

SEPTEMBER 3-9 2023

# SUNDAY POST

HERE . NOW



# A true trailblazer

JAYANTA MAHAPATRA

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COVER STORY





### Flexible offs

Since I work as a cinematographer rather than in a corporate setting, my Sunday schedule is not set. So my work breaks are my Sundays, when I watch films and take care of domestic chores.



With the cast and crew of upcoming movie Puskar

FALGU SATAPATHY, AN ALUMNUS OF CUTTACK-BASED BIJU PATNAIK FILM AND TELEVISION INSTITUTE, WAS DRAWN TO THE WORLD OF FILMS AT A YOUNG AGE, INSPIRING HER TO PURSUE A CAREER IN CINEMATOGRAPHY. ALONGSIDE THIS, SHE NURTURES A STRONG PASSION TO TRAVEL TO NEW PLACES, IMMERSE HERSELF IN DIFFERENT CULTURES, UNDERSTAND PEOPLE, AND EMBRACE DIFFERENT WAYS OF LIFE



### Travel fanatic

I've visited Bali, Vietnam, Andaman, Thailand, and adjacent islands, as well as various other spots in Odisha and other states. Despite this, if the opportunity arises, I am always eager to pack my bags and travel to new areas as well as revisit some of my favourite destinations.



With husband Hara Rath

### Spending time with family

Because my job requires me to travel the majority of the time, I make every effort to spend time with my family. As a part of a joint family, I try not to leave anyone out by engaging in meaningful interactions.

### Vegetarian at all times

As a vegetarian, I enjoy eating foods made from mushrooms, mustard, badi bhaja, and soya chunks. I also enjoy preparing stuff like Chili Panasa and Mushroom Besara.

### Fun Chats

I have acquaintances in both the film industry and the corporate world. So my vacations are primarily filled with chats about our work, future goals, movies, and food.



With dance mates

MADHUSMITA SAHU, OP

## WhatsApp This Week

Only on Sunday POST!

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

THE BEST MEMES OF THIS ISSUE

- What do you call a cow during an earthquake? A milkshake.
- What do you call a bee that lives in America? A USB.
- You know Bruce Lee was fast, but he had an even faster brother... Sudden Lee.

## THRILLING EXPEDITION

Sir, Last week's cover story on Voyager II, NASA's unmanned satellite launched roughly 45 years ago, was not only entertaining but also educational. An article on one of the most successful space missions came at a time when the world was celebrating the soft-landing of Chandrayaan-III on the moon's South Pole. Kudos to the scientists who, with the little resources and technology available at the time, built a satellite that is still transmitting data from space. Voyager II, as the name suggests, is a planetary pioneer that has outlived its usefulness. It's also exciting to read that the then-President of the United States made an emotional appeal to the people of other inhabited worlds via a message written on the spaceship. We never know, we might get some excellent news in the following days!

