

FEBRUARY 19-25, 2023

SUNDAY POST

HERE . NOW

Home away from home

COVER STORY

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MY SUNDAY

A full-time IT professional with a passion for making tasteful humorous content, Subhajit Dash from Cuttack wears Odia pride on his sleeve. The popular influencer, who loves responding to the DMs of his fans more often than not, cherishes a dream to become a filmmaker



True SRKian

I am a fanboy of Shah Rukh Khan. Little wonder then that I am so filmy and dramatic in real life as well. As far as my admiration for him goes, I have always tried to imitate his style since childhood.

With friends

Burning up dance floor

I am a dancer who can't resist shaking legs to music playing nearby. I believe I got that from my mother, who is a trained Odissi dancer. I have performed in events/functions from my school days.

Mama's gossip buddy

My mother loves to gossip, so me and my brother are her gossip buddies. We tell our mother everything that happens in our lives and listen to her childhood stories.



With mother

Moodie Foodie

When it comes to food, I always juggle between Chinese, Indian, and Italian. Mutton rice and mutton biryani are dishes I can't say no to. Dahibara Aloodum, Gupchup, Chat, and Bara Ghuguni are a few of my go-to street foods. I used to be an ardent lover of sweets though when I was a kid.



With family

Concern for voiceless

I am a pet lover and I feed all the street dogs in our locality to the best of my ability. We have adopted three stray dogs by providing them with shelter, food, and joy. I donate to an NGO monthly for serving the cause as well.

Hidden desire

I have written a couple of scripts and a lot of short stories as I nourished the dream of becoming a filmmaker. Though fate had some other plans, I still intend to turn into films anytime soon.

MADHUSMITA SAHU, 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

- The Man Who Created Autocorrect Has Died. Restaurant In Peace.
- Strong people don't put others down. They lift them up and slam them on the ground for maximum damage.
- T-shirt is actually short for tyrannosaurus shirt. It's because of the small arms.
- My boss told me to have a good day. So I went home.

LOVE IN AIR

Sir, The cover story on Valentine's Day, 'Love, its myriad hues' made for a delightful read. Surprisingly, in the chaotic world carrying the pretentious meaning of love everywhere around, the individuals speaking about their understanding of love was beguiling. Quoting the romantic poet Durga Prasad Panda, "Love is not an 'Entitlement'; you 'Earn' it by making yourself 'Worthy' of its grace", describes love admirably. However, I felt little disheartened as I expected to get to learn more about the love story of Hiranmayee Mishra, one of the prolific storyteller of our times and her husband Arun Nayak. The contagious feeling that love is, has successfully infected every creation of God. This captivating read has wonderfully depicted the love stories dating back to the 80's and now. It brings an arc of a smile on my face while reading how beautifully people have grown with love and relationships.

SOUMYA RANJAN BARIK, PIPILI

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



NuaGoa Nature Retreat

Home away from home

MADHUSMITA SAHU, OP

THE POPULARITY OF STAYCATION HAS SOARED IN THE WAKE OF THE PANDEMIC, AS PEOPLE LOOK FOR WAYS TO BREAK FREE FROM THE MONOTONY OF EVERYDAY LIFE WHILE STILL STAYING CLOSE TO HOME

The phrase home away from home justifies a place where one is as happy, relaxed, or comfortable as in one's own home. It is a concept that provides a sense of comfort and familiarity to those who travel or live away from home.

The COVID-19 pandemic has transformed the way we live our lives and how we approach our leisure time. For many, the idea of traveling to far-off destinations and staying in unfamiliar places has lost its appeal. Instead, people have begun to rediscover the hidden gems in their backyards and the joy of spending quality time with loved ones. And, with all the burnouts, staycations are here to stay.

The popularity has soared in the wake of the pandemic, as people look for ways to break free from the monotony of everyday life while still staying close to home. They are often enjoyed by individuals or families who want to save money, reduce travel time, and still enjoy a break from their usual routines. Additionally, individuals need to disconnect from work and other responsibilities to fully relax and enjoy themselves.

Of the wide range of destinations on the offer, **Sunday POST** takes a close look at a select few in Odisha.

Skip Intro, Bhubaneswar

Siddharth Das, a hardcore marketer with



H&M US, loves to build brands and with that pursuit, he and his family started *Indistinct Chatter*, the most loved cafe in Bhubaneswar. He and his family want to be known as the agents of change for the City. Every year, they want to bring something unique and disruptive to the state. That's how they have created a Speak Easy-inspired homestay called the *Skip Intro*.

It is one of the most creative and editorial stay right at the heart of Saheed Nagar, City's business hub, with a 3-boutique style bedrooms with lots of creative delights – a bunk bed, a poster bed, concept mirrors, and loads of old-school charm, along with the most gorgeous living room as a cherry on top. One can feel free to host a party, hold a business meeting or just chill with a squad.

