at my work place, then give 2-4 hours to my creative work at the end of the day. I also write during the day if I get some time. So, balancing family, career as a writer and workplace challenges have never been an issue for me.
- **Had you been a man instead of a woman what would have been your approach towards your life partner?**
- If I were a man, I would have cooperated with my wife like the way my husband has come forward to let me grow as a poet. There should be good understanding between a couple which helps each other to grow in their respective professions.
- **Can a poet or writer change society through his work?**
- No, a poet can't transform society overnight. It's a gradual process. A powerful poem can make an impact on an individual and shake his inner being. Then, that particular individual can play a role in transforming others and then they can bring about changes in the society.
- **What is your source of inspiration or motivation behind your becoming a poet?**
- My grandfather was a writer.

He wrote poems, novels and bhajans. I used to watch him write and loved his level of involvement. We also had a library having many books in Odia and English. My aunts and my father were also avid readers. So, I have been brought up in an environment which had a reading culture from the beginning. There is little wonder then that I went on to become an author. You can say writing was in my blood.

- **In this age of social media, a new poet is born every day. They also get appreciated. What would you say about this?**
- I think it is a very good sign and many of those who are writing in the social media also have good readership base. The works of new age poets are more about reality rather than traditional stuff. The words used in these poems are comparatively simpler and the message is clear.
- **What will be your advice to the new age poets?**
- Every poet or author builds his own path and traverses his/her own journey. For that, one needs to concentrate really hard. This apart, he or she has to be deeply connected with the mother tongue and literary tradition, have respect towards the predecessors, good relation with the contemporary poets and authors. Most importantly, a poet has to be truthful and dedicated towards her creation.



# When Alaya was left speechless

Riding high on the success of her last release, *Freddy*, Alaya F walked away with huge accolades for her effortless and demanding portrayal of Kainaaz in the movie at such an early stage of her film career with one of B-town's most popular stars – Kartik Aaryan!

Though Alaya had essayed a complex character in *Freddy*, the actress also seems to have had a whale of a time shooting the film along with her co-star Kartik... at least the BTS video that the gorgeous actress has shared on her social media recently suggests so!

Sharing an interesting caption of the BTS video, Alaya wrote, "For all the many many many people asking and joking, MERE DAANT THEEK HAI!! I am speechless. Enjoy these BTS videos of the #Freddy climax".

Having pulled off an unconventional role in her debut film *Jawaani Jaaneman*, Alaya also showcased her vision and range as an actor. The gorgeous actress also successfully proved that taking the road less travelled unlike other debutant actors proved beneficial to her and the success of her back-to-back hits speaks vol-

umes about the young actor.

No wonder, Alaya fast superseded her contemporaries and is being labelled as the 'dark horse' of the industry by renowned trade pundits and fraternity people, as she is certainly here to stay!

AGENCIES



## Anu speaks about her love life

Actress Anu Aggarwal, who was recently seen in a special episode of the singing reality show *Indian Idol 13* that honoured her 1990 film *Aashiqui*, spoke about her personal life in a new interview.

Anu said she was 'content' with her love life. She added that her need for love was 'fulfilled in a different way'. Anu further said, 'it is not sex' and added 'that is not love'.

Anu started her career as a model and was seen in the Doordarshan serial *Isi Bahane*. She rose to fame after her 1990 hit film *Aashiqui*, alongside Rahul Roy. Anu had revealed in an interview in November this year that in 2001, she had become a monk.

Now, she has spoken about her personal life in a new interview.

Anu said, "*Meri aashiqui ko kya ho gaya* (What happened to my love life)? I am a very open person. I have always been an open person. In fact, I had been too open. Talking about love, no one knows what is going to happen in the future..."

She further said, "My need for love is fulfilled in a different way. It is not sex... Woh toh kabhi (ka) khatam ho gaya (that ended long ago)... that is not love."

AGENCIES



## 'Disney almost fired me for wearing a bikini at age 14'

Actress Bella Thorne was a staple on the Disney Channel for many years, but she apparently almost lost her job when she was 14.

During an episode of Emily Ratajkowski's *High Low With EmRata* podcast, Thorne opened up about many instances where she felt she was sexualized as a young girl, reports Variety.

"One time I almost got fired off the Disney Channel because I was 14, and I wore a two-piece on the beach," Thorne said.

"This stylist that I was hanging out with put this chain on me that's, like, a body chain. I don't know? I don't care."

There was a fan, they got a photo of me on the beach. I almost got fired. It was all over the media, it was literally viral in that time. It was, 'How dare this little girl do this? This is so disgusting'."

Thorne, who starred opposite Zendaya on *Shake It Up* from 2010 to 2013, explained that people were "putting Disney under pressure" to fire her, but ultimately they didn't.

AGENCIES



## I never plan things: Saie

She's a popular face in the Marathi cinema, but Saie Tamhankar has definitely shown her mettle in Hindi films too. After a successful film like *Mimi*, the actress was seen in Madhur Bhandarkar's *India Lockdown*.