RAKESH SENAPATI, JAGATSINGHPUR

## LETTERS



### A WORD FOR READERS

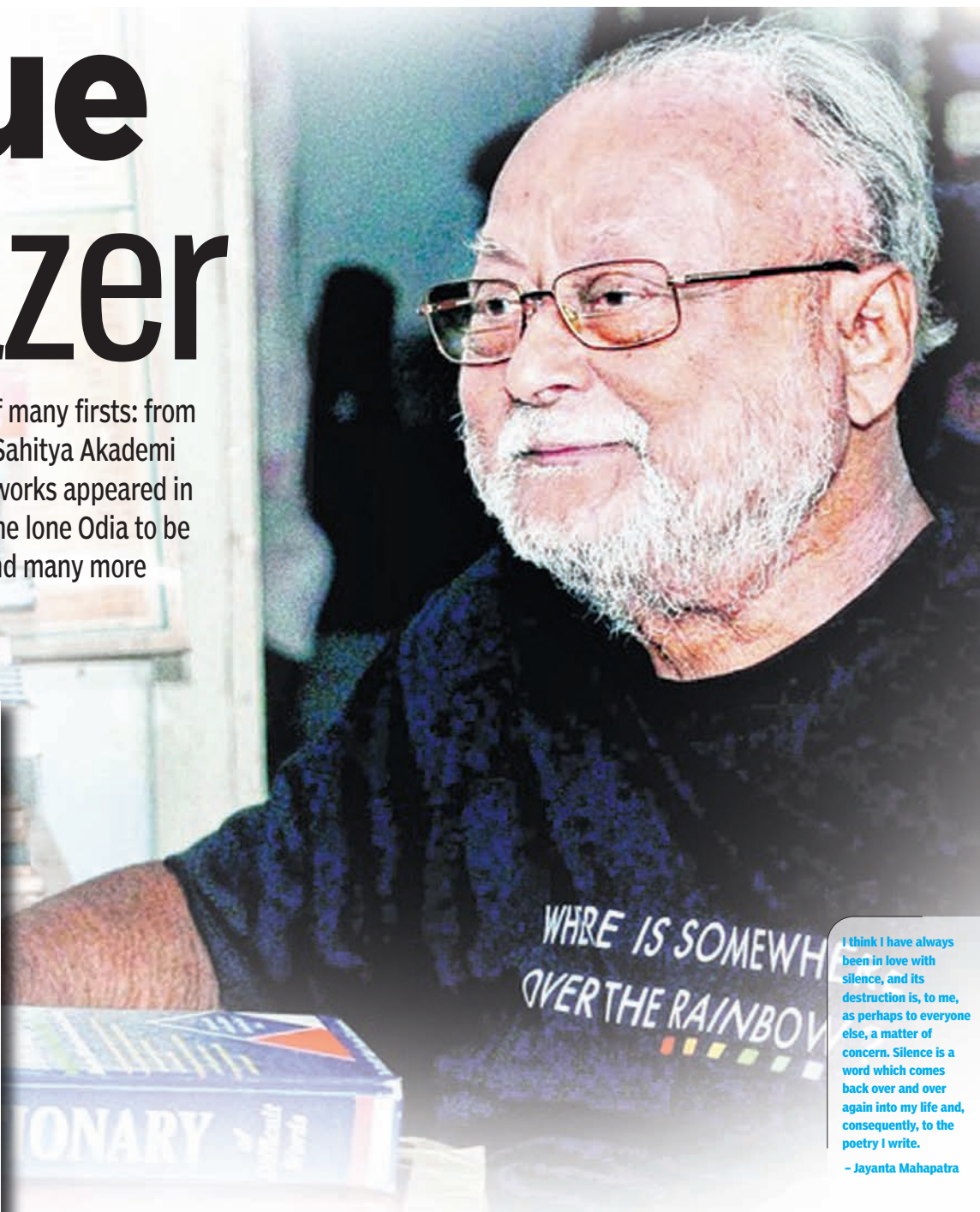
Sunday POST is serving a platter of delectable fare every week, or so we hope. We want readers to interact with us. Feel free to send in your opinions, queries, comments and contributions to

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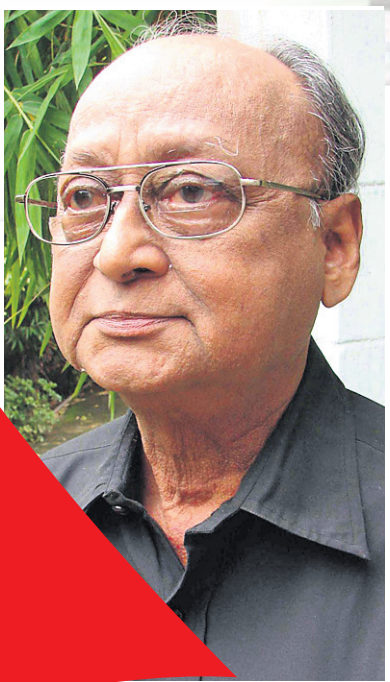


# A true trailblazer

Legendary poet Jayanta Mahapatra was a man of many firsts: from being the first Indian English poet to receive a Sahitya Akademi honour and a Fellowship, to the only one whose works appeared in over a dozen of prestigious foreign journals, to the lone Odia to be feted with so many international awards, and many more



I think I have always been in love with silence, and its destruction is, to me, as perhaps to everyone else, a matter of concern. Silence is a word which comes back over and over again into my life and, consequently, to the poetry I write.  
- Jayanta Mahapatra



BIJAY MANDAL, OP



The sparks of the funeral pyre might have gone after the remains got aligned with the elements, however, the fragrance of the legendary poet Jayanta Mahapatra's repertoire will continue to live and inspire generations to come.