"We have created a place that's inspired by

Speak Easy in New York. It may look dilapidated from the outside; however, when you step inside, it's a whole different experience altogether. You will prefer to stay in a place that's less commercial and more personal and inviting, where you can cook a meal, and spend some quiet time with your loved ones. You have a well-crafted private bedroom, an editorial bathroom, a gorgeous living room, and a fully functional kitchen," says Sidharth.

Guests who book through booking sites understand what it's all about, while they focus on the basics which are safety, hygiene, and excellent service, he adds.

"We will always focus on these things rather than chasing anything fancy. Our state needs such experiences to complement its beauty. Our long-term ambition is to collaborate with the state government and create experiences in the state that will attract people from all over the world," concludes Sidharth.

NuaGoa Nature Retreat, Nuapada (Cuttack)

Chandra Kishore Sasmal, Founder and Managing Director, NuaGoa Nature Retreat Private Limited, located at Nuapada, about 30 kms from Silver City Cuttack has shared his views on staycations. The idea of the staycation came to the host when he met with an unfortunate accident



and had to spend around six months, while his mother catered him at this beautiful farmhouse which she developed herself. Challenging the idea of conventional tourism, he started the nature retreat with potential to provide an alternative, close to Kapilash wildlife sanctuary and nearby picturesque areas. "At NuaGoa, we primarily cater to families and corporate guests and provide a range of unique offerings such as boating, fishing, rain dancing, borewell bath, karaoke, a cricket ground, bonfire, barbeque, and various local games, making experiences quite memorable. One of our most appreciated offers is our nature safari and sunset viewpoint at the nearby lake," boasts Samal.

As a person who spent most of their life on customer experience management in the corporate IT sector, the host found the hospitality sector to be no different. The concept of customer being the king and guests being God (*Athiti Devo Bhaba*) is analogous in both the industries.

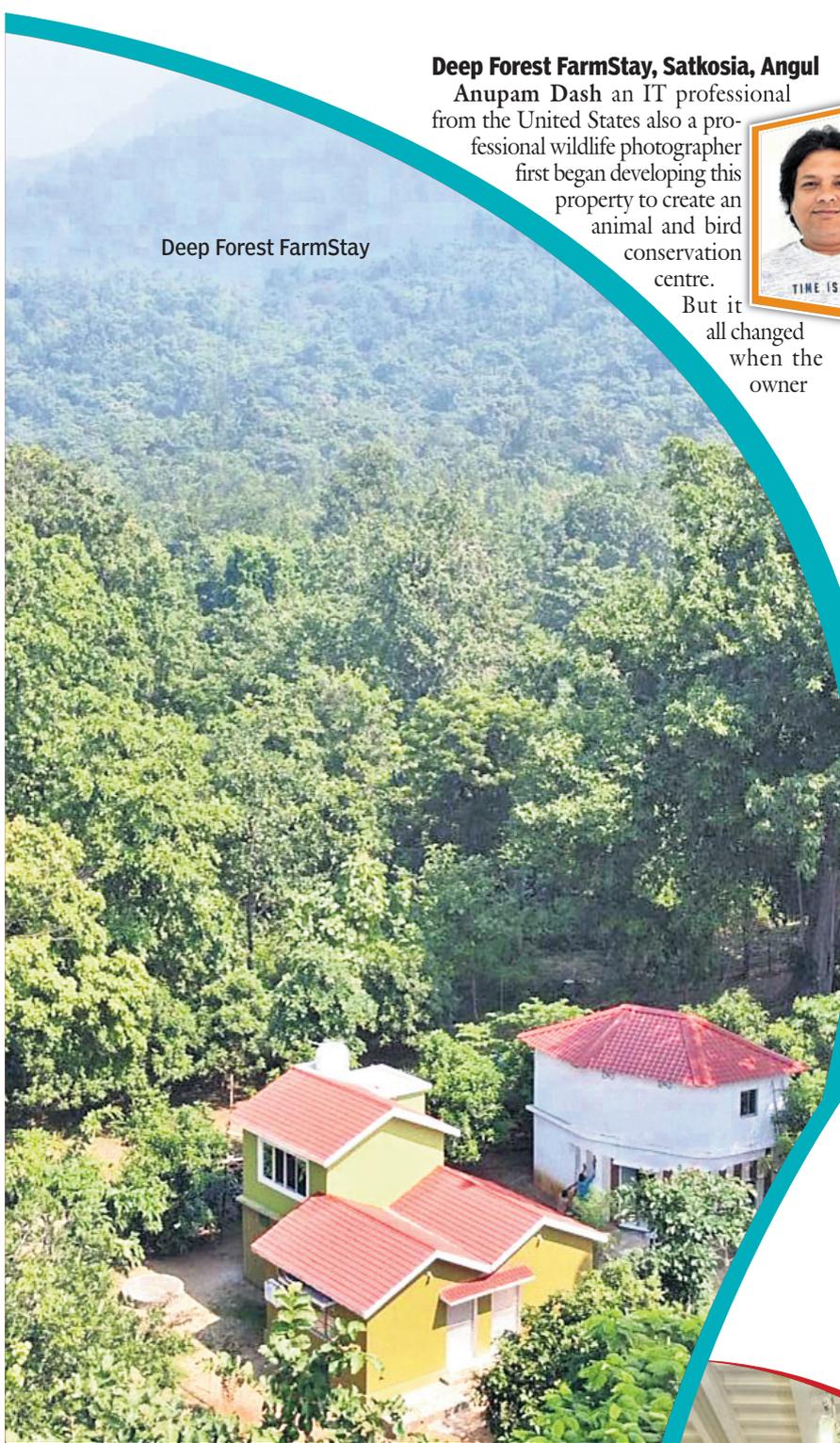
"Our team members continuously keep in touch with our guests to ensure they are updated on the current developments and offerings on an ongoing basis to maintain customer loyalty, treating our guests as 'guests for life'. With most of our guests, visiting us more than 5 to 7 times in the last few years, we are in the process of building a community of nature lovers with special privileges including A-La-Carte service, self-cooking, guided tours, and local community interactions," Samal, sharing his future plan, says.

