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WORLD SAREE DAY - DECEMBER 21

Weaving Dreams

UNDAY

Arlin Ankita is an accomplished dancer. But the Baripada-bred became a celebrity overnight after appearing in Odia films 'Adha Lekha Gapa', 'Mukha', and 'Bichha Gang'. However, the actress wants to finish her studies in Economics before taking up further acting assignments. Arlin enjoys spending pastime with her younger sister

Revitalising mornings

I begin my mornings by waking up early and engaging in some logging and exercise, either with my father or by running laps at the nearby stadium.





Holistic living

On Sundays, I make sure to complete the household tasks and take care of the plants. This apart, I enjoy taking part in religious rituals at a nearby temple and assisting my mother in preparing dinner. On vacation, I like to unwind by listening to music.

WITH FRIENDS

Foodie stories

As a typical Mayurbhanjia, I love indulging in mudhi mansa, with Pakhala being my ultimate comfort meal. I also enjoy trying out new recipes by watching YouTube videos.

Friendship beyond books

Because I'm an actor, my classmates send me important notes and help me prepare for tests. I consider them my kindred spirits. On Sundays, we love exploring new places, eating street cuisine, watching movies together, dancing and participating in a variety of enjoyable activities.

MADHUSMITA SAHU, OP



ROLE OF MOUNTAINS

Sir, Last week's cover story 'Preserving the Peaks' delves into the environmental challenges Odisha faces, revealing the alarming impact of deforestation and mining on its well-kept secret-its majestic mountains. People involved in the elimination of peaks shouldn't forget that mountains are the world's "water towers," providing 60–80% of all freshwater resources for the Earth. At least half of the world's population depends on mountain ecosystem services to survive-not only water but also food and clean energy. Environmentalist Ranjan Panda has rightly emphasised the critical role mountains play in local ecosystems, stressing the immediate need for conservation. As the future of Odisha's mountains hangs in the balance, the plea for comprehensive conservation, sustainable practices, and global awareness should resonate, calling for a unified effort to ensure their preservation.

DEEPAK SAHU, KORAPUT

MIXED BAG



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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SUNDAY POST DECEMBER 17-23 2023

WORLD SAREE DAY - DECEMBER 21

Weaving Dreams

Of late, the handloom traditions of Odisha have evolved into contemporary ensembles, with a new crop of designers experimenting to create international-standard couture fashion, says fashionista and filmmaker Rajesh Ranjan Mohanty

MADHUSMITA SAHU, OP

ast week, the Ministry of Textiles organised India's largest ever 'One Bharat Sari Walkathon' in Mumbai. The event aimed to promote the handloom saree culture in India by inviting the participation of women across the country to showcase their ways of wearing sarees and also promoted the spirit of traditional textiles, supporting the idea of 'Vocal for Local.'

In the ever-evolving world of fashion, where trends come and go, there remains a timeless symbol of elegance and cultural heritage—the handloom saree. Woven with precision, care, and centuries of tradition, handloom sarees are not just garments but a piece of art.

Back home, Odisha, a state rich in culture and heritage, boasts a vibrant tapestry of handloom traditions that tell tales of skill, artistry, and centuries-old craftsmanship. The handloom heritage here

is a treasure trove of diverse weaving techniques, intricate designs, and vibrant quisite Ikat, Bomkai, Sambalpuri, Khandua, and Tussar silk, each narrating a unique story of tradition and craftsmanship. The intricate tie-and-dye method and the use of indigenous materials showcase the exceptional skills passed down through generations.

hues. The state

is renowned

for its ex

In recent years, there has been a concerted effort to revive and promote Odisha's handloom traditions. While preserving traditional designs, there is also a push for innovation and adapting to contemporary tastes. Young designers and entrepreneurs are collaborating with weavers to create modern interpretations of Odisha handloom, making it rele-

vant

in

today's fashion landscape.

Ahead of World Saree Day, a few designers and an artisan share with **Sunday POST** their thoughts on revival of handloom fashion.