For friends, contemporaries and fans Jayanta reminisces the jovial creative genius who completed his earthly journey at a young age of 95! Yes, he never aged to be called old, they retort. He left many unfinished tasks which they still wanted to rollout from the hospital bed of the indomitable fighter who had cheated death on many occasions in the past. Sadly, cruel destiny had something ominous in store this time.

However, after coming to terms with the reality, his 'lovers' - as Mahapatra's fans call themselves- would prefer to fall back on his legacy to cope with the losses.

Talking about his inheritance and works, this space is insufficient to describe them and what he has achieved in a career spanning over half a century. From being the first Indian English poet to get a Sahitya Akademi award and a Fellowship to his poems being part of prestigious poetry journals from across the globe such as *The New Yorker*, *The Sewanee Review*, *New England Review*, *Chicago Review*, *The Hudson Review*, *The Kenyon Review*, *The New Republic*, *Poetry International*, *Boundary*, *Poetry* (Chicago), *Georgia*

*Review*, and many others, his has been an incredible body of works. Apart from his craft, there are several more aspects of his life that will undoubtedly become folklore in a few years from now.

Here's a close look at some select anecdotes from his eventful life.

### Seeking escape in books

He had a difficult childhood. "Taunted, bullied by my classmates for almost all of my school years; perhaps because I was good at studies, and then because I looked like a naked little worm, I sought refuge in books - books that made me dream. I loved to go into the novels of H. Rider Hoggard, Edgar, Rice Burrows, and Walter Scott and all my loneliness seemed to go away," the legend reportedly told *Different Truths*, a social journalism platform, about his early years. Jayanta also told how he ran away from home and, after arriving in Mumbai (Formerly Bombay), slept on a bench at the Chinchpokli rail station because he didn't have any money. He also spent a hot and humid night outside the Howrah railway station with some homeless people who had nowhere to go.

### Transition from Physics to poetry

His profession was teaching Physics, but his love was writing poetry, which won him international acclaim. The first is about science, whereas the other is about feeling. What did he have to say about this contradiction? "Physics never interfered with my love for literature," he remarked in an exclusive interview with aforementioned portal and

went on to add, "When I started writing poetry and that too at a late age, I felt my English could be the right medium to express my emotions and I wasn't wrong. Higher physics and poetry said the same thing: the chaos in the universe and the ambiguity, the uncertainty in life. Physics was the poetry of the intellect and poetry the science of human emotions. And there could be no contradictions between them."