Culturally, Odisha is known for being hospitable, friendly and welcoming.

However, for a successful staycation ecosystem there is a need to sensitise the providers on the professional etiquettes associated with the guest services along with making staycation patrons aware about the differences between hotels and retreats, he suggests.



Belgadia Palace



Deep Forest FarmStay

Deep Forest FarmStay, Satkosia, Angul

Anupam Dash an IT professional from the United States also a professional wildlife photographer first began developing this property to create an animal and bird conservation centre.

But it all changed when the owner



revamped the place to a FarmStay with an idea to create a property that can transport individuals back to their childhood, via going off the grid and connecting more with nature.

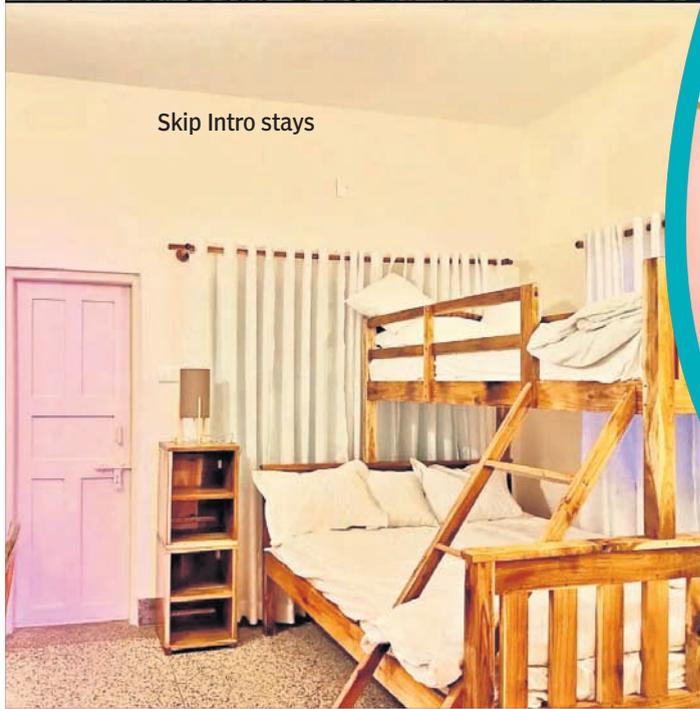
Deep Forest FarmStay, true to its name, is a four-acre property with six homes deep inside Satkosia forest under Athmallik subdivision of Angul district. It includes five standard cottages with double beds and one family cottage with six beds. There's a dormitory with eight beds, followed by two tents with two beds each. Belapunji, as the owner nicknamed it Bali of Odisha, is a nearby place where one may enjoy a bath in a shallow and safe river stream, surrounded by Mahanadi white sand and enormous black boulders. Guests can explore a few waterfalls, treks, and fun activities like barbecue, campfire, and mud baths, which make the FarmStay different from the likes of the hotel industry.

Anupam, sharing his journey so far, reveals, "With little to no experience, I wanted to make this location liveable for people by providing necessities for a comfortable stay. My exposure to travel made me comfortable enough to make this work in the centre of nature's woodland. There was nothing like a staycation option in Odisha back in 2016. The only thought that got me going was the farm amidst a forest with its beauty. We have a fresh-from-the-farm-to-table quality approach, so we serve exactly what we eat and what we produce at our farm including the vegetables, aside from the usual foodstuffs like chicken, mutton, and eggs, which we acquire from outside. I am residing here along with my elderly parents; hence, cleanliness and safety are quite essential. Before our guests arrive, we sanitise all the rooms. So, there is no question of providing an unsanitary room."

Belgadia Palace, Baripada

Princess Mrinalika and Akshita

BhanjDeo, the director of The Belgadia Palace, have restored and turned the place, owned by The Royals of Mayurbhanj into a staycation.