Happy with the way things are looking ahead for her, and hoping that it gets even better for her, Saie shares, "I think a lot of doors are slowly opening up. I get approached for projects, quite often these days, which is nice. I am meeting new people, working with new people. It's like different horizons are opening for me and I am ready to take on the world! It's this very positive feeling right now."

While she's quite established in the regional space, ask Saie if she now looks at taking over Hindi film industry and she shares, "Can I be brutally honest? I never think of these things! I am a girl who will make the most of today. I never plan things."

Talking about the kind of work she's looking forward to doing, Saie adds, "Doing different kind of work is what I want to do. I worship work. I am a workaholic. I love my work and it does not have any barriers of language or region." AGENCIES

# Socotra Island, a land of **mystery**

*According to legends the first Dragon's blood tree plant was born of the blood spilled during a cruel fight between a dragon and an elephant.*



PIC COURTESY: BAYTALFANN

and a wide range of other geographical areas. Given the proximity to Africa and Arabia and the way the monsoon winds blow it seems like the migration in and out of the islands has played an important role. However, the stable geology and relatively moist, oceanic climate must have allowed plants to survive and evolve here over much longer time periods than in the harsher environments of the neighboring continents.

### Secret behind 'bleeding'

Bleeding occurs due to the pressure of sap within the tissues that conduct water and sugars around the plant. Normally, the sap of deciduous plants falls in autumn to early winter, as the plants lose their leaves and become dormant.

### An endangered species

In recent decades, the pressures of human activity and a changing climate have taken their toll. Some scientists predict that the dragon's blood tree will experience a steep decline in the next 30 to 80 years, and may one day be gone altogether.

Most trees draw water from the soil and up their roots to the leaves; dragon's blood trees can also do the reverse, taking water from the air and passing it into the soil. Scientists suggest that the unique shape of the dragon's blood tree is an adaptation to life in its arid environment, allowing the trees to capture moisture from the fog and clouds, a process called horizontal precipitation cap-

protracted civil war.

An iconic tree on the Socotran landscape, the dragon's blood tree is threatened. Habitat fragmentation, livestock grazing, and climate change have reduced the tree to just a fraction of its native range. Now, researchers and local residents are trying to help it survive.

And that protection could save a lot more than just the dragon's blood tree. New research published in *Forests* classifies *Dracaena cinnabari* as an umbrella species. Dragon's blood trees provide food and shelter to at least a dozen reptile species, including a critically endangered gecko known as *Hemidactylus dracaenaculus*. Saving the dragon's blood tree would save both a cultural icon and a critical habitat.

### Slowest growing tree

According to researchers from renowned Universities, the seedlings can take up to 100 years to grow high enough to escape the constant grazing of the local goats. This makes the dragon's blood tree one of the slowest growing trees in the world. Most of the dragon's blood trees in the wild today are probably hundreds of years old, though their exact age is impossible to calculate, because they have no rings in their trunks. But without a younger generation to replace them, the current generation could be the last.

### Legends

According to legends the plant was born of the blood spilled during a cruel fight between a dragon and an elephant. The name "dragon blood" comes from reddish resin, cinnabar, contained in the leaves and in the cortex. This resin has been used since antiquity as a medicine due to its many beneficial effects, such as scented essence and pigment to color precious stones, glass and marble.

In Arabic, the dragon's blood tree is known as *Dam al-Akhawain*, or "the blood of the two brothers", according to another legend. The folklore says, the first dragon's blood tree grew in the spot where two brothers, Darsa and Samha, fought each other to the death.

AGENCIES



PHOTOGRAPH: JESS CRAIG

## Usages

The bright red resin that seeps from the dragon's blood trunk when it is cut was ground into a fine powder and sold to Greek, Arab and Indian merchants who transported it around the world where it was used in paint and pottery glaze, make-up and nail polish, as ointment for cuts and scrapes, or as an elixir to treat anything from diarrhoeal disease to postpartum bleeding.

Certain marvels of nature never cease to amaze us. These natural objects or phenomena exhibit behaviour that one can either call an irregularity or a miracle. One such natural miracle is Socotra Island, known as 'The Jewel of Arabia, of Yemen.

The virgin alien-like landscape of the island has amused travelers and scientists for ages. According to UNESCO, Socotra Island, an island of Bliss in ancient Sanskrit, is a site of Universal importance because of its biodiversity with rich and distinct flora & fauna. But the centre of attraction of this island is Dragon's blood tree.

### A tree cries tears of blood

The specialty of the tree is if it is cut, thick red coloured liquid oozes out of it, giving the impression that it cries tears of blood making it look like a scene out of a gory horror movie. It is a tree native to the Socotra archipelago. It is named after the blood-like colour of the red sap that the trees produce.