'Rejuvenating Odisha's handloom industry is the need of the hour'

Fashion designer and documentary filmmaker **Rajesh Ranjan Mohanty**, sharing his thoughts on various forms of handloom saree, says, "Odisha is home to various weaving clusters that manufacture distinctive handloom items. For instance, the production of Khandua Pata/silk occurs in the Maniabandha and Nuapatna clusters. The Sambalpur, Sonepur, and Bargarh clusters are renowned for their intricate Sambalpuri Pata/silk handlooms, while the Gopalpur cluster specialises in Tussar silk products. The Kotpad cluster is recognised for its handloom treasures, featuring the use of natural dyes."

He carries on adding, "The ancient tradition of Odisha handloom Ikat, spanning a thousand years, gained prominence in South-East Asian countries. For centuries, the intricate Khandua Pata has been used at Srimandir. Our sarees have played a pivotal role in festivals and cultural events throughout history. In recent times, these handloom traditions have evolved into contemporary ensembles, with a new generation of designers experimenting to create international-standard couture fashion. Events such as the Odisha Fashion Week have taken the initiative to exclusively showcase and promote Odisha Handlooms through their fashion shows."

Baring about his plans to promote the Odisha handloom, he continues: "I believe in the rejuvenation of Odisha's handloom industry, and we have been actively collaborating with weaver clusters and Tata Trust (Antaran Initiative) to revive our hand-

COVER

loom heritage. This involves the creation of over 200 new saree designs in collaboration with 150 weavers from various clusters. We are committed to providing training and guidance to weavers in developing new designs, incorporating modern weaving technologies, exploring the use of natural dyes and shibori techniques, and enhancing branding through activities like brand shoots and fashion shows, supported by social media promotion," says the *Aau Nakara Kaha Age Guhari* director.

Rajesh is also working on a project called



'Malhar: Let's Bring Back the Handloom Sarees'. Malhar represents a commendable effort to modernise and revitalise the traditional Odisha handloom saree culture.

"This year-long endeavour aims to showcase the rich heritage of our handloom sarees, emphasising the emotions tied to these exquisite pieces. Malhar is a collaborative initiative led by Earthy Hues, Rajesh Ranjan Films, and Odisha Fashion Week, seeking to reimagine and contemporize Odisha's handloom saree culture within the realm of modern fashion. It transcends mere collection status; instead, it stands as a proactive movement to redefine the saree as a statement in the fashion choices of young women.



Different types of handloom saree in display

Comprising 50 episodes, this initiative features diverse sets of women from various walks of life elegantly donning our sarees in distinct styles," the filmmaker shares.

"I think Odisha handloom will strive to be the textile for modern young generation customers through innovative designs and fashion products," predicts Rajesh.

'Revival of handloom sarees in Odisha marks a cultural resurgence'

Goodlee Rani P Sitanshu Malinee, a fusion fashion designer, expresses her joy over the increasing demand for handloom products.

"The revival of handlooms in Odisha is a commendable ode to tradition, weaving a rich tapestry of cultural resurgence. The vibrant resurgence not only preserves ageold craftsmanship but also unveils a narrative of sustainability and authenticity in contemporary fashion. Odisha's handlooms, adorned



with intricate motifs and vivid hues, transcend time, offering a harmonious blend of heritage and modernity. As a fusion fashion designer, I celebrate this revival as an opportunity to infuse traditional weaves into avant-

garde creations, fostering a dialogue between the past and the present. The handloom renaissance of Odisha is a testament to the enduring allure of artisanal craftsmanship in the evolving landscape of fashion," she says.

Speaking on how she views the present fashion scene in Odisha, the owner of Mrigika Boutique adds, "My approach to Odisha's handloom is a delicate dance between tradition and innovation. I honour the rich heritage of Odisha's handloom by preserving its authenticity through meticulous craftsmanship and traditional weaving techniques. I infuse modern design elements to create a harmonious blend that resonates with a broader audience. This balance not only pays homage to the cultural roots but also ensures the timeless relevance of the garments. It's about weaving narratives of the past into the fabric of the present, offering a unique and versatile collection."

Looking forward, she says, "My fervent hope is to witness a fusion of tradition and modernity where artisans continue to weave intricate stories through their craft while embracing contemporary design elements. By fostering collaborations that transcend borders, my dream is to see the artisans prosper, their skills celebrated, and Odisha's handloom legacy enduring through



innovative, timeless creations."