Skip Intro stays



Belgadia Palace hall

Nestled amidst a lush green backdrop of rolling hills and sparkling waterfalls of the rich and diverse Eastern-Indian countryside is the palace. An 18th-century Victorian brick-built double-storey structure in the classical Western style of Doric-Corinthian column and a mixture of Greek and Victorian architecture, the property is a replica of Buckingham Palace. Home to the erstwhile royal family of Mayurbhanj, this boutique homestay is a few hours from the Simlipal, an Elephant and

Tiger UNESCO Biosphere, the second largest national park in India.

The palace sits on a raised hill overlooking sprawling lawns on either side, with the entrance highlighted by a long drive-in with indigenous flora and fauna dotting either side and ending at the Elephant Porch or "Hathi Baramdah", which is a high arched porch built to accommodate the ruler when he would mount the howdah on an elephant for ceremonial processions.

A natural lake is situated at one border and a manicured walking path crisscrosses the entire estate. The open verandahs were meant to be viewing parlours for the women of the family to watch the famous Mayurbhanj Chhau performances at the main lawn. It is a martial arts dance form that was practiced by the state military and flourished under the patronage of the erstwhile rulers.

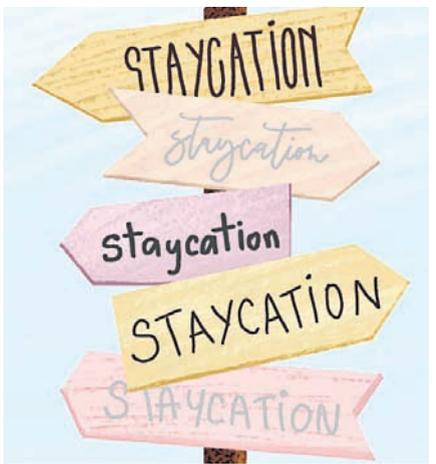
"Belgadia was restored keeping in mind that travel can be a means to sustainable development and that homes can be seen more as a platform than a property with social impact as a core ethos. The idea was to run The Belgadia Palace more as a startup whereby tourism is a vehicle of change to build a sustainable community that employs and skills the local community," says Akshita.

She continues: "It also aims to house and provide a platform for local community small enterprises whereby they get mentorship and potentially funding from travelers who stay and participate in artist residency programs and finally invest in sustainable infrastructure to reduce the palace's carbon footprint so the property is self-reliant and can take care of the surrounding community."

Converting the palace into a staycation facility was no less than a dream for the BhanjDeos.

On this Akshita says, "We would like to impact a much larger section of society via tourism to achieve our dream. With the state government not having a heritage policy unlike Rajasthan and Gujarat, it is a massive investment to restore a property such as this and build it to be a viable social enterprise."

Talking about how they dealt with COVID-19, she adds, "Opening a few months before the pandemic in 2019 was a double-edged sword so we had to change our marketing strategy. We were also required to understand the needs of the guests and cater to them with a whole new level of personalisation, which understood safety, luxury, and bespoke experiences rooted in something local but for a global palette, hence our vision includes an emphasis on nature and wellness."



EVEN AS SHE WILL BE IN HER 80s IN A FEW MONTHS, THE MAGIC SHE WIELDS ON THE CANVAS STILL CASTS ITS SPELL ON THE ART CONNOISSEURS. DEDICATION AND INVOLVEMENT COUPLED WITH HARD WORK HAVE LED HER TO WHERE SHE IS TODAY, SAYS KHALLIKOTE-BASED PAINTER-CUM-POET BASANTA KUMARI SAMANTA

SMRUTI REKHA BARIK, OP

'Have achieved all I ever wanted to'

says women have the heightened emotional intelligence to comprehend everything better than their male counterparts. Hence, I have the notion that learning the art of life and strengthening the approach towards the world, is way more important for a woman, because she looks at the worldly creations from a different perspective. The heartfelt desires and emotions attached to guiding students about sketches, alpona and rangoli rise when it's a female tutor.

■ You played a significant role in girls taking up painting as a career option. How excited do you think the youth of today are for the same?

■ The youth are both motivated and excited here in Odisha, but the government has the responsibility to create opportunities for them. Post-education, the youth don't have enough career options, which is an awful situation. To preserve fine arts, the government must make efforts to put the brilliant minds of youth to use. The inclusion of art in the basic educational curriculum of schools, colleges, and other institutions should be the system's first priority. The appointed teachers for art should get a stable place of work. In the current system, they are either guest faculties or contract-based teachers with a mere four-digit salary. This leads to the degradation of the quality of art.

■ What difference would it make if your family assisted you like the families do these days?

■ By God's grace, I had all the support from my family at that time, which has led me to where I am today. Had this been otherwise, I would probably be a dependent, mediocre homemaker running errands with every household chore.

■ Can a young painter take fine art as a profession today for a living? If yes, how do you think it is possible?

■ Through commercial art practice, one can earn in numbers, but without that, it is quite difficult. A lot of good artists are not only eking out their livelihoods, but flourishing in their profession by selling their works.

But the number is still not very encouraging. A professional artist should practice and teach at the same time. A profession without growth is no profession.