### Burdened with awards

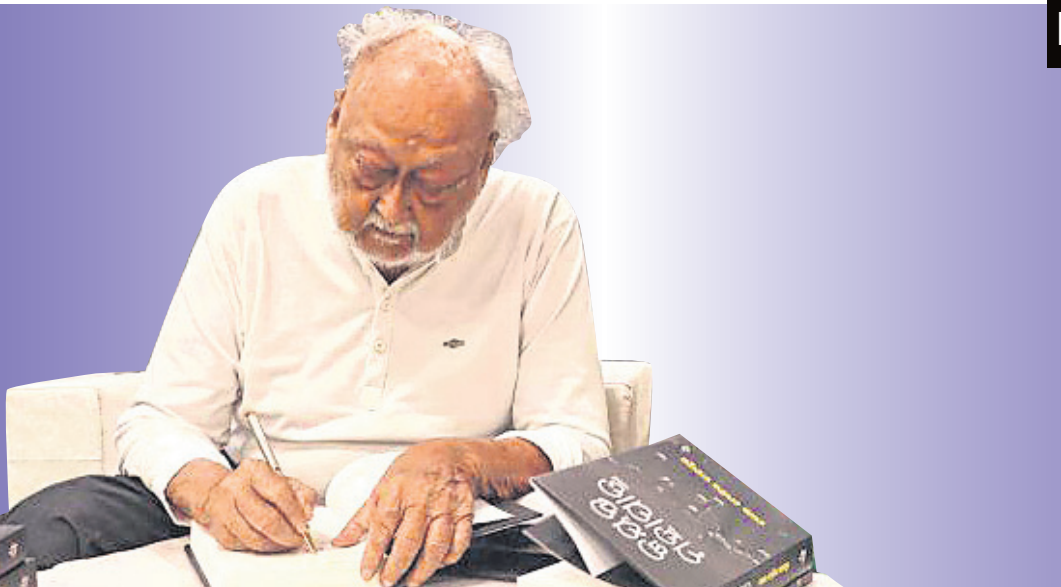
Most creative people yearn for honours and recognition. However, Jayanta Mahapatra was in another league. He admitted on multiple occasions that receiving prizes had become a burden for him. They were sort of weight on his shoulders that he never became free from them. Quoting Sir Winston Churchill he once remarked, "Medal glitters but it also casts a shadow." No wonder, he didn't think twice before returning the Padma honour in 2015 to protest against 'rising intolerance in India.'

### Secret behind youthfulness

This was nicely articulated in a recent Facebook post by his close friend and eminent author Jagannath Prasad Das (JP). A tiny handwritten note in Odia, May 15, 2010, from Jayanta to JP says, "It doesn't feel like getting older if you love people or things around you with intensity, isn't it JP?" Then, noted poet and former editor of family magazine *Sachitra Vijaya*, Kedar Mishra shares how the great poet was impacted by the love and affection showered on him by his admirers.



LIFE IN MOMENTS



With wife Jyotsna Rani Das



While receiving Padma Shri



With close friend and eminent author JP Das



With Nepali poet Abhi Subedi and Indian poet Sitakanta Mahapatra



With vocalist Shyamamani Devi

PIC: PRADIPTA MOHANTY

“With such abundance of love, who else would be king except me,” he reportedly told Mishra beaming with contentment.

On death

On how Jayanta Mahapatra viewed death in his twilight years, former VC of Central University Odisha Sachidananda Mohanty, quoting the former in his write-up in The Frontline mentioned, “Death has different meanings at different stages of your life. For example, when you are about 50, you are afraid of death as you see so many of your close associates dying. But when you come to my age, when you are 80-plus, the fear of death is no longer there. As I live in isolation these

days, I get this overwhelming desire for death at times. But the next moment, the urge to live comes back.”

Did he sense the end?

The aging poet had the premonition about the last days? Author and publisher of Dhauli Books Manu Dash thinks so. Sharing a chat he had with Jayanta a few days ago, Dash revealed, “When I said to JM to bring out his forthcoming anthology Birds of Water in December 2023, he laughed and asked: Do you think I shall survive till then? I was shocked and abruptly answered: I shall bring it out on your 96th birthday October 22. He seemed happy but kept quiet,”

Here’s a composition titled A Poem on Untouchability from that book.

It’s my appeal to you, dear friends- That, on the day of my death Do not come in your grief To see me for the last time

It pains me a lot To think of that day When, standing by my dead body, You’d be speaking to yourselves that, as soon as you’d get back home, you would wash your body clean, before you do anything else.

Perhaps Dash is right.

No retirement from writing



Releasing his last book Jhanzi at hospital

He had been fighting for his life in the hospital for over a month, yet he never stopped writing. “I don’t want to lie idle on the bed. Please provide me with a pencil and a few sheets of paper. I want to write,” the poet expressed while getting treatment. In fact, at the hospital, a book of his titled Jhanzi was released. He also wanted to check the final draft of Chandrabhaga 20, the magazine he had edited for the last four decades. Only after his final clearance was the content sent to print.

A FEW AMAZING FACTS

Rare failure At the age of 13, he couldn’t qualify Senior Cambridge in first class. He had to settle for second division. The great Indian English writer couldn’t even pass English paper during his initial years. Then he also failed in English and Mathematics in his first year of intermediate. Besides, Jayanta couldn’t clear his practical in Optics and dropped the theory paper during his Graduation in Patna University.