Botanically named *Dracaena cinnabari* is a suji plant native to the Socotra islands. The plant was first described by Isaac Bayley Balfour in 1882.

The dragon blood tree has a unique and strange appearance, with an upturned, densely packed crown having the shape of an uprightly held umbrella. This evergreen species is named after its dark red resin, which is known as "dragon's blood".

The tree's length can range from 33 to 39 feet and its life can be up to 650 years. These trees are completely flat from below and their branches grow thicker as they climb upwards.

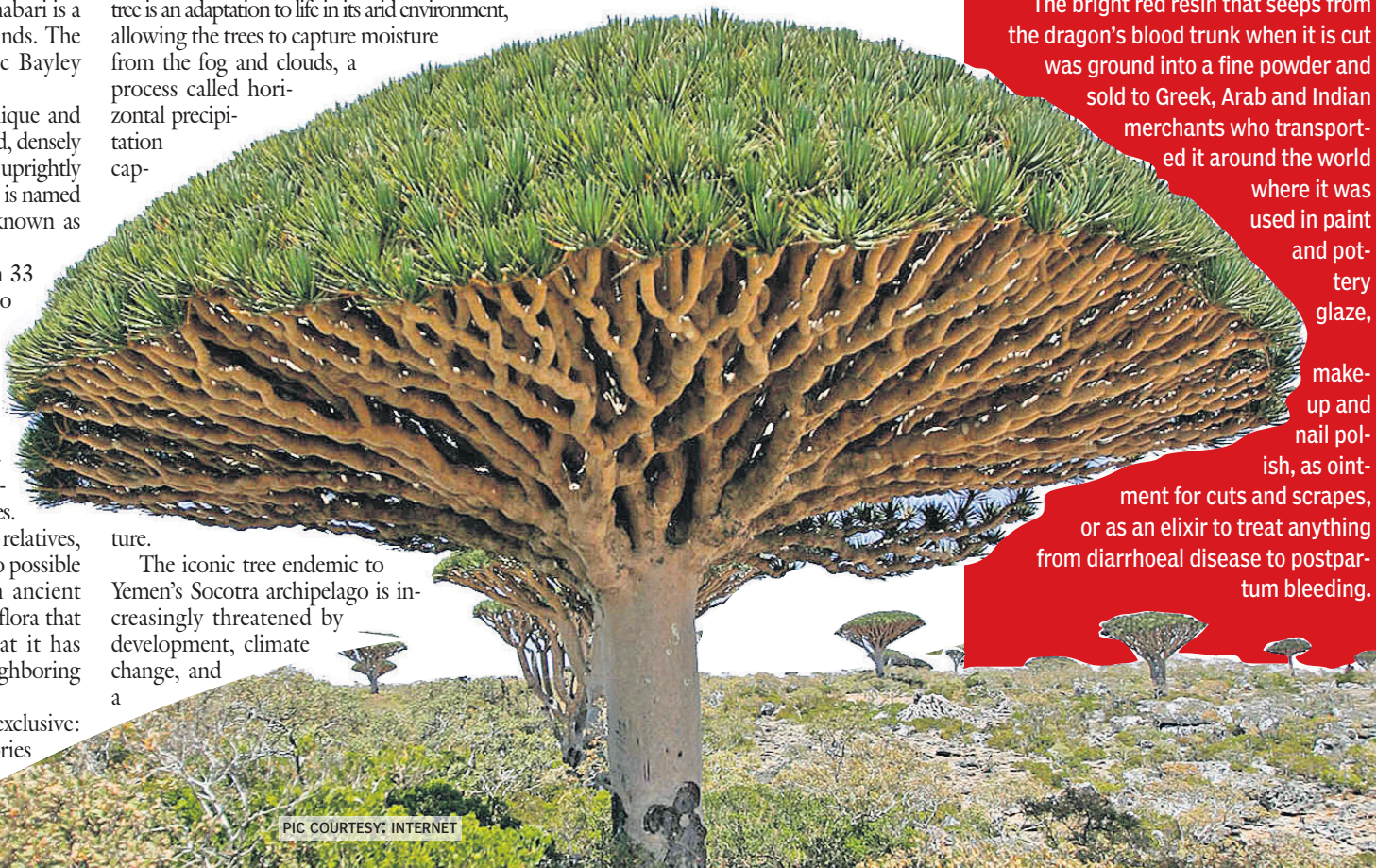
### The Origin

The endemic flora of Socotra appears to largely represent relict populations of formerly widespread families. So where did the endemics, or their relatives, originally come from? There are two possible explanations: that the flora is an ancient remnant, representing relics of the flora that originated on Gondwana; or that it has migrated into the islands from neighboring continents.

The theories are not mutually exclusive: different families have different stories and both theories are supported by the distribution of related families from Socotra

ture.

The iconic tree endemic to Yemen's Socotra archipelago is increasingly threatened by development, climate change, and a



PIC COURTESY: INTERNET



Ashima