■ What was your source of inspiration throughout your journey?

■ Every family member has been my inspiration, as all of them have supported me throughout. I did everything I wanted to because they helped me through it. I studied, read literature and fine art, and pursued the career of my dreams. For somebody who is into arts and literature, there couldn't be a more suitable profession than teaching.

■ Who have you always looked up to as your 'guru' in the field of art?

■ Back in time, Sarat Chandra Dev, Jita Charan Mohanty, Ajit Keshari Ray, and Rabi Narayan Nayak were among the few legendary painters who had inspired me a lot by their body of works. They have sketched and inked the history of the land. Every time I hold a paintbrush, I reminisce how they have influenced my life. None of them are alive, but the way they held the brush, dipped it in colors, and inked the canvas were remarkable and are clearly etched in my memory.

■ Finally, what were your dreams when you started off? Have they been

realised?

■ I must say I never had any; there were no set aims or goals back then. All I ever thought about was never settling for a mediocre life, as most of the girls back then



did. I always wanted to work, and most importantly, work to pursue my passion. I followed my passion and achieved everything I ever wanted to.

Just a decade after Indian Independence when the Government School of Art and Crafts, the first ever fine art institution of Odisha, was established in Khallikote, let alone dreaming about a professional career in painting, girls in average Odia families were not even allowed to look beyond the four walls of the house. But acclaimed painter Basanta Kumari Samanta, a first batch alumna of that college, made her presence felt in the culture firmament of Odisha, through her works as an artist and an author. Hailing from Khallikote, Samanta has honed her skills to perfection over the years, making her a well-rounded artist who can express herself through a variety of mediums.

With the art losing its glory in recent times, **SundayPOST** was all ears for a few wise words from the aging painter who has numerous state and national level honours to her credit.

■ How would you compare art in current times against art from five decades back?

■ I have scrutinised the differences between decade-old, well-preserved art and the art of recent times. The difference in dedication, involvement, and hard work is quite evident. It would be incorrect to say that artists today put in little effort, but back then, the sheer dedication was palpable. In the method of sketching, the artists of today have a loose hand while drawing. If we can't expect a perfect drawing from the artists, considering the paintings and colours would be a far-fetched idea.

■ You have always been of the opinion that learning fine art is very much essential for girls. Would you elaborate on this little more?

■ On this, I would like to quote prominent astrologer Bisaraga who



Yash Raj Films' head honcho Aditya Chopra spilled the beans on the recent Netflix series *The Romantics*, including how he told actress Anushka Sharma to not tell her parents about her debut film, *Rab Ne Bana Di Jodi* starring Shah Rukh Khan.

Anushka reveals, laughing, "Everything was under wraps. Nobody knew about it, and Adi didn't want anybody to know that I was the lead actor. Adi literally said to me, 'you can't tell anybody. You cannot even tell your parents'. I said, 'Huh?'"

'Aditya asked me to hide my debut from parents'

The Romantics has been directed by Oscar and Emmy-nominated filmmaker Smriti Mundhra, who returns to Netflix after the phenomenal success of *Indian Matchmaking* and the *Never Have I Ever* franchise. The series includes chitchats and masala spoken by 35 ensemble Hindi movie industry leads from the YRF era, including Amitabh Bachchan, Aamir Khan, Shah Rukh Khan, Salman Khan, Ranbir Kapoor, and many others, about Yash Chopra and YRF's contribution to Indian cinema.

IANAS

Fame comes at a price: Anchal

Actress Anchal Sahu, who is currently seen essaying the role of Parineet Kakkhar in the show *Parineeti*, recalled how tough it was to balance her studies and acting career, and how she also had to let go of her school life.

Anchal said: "I do believe that being an actor, managing everything is not an easy task because you tend to lose some or other things. Due to work commitments, I was also not able to attend my school on a regular basis, however, I tried my best to be present on important days."

"Initially, I used to struggle to find a balance between my work and studies, but gradually, I learned to balance everything. I carry books with me on the set and study whenever I find time between the shots."

The 17-year-old actress is known for her performance in shows such as *Kyun Utthe Dil Chhod Aaye* and *Barrister Babu*.

She further said although she has to miss certain things for her TV shows she never regrets it and is happy with whatever she achieved till now.

"I think everything happens for a reason. To be honest, I don't regret anything in life, I do believe that fame comes at a price and for me, it was letting go of my school life," she concluded.

IANAS

Selena Gomez talks about dealing with online hate

Selena Gomez has opened up about dealing with social media hate and meanness after going through a breakup.

The *Rare* singer is one of the few celebrities who have openly admitted to outsourcing her social media accounts to her assistants.

When the 30-year-old was asked about that decision, she explained she was starting to get 'inundated' with a lot of information that she did not want to know. Explaining further, she added, "I went through a hard time in a breakup and I didn't want to see any of the (feedback)—not necessarily about the relationship, but the opinions of me versus (someone) else. There'd be thousands of really nice comments, but my mind goes straight to the mean one."