Learnt Odia from English professor

Jayanta was unable to read or write Odia when took admission in Ravenshaw University (then a college). So, he sought help from Srimad Sahoo, a professor in English at Ravenshaw and learnt Odia, a compulsory subject then, privately.

An abandoned Calcutta trip

Despite being bashful and childlike, he has always been a fantastic lover. He fell in love with Jyotsnarani, a classmate. Despite Jyotsna's family's opposition to their love, the two married when Jayanta was 20.

He was completely smitten. So much so that he borrowed Rs 200 from a lender to spend his vacation in Kolkata (formerly Calcutta). He checked into a low-cost hotel there. However, Jayanta had to abandon the vacation in the middle and return home because the money he borrowed had been spent on books.

Monroe fanboy

Jayanta was always interested in photography in his young days. Images shot by him even appeared in Film India magazine published from Mumbai. However, photography was an expensive hobby at that time also. So, he had to drop the idea of becoming a photographer and leaned towards poetry. But before that he used to watch a lot of movies and was a major Marlyn Monroe fan. He was very sad when the Hollywood actress died under suspicious circumstances.

SOURCE: REBATI/SACHITRA VIJAYA



**SHORT STORIES PENNED BY THE RUSSIAN WRITER BEWILDER, ENLIGHTEN, TRANSFORM THE BANAL INTO BEAUTIFUL GIVING THE READERS A SLICE OF LIFE THEY WOULD HAVE OTHERWISE PASSED OVER**

# Anton Chekhov- An artist of life

father in the warmth of his memories.

Maxim Gorky says about Chekhov “No one understood the tragedy of life’s trifles as clearly and discerningly as Anton Chekhov, no one before him has been able to paint with such merciless ruthlessness the inglorious and beautiful picture of people’s life in the dim chaos of philistine prosiness.” Concentrating on apparent trivialities he drives home bare truths. He disliked shoddiness ridiculed it and showed it up dispassionately even where everything appeared organised and in order. In *Ward no 6*, an elderly doctor non-resistant to evil by refraining from remedying the appalling conditions in

woman running through all her attachments finds real love in looking after a little boy, not her own, with all his childish petulance. “Ah how she loved him. Of her former attachments not one had been so deep, never had her soul surrendered to any feeling so spontaneously, so disinterestedly and so joyously as now that her maternal instincts were aroused. For this little boy with the dimple in his cheek and the big school cap she would have given her whole life, she would have given it with joy and tears of tenderness. Why? Who can tell why?”

*The Lady with the Dog* is one of Chekhov’s most celebrated stories that talks of illicit