Selena also shared that although she did not care about people calling her 'ugly' or 'stupid', they tended to get extremely 'detailed'. "They write paragraphs that are so specific and mean. I would constantly be crying. I constantly had anxiety... I couldn't do it anymore. It was a waste of my time," she said.

AGENCIES

Kirti to reprise her role in Khichdi 2

Actress Kirti Kulhari,

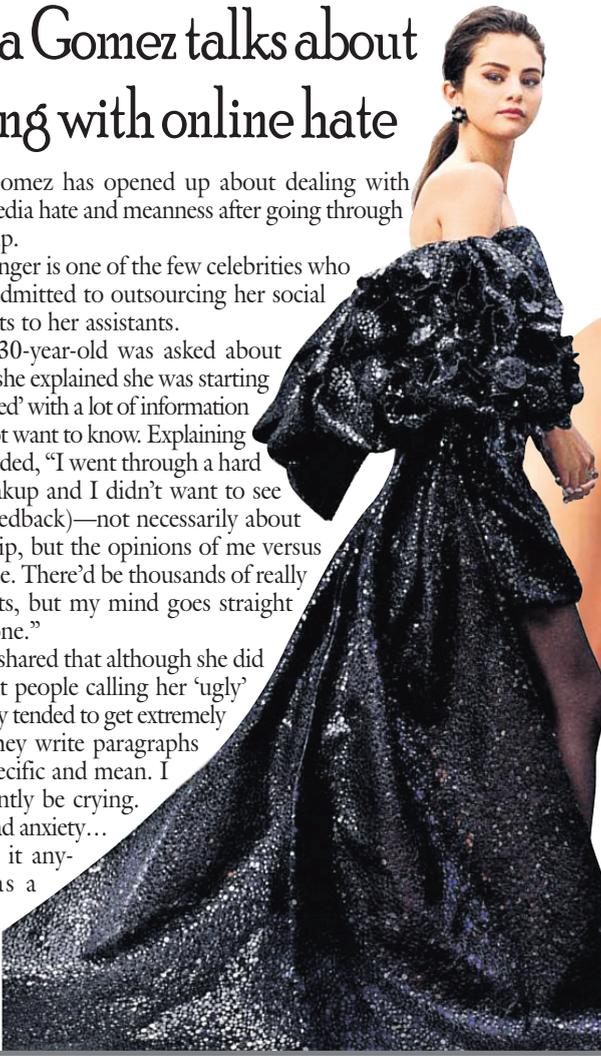
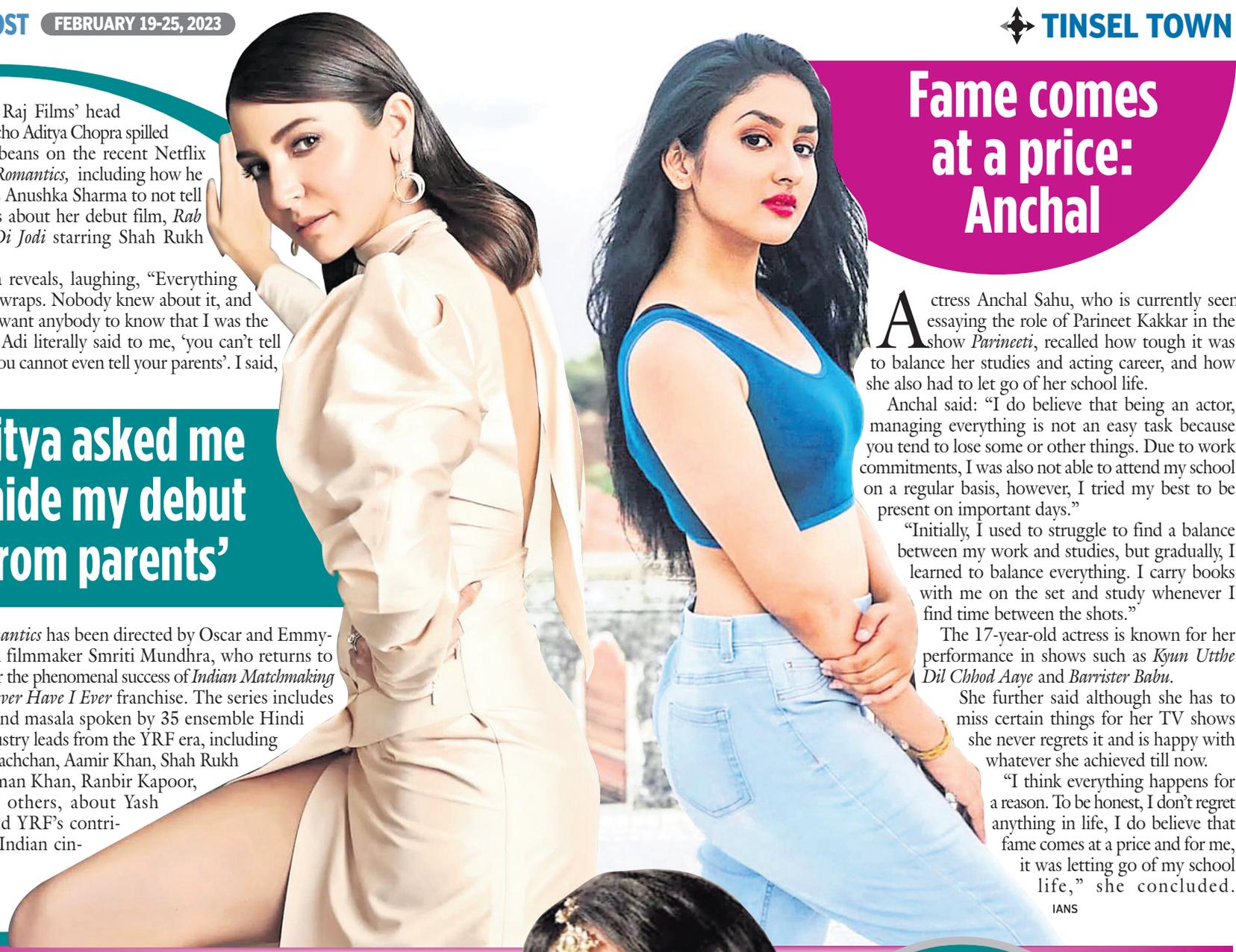
who made her mark in the industry with *Khichdi: The Movie*, is all set to be seen reprising her role of Parminder in *Khichdi 2* which is going to be a sequel to the 2010 comedy film directed by Aatish Kapadia.

Khichdi: The Movie which was released in 2010 revolved around the Parekh family and showed an interesting chemistry between Parminder, played by Kirti, and Himanshu (played by Jamnadas Majhetia).

Kirti, who was seen in movies such as *Shaitan*, *Pink*, *Blackmail*, *Uri: The Surgical Strike*, and the web series *Four More Shots Please*, talked about the sequel and said: "*Khichdi 2* is finally happening and it's going to be a hilarious ride. I have so many memories from the first film, from shooting the song *Chal Chal Bhonsle Market* to doing all the crazy comedy scenes."

Expressing her excitement about reprising her role of Parminder in *Khichdi 2* she added: "I am so happy to return as Parminder in *Khichdi 2* since this is where it all started for me."

IANAS



A Peek into People, Policy and Potpourri

In the world where the differences are getting more and more poles apart, where there is no scope for grey areas, the book by Prof. Satya Narayan Misra and Dr. Sanjaya Kumar Ghadai, *Between the Binary* comes as a whiff of fresh air that makes an attempt to search for truth by searching for a path between the binaries. A famous Sanskrit sutra from one of the Upanishads states *Ekam Sat, Vipra Bahuda Vadanti*, meaning there is one god called by different names or there are many ways to connect with god. This sutra best describes the intent behind the enormous efforts put in coming out with this masterpiece whose objective is to make people think on ways to unify and prosper together rather than finding reasons for division. Harold Hotelling, a famous American Statistician, in 1929 propounded Median Voter Theorem which basically talks about how politician gravitate towards the position of median voter as it is inclusive of interests of maximum voters. That's the importance of grey area i.e. the region between the 'binaries' which encompasses interest of all rather than being exclusivist and catering to only the popular and dominant section. The foundation of the book rests on these nobel principles with a vision of a better world for all. The book is a collection of numerous articles most of which have featured in a popular English daily **Orissa POST**, published from Odisha's capital Bhubaneswar.

Between The Binary has three parts to it viz. People, Policy, and Potpourri. The People's part covers the delightful metamorphosis of Manoj Das, from a Marxist to a writer, Shane Warne, the maverick cricketer, Lata Mangeshkar, the eternal minstrel and Girish Karnad, the last of our Renaissance man. It includes Roger Federer who retired recently and considered one of the All Time Greats in Tennis.