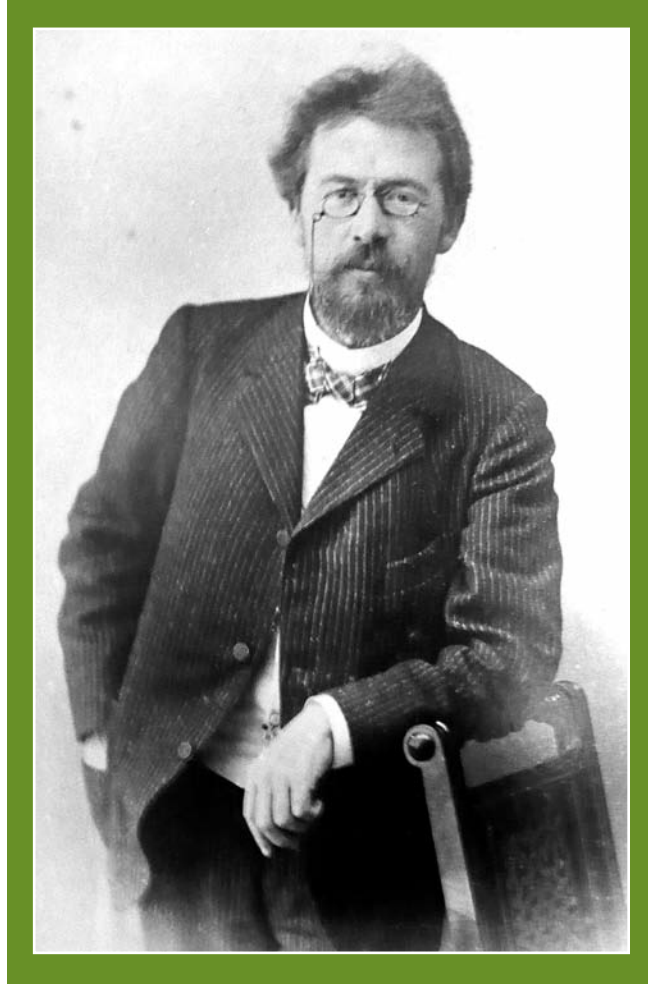
love of a married man and a married woman who keep up their liaison through clandestine meetings keeping up appearances but with a burden of guilt, till they feel the need to tackle their feelings upfront and cast off the deception. A solution should be there and life should start afresh and the realisation that the road ahead would be far from smooth. Vladimir Nabokov claimed it to be the greatest short story ever written. In his story *Peasants* it is an honest portrayal of the Russian peasant, the ignorance, the moral degeneracy, violence and impoverishment. Yes to live with them was terrible; but yet they were human beings, they suffered and wept like human beings and there was nothing in their lives for which one could not find excuse. Hard labour that made the whole body ache at night, the cruel winters, the scanty harvests, the overcrowding and they had no help and none to whom they could look for help. This story was considered the greatest piece of literature and continues to remain his masterpiece. Another heartrending story is *Sleepy* where a thirteen year old girl has to look after the baby of her employers amidst other chores. Ill-

treated, sleep-starved she is unable to keep the child quiet. In her desperation, her struggle to keep awake and her dreams of her home she throttles the baby and drifts into happy, innocent slumber. Chekhov gives us small moments, epiphanies, struggles, the divine comedy and tragedy of life and the result is an awakening all its own.

In his embrace of the trivial and the inconsequential, in his eye for the ironic, his humour laced with sympathy, his artless artistry and guileless style, his mood of uncertainty, he baffled reader and critic alike, and defied effective imitation by other writers. There is no linear progression in his stories, no conclusive endings and the readers are left to wonder at the ultimate fate of his characters. Thomas Seltzer, Russian American scholar and translator says, “Chekhov’s works show an outstanding resourcefulness and versatility. There is no monotony, no repetition, no two stories are alike. Chekhov does not invent. He merely reveals. Divination is a better term than invention. Chekhov divines the most secret impulses of the soul, scents out what is buried in the subconscious and brings it up to the surface. He is equally at home everywhere. The peasant, the labourer, the merchant, the priest, the professional and the scholar, the military officer and the government functionary, Gentile or Jew, man woman or child – Chekhov is intimate with all of them.”

As Sean O’Casey the Irish playwright says, “There is little that can be said about Chekhov, for he is too great, too many sided to be measured. He goes about in his own light and we can but see him and listen to his gentle voice full of melody and grace and truth. A man of the people, he took hold of their words and deeds, and longings and tears made them into songs, magical muse muted.”

Within his gentleness and his grace, he was as sturdy as his own lovely Russian birch tree. Courage was his too, great courage that could be attacked but never riven; and around him, all his life shone the aura of hope. So, Chekhov’s short story bewilders, enlightens, transforms the banal into beautiful giving us a slice of life we would have otherwise passed over.



the hospital is himself incarcerated through the machinations of a subordinate. His stories contain a submerged moral than a philosophical or ethical doctrine. He deals with all conceivable situations and emotions no matter how microscopic and endows them with a life and soul. By virtue of this power *The Steppe* a long short story, an uneventful record of peasants travelling through flat monotonous landscape becomes a thing of beauty. Seen through the eyes of a young child the flow of life with its incident is full of dramatic interest that mesmerises the reader. In *The Darling* a



SUDHA DEVI NAYAK



# Rani wants to reprise her fearless cop role



Actress Rani Mukerji, who has been in the *Mardaani* series, expresses she would love to reprise the role of fearless cop Shivani Shivaji Roy once again.