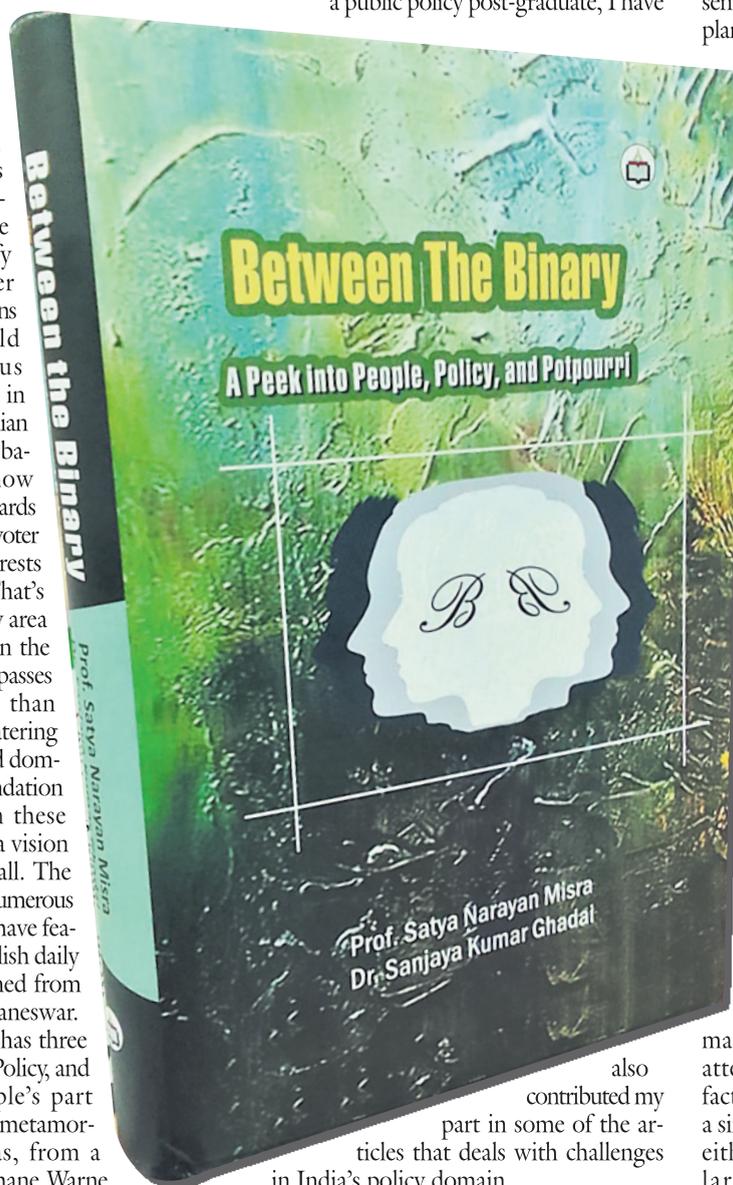
The Policy portfolio addresses a number of issues ranging from India@75 to the debate on freebies to myriad concerns in public policy. Having the advantage of a trained economist; and a yen for facts and logic, the edits in this part should engage the attention of both the connoisseur and the hoi polloi. It also includes a number of

opinion pieces on Prof. Misra's dalliance with court judgements and their nuances. Instead of being a fawning admirer, I have applied Prof. Misra's objective scalpel to analyse issues like judiciary in the policy space, judgements that have changed India and judicial overreach in issues like promulgating a uniform civil code. There are also interesting forays, like Nehru's first amendment to the Indian Constitution, which puts a question mark on his credentials as a liberal Democrat. As a public policy post-graduate, I have

the seeds of authoritarianism and emasculated institutions like the judiciary and the bureaucracy. This brief blot in democracy was, however, followed by economic liberalisation in 1991, which was not only practised by Congress but the present dispensation under Prime Minister Narendra Modi. The political difference has not divided the governing parties in following the economic ideology of the free market. However, the ideals of a multicultural society, tolerance towards dissenting opinions & minorities, are being supplanted by majoritarianism and religious fundamentalism. Harold J. Laski, the liberal democrat, had wisely said 'Responsible dissent is the essence of democracy. Sadly, a dissenter in India is being branded as anti-national.'

The governing elite of our times often pays scant attention to the minimum needs of a humungous section of our society, in terms of good education, skilling and digital access, basic health care at affordable cost, and minimal nutritional requirements in terms of protein, and micronutrients. I have often wondered why these basic requirements of the social sector, from Nehru to Modi, have escaped their attention in terms of policy priority. Instead rhetoric has replaced real action at the grassroots. As Jeffrey Sachs, the leading light of Millennium Development Goals rightly observes "Our greatest illusion is that a healthy society can be built around the mindless pursuit of wealth".

As India steps into the 75 years of independence and has made a mid-course ideological correction; from Fabian socialism to market economics, most of Prof. Misra's columns have been aimed to highlight the mismatch in our growth and development journey, and lack of shared prosperity, a central concern aired by Nobel laureate Joseph Stiglitz & our Constitution which pigeon holes socio-economic and distributive justice as a central mandate of a state. *Between the Binary* attempts to follow the straight path, of facts, logic and objectivity. There has been a sincere attempt by authors of not slumping either in to ideological or religious polarization, that seems to have engulfed our country, as never before.



also contributed my part in some of the articles that deals with challenges in India's policy domain.

The last part has Prof. Misra's opinion pieces on India's defence sector, with which I had a close association as an auditor, financial advisor and policy maker. It has also interesting insights into the role of the bureaucracy, and Russia's mindless brutal invasion of Ukraine. Dr Sanjaya Ghadai's Opinion pieces are mostly concerned with Community participation in Anganwadis, Early Childhood care & Education & some of the important targets of Sustainable Development Goals.

India's emergency in 1975 has been a watershed moment, as it sowed



KARTIK KISHORE

The reviewer is a Policy Researcher at Research and Information System for Developing Countries (RIS), New Delhi

Suchishree



PHOTO: ODISHA FASHION VILLA