The *Ghulam* actress discloses, "*Mardaani 3* is in the ideation stage. Once YRF has a great and concrete story idea, it will get into the scripting stage. I'm excited to see how it shapes up as! I am crossing my fingers because I would love to play the part of Shivani. When I did *Mardaani 2*, I was quite nervous because I had never done a sequel before. Because I leave my characters behind each time a film gets over and I don't know if I will be able to reprise that part again. With *Mardaani 2*, I was surprised that I enjoyed reprising the part and now I want to reprise it again in 3."

Rani concluded with, "I will be very happy and excited if the *Mardaani 3* script comes about really something that we would make a film. Because I as an actor always believe that we don't want to do a film because it sounds good. We need to do a film when the script is good."

AGENCIES

# 'Relevance of an actor depends on social media'

Actor Babil Khan, who made his debut with Anvita Dutt's *Qala*, said an actor's relevance and ability to obtain work today depend on social media and who finds it challenging to walk the fine line between honesty and pretence.

"I'm struggling so much because I was brought up in a household where I got a phone when I was 16 or 17-year-old. I have no relation with phones and social media but we have to do certain things now. To live in the discipline of an actor, you have to understand honesty with oneself and with life. Like, how do you look at things in an honest way...Now your relevance is dependent on social media and your job as an actor is dependent on that relevance," the actor told PTI in an interview.

"It's just that you know when you are pretending and lying and when you do so you feel turmoil within yourself. That is a very spiritual and mental turmoil, and that is a tough thing to deal with, like ego management, the pleasing, you cannot say the truth to people because people might feel bad," he concludes.

On the workfront, Babil will be seen next in *Friday Night Plan*.

PTI



# Radhika's take on launching star kids

Actress Radhika Apte who has aced numerous different roles in her acting career took a dig at how filmmakers launch star kids without caring much about whether their acting skills are up to the mark.

In a throwback interview, the *Andhadhun* actress said "I'd like to give actors more value in the industry. In the sense that you want the best cinematographer, you want the best sound designer, but you don't want the best actor. You want a star."

She further added, "If a cinematographer wants to better his craft, he has to learn more. Actors who want to better their game, they have to more exercise, dress better, get clicked more, and do things on their faces. They don't go for courses or for coaching, for performance you know because that's not valued. They go like 'That's a star kid, or this is somebody being promoted by somebody, cast them, acting to karwa lenge.' And then they say, actors are dumb. The actual craft is not respected at all."

Radhika Apte was recently seen in *Made In Heaven 2*.

AGENCIES



# Dosanjh teams up with Camilo

Actor-singer Diljit Dosanjh teamed up with Grammy nominated and five-time Latin Grammy winner singer Camilo on new song *Palpita*, an original track released for the second season of Coca-Cola's global music campaign Coke Studio.

"I have always felt a fascination for Indian culture and its traditions. I had the chance to go once and fell in love with it. Years later, I noticed what's happening with Punjabi music and how artistes like Diljit, are crossing over and sharing their music, culture, and sound worldwide. I've admired Diljit for a long time, long before this collaboration came to me, so it was an incredible surprise to see it all come to life," said Camilo.

"Collaborating with the incredibly talented Latin artist Camilo on *Palpita* for Coke Studio has been a truly enriching experience. Music has this extraordinary ability to bridge cultures and create an unbreakable bond among people, and this collaboration exemplifies that beautifully. Working on this project has been an absolute joy, and I'm eagerly looking forward to it," said Diljit.

AGENCIES





In the present scenario, educators must revamp their teaching strategies, be creative with content, and identify what captures students' attention, says Deepak Ranjan Padhi, an assistant professor at NIFT, Bhubaneswar

TEACHERS' DAY – SEPTEMBER 5

# Changing landscape of education



MADHUSMITA SAHU, OP

In recent decades, education has undergone a significant transformation due to technological advancements and evolving teaching methods. Traditional classrooms are gradually being replaced by digital learning environments, incorporating a wide range of technological tools and online platforms. This shift has redefined how students learn and created fresh challenges and opportunities for educators.

Similarly, teachers have evolved from knowledge providers to facilitators, mentors, and curators of learning experiences.

Ahead of Teachers' Day, here's what a few teachers have to share with **Sunday POST** on the transition and the role of teachers in the process.

### 'Transition into digital format wasn't seamless'

Shaheen Akhtar, PGT English in Kendriya Vidyalaya of Deogarh, says, "I've been an educator for approximately 3 years, and I believe the phase of change was fairly demanding. While newer teachers are familiar with modern tools, their more experienced counterparts are not as comfortable. They tend to struggle in adapting to new processes and are not very comfortable with technology."



Sharing her experience she adds, "I've worked as an educator since the start of the pandemic. Throughout that period, educational institutions predominantly adopted online platforms like Zoom and Google Meet as it was the need of that period. However, my transition into this digital format wasn't entirely seamless. I've experienced teaching in both online and offline settings and observed a significant transformation. The dynamics of student-teacher engagement have shifted. While face-to-face interactions were possible in offline classes, fostering engagement in virtual settings has proven to be

challenging and draining."

Therefore, Akhtar is for traditional in-person teaching instead of online classes.

"Because the process of establishing online connections and enrolling students in digital platforms takes nearly 15 minutes, which ends up consuming the entire teaching duration. In a traditional classroom setup, we have more teaching time available and can utilise it fully without any time wastage," she points out.

"In online classes, students often lack full focus, opting to deactivate their camera and microphone to engage in other activities. On the other hand, in traditional classes, this isn't possible, and the in-person presence of



students significantly enhances the learning process compared to the online setting," says Shaheen putting emphasis on how the students' engagement is important for their growth.

### 'Embracing new educational technologies is essential'

Esther Ghanta Rout, a teaching faculty at Stewart School, Cuttack, says she has a desire to spread positivity wherever she teaches. She also has a genuine fondness for being in the company of children.

Talking about the change in teaching mode, Rout says, "The rise of digital learning has enabled adaptable teaching techniques. Utilising audio-visual



aids enhances students' grasp and memory retention compared to traditional teaching." She adds by saying, "The advent of digital learning technologies introduces captivating and immersive educational encounters, amplifying student involvement. Merging multimedia resources, real-time collaboration, and interactive assessments garners student interest, fostering active engagement. This tech-driven transformation makes learning more vibrant and accessible, facilitating customised and varied learning exploits."

Battling for the changes, she further says, "For educators, ongoing learning and adapting to changes are vital to improve teaching methods. Embracing new educational technologies is

while digital learning promotes active participation and peer cooperation."

### 'Training more important than technology'

Deepak Ranjan Padhi, Asst. Professor, NIFT, Bhubaneswar, commenting the challenges of online education says, "The research paper I presented at India HCI 2021 international conference explored challenges faced by educators during online teaching. Switching from traditional chalkboard methods to e-learning during the pandemic was tough. Online tools like Zoom, Google Talk, and Skype were challenging to navigate, designed more for meetings than teaching. Despite features like Zoom's Scribble boards aiding classroom interactions, educators struggled due to limited training. Schools conducted exams online, using methods like photographing handwritten answers via WhatsApp, limiting evaluation quality. Crafting online questionnaires posed another challenge."



Pointing out other hurdles, he adds, "Despite Odisha's 5T schools initiative, technology's education potential remained untapped. Teacher training was insufficient and generating appealing digital content, like PowerPoint presentations too was difficult. Training, practice, and evaluation were needed. Online learning also hindered group activities and meaningful interactions."

Training is more important than technology, observed Padhi. Underscoring its need, he continues: "It became evident that teachers' skill enhancement was more crucial than the technology itself. While the shift to online education brought up concerns of decreased attention spans and student engagement due to the freedom granted by virtual platforms, the effectiveness of content delivery was already a concern in physical classrooms."

Asked what the teachers need to do in present scenario, he suggests, "Now, educators must revamp their teaching strategies, be creative with content, and identify what captures students' attention."



Traditional classroom teaching and Online teaching



# Samata



**PHOTO: KAMAL PHOTOGRAPHY**