'Preserving traditional weaving skills is necessary to sustain cultural wealth'

"The art of weaving connects us to our roots. Reviving handloom traditions is not just about sustaining a craft; it's about preserving the cultural essence of Odisha. Our ancestors passed on this rich tradition of handloom weaving. It's not just a livelihood; it's our identity. By reviving these traditions, we ensure our heritage lives on," says **Manoranjan Bardhan**, an artisan from Nuapatana, Cuttack.

"Being part of Odisha's rich handloom heritage is not just a profession; it's a connection to centuries of artistic tradition and cultural legacy. Every intricate weave carries the stories of our ancestors, and each thread reflects the craftsmanship passed down through generations. This craft is a source of identity, livelihood, and cultural preservation, making me grateful and committed to contributing to this vibrant legacy," adds Bardhan.

Discussing the rich history of local style, he continues: "Nuapatana saree weaving, deeply rooted in Odisha's historical narrative, reflects a longstanding tradition. With origins dating back to ancient times, this craft intricately weaves into the cultural fabric of the state. Historical patronage, particularly from royalty, adorned temples and palaces with exquisite weaves. The tie-and-dye tech-

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Patta saree holds a signif-

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Lord Jagannath and is featured in daily temple rituals. Despite modern influences leading to a decline in original handloom prominence, the cultural tie to Lord Jagannath ensures the enduring presence of handlooms in Odisha's heritage."

Acknowledging the recent growth of the handloom sector, Bardhan says the resurgence of Odisha's handloom industry stands as a symbol of both cultural revival and economic empowerment. I commend the endeavours aimed at safeguarding our rich textile legacy. The rejuvenation of handloom traditions not only upholds our craftsmanship but also nurtures a sense of community pride. This revival transcends mere fabric; it serves as a testament to resilience,







(Above) Craft map of Odisha; (Below) Gita Gobinda original Khandua Ikat pure silk cloth of Lord Jagannath

skill, and the timeless allure of our craft. It instills optimism for a dynamic future, where our hand-woven treasures adorn the world with Odisha's artistic brilliance. Contemporary designers blending handlooms into fusion attire capture the attention of the present generation, fostering a simultaneous growth in the revival of handloom fashion," he adds.

He signs off saying, "Preserving traditional weaving skills is paramount to sustain our cultural wealth. Passing down our intricate techniques ensures the continuity of a rich legacy, and to neglect this inheritance risks losing not just a skill but a living testament to our cultural resilience and identity."

ATRI PRASAD ROUT, OP

inning a National Film Award is not a mean feat. Then, what to say about someone who has bagged four in quick succession before reaching 40? A legend in the making, for sure.

After graduating in sound recording from the prestigious Film and Television Institute of India (FTII), Lipika Singh Darai so far has four national trophies to her credit, a testament to her proficiency in craft and commitment to professionalism. Moreover, her films have received appreciation from soughtafter international film forums—recently from the International Film Festival Rotterdam (IFFR)'s Hubert Bals Fund and the British Academy of Film and Television Arts' (BAFTA) Breakthrough initiative.

Following her BAFTA recognition, **Sunday POST** caught up with Lipika to understand her thoughts and journey as a filmmaker so far.

Here're the excerpts:

Congratulations on Hubert Bals and BAFTA Breakthrough! How does it feel? This filmmaking journey, from FTII to IFFR?

Thanks! Basically, for the last ten years I've been trying to learn how to make films. At FTII, when I was studying sound recording, the entire approach towards filmmaking, from the perspective of a sound recordist, was different. We never learned about how to write a script or how to be the captain of the ship! Most of the time, I just learned how to be part of a team.

When I decided to make films, I figured that it was a different world. I decided that, as I'm young and I don't have to prove anything to anyone, I can experiment and make films on subjects that I find interesting. So, in the past years, I've tried to understand the craft and figure out my way of making films. How as an artist I can express what I want and through what form of cinema?

I've been trying to make films since the time I had only one National Award on my CV. And I don't' consider myself a talented person. But I work really hard and I've been hustling for quite some time. For four years even I didn't think I'll be able to return to films as I had facial paralysis, long Covid and an accident!Now, things seem to be falling into place and I'm glad that I gave myself that time for selfexploration.

So, have you found your form of cinema? Your voice so to say? Any filmmaker in particular who has influenced you?

I used to resist the idea of uniqueness, using similar types of images and patterns that make someone's film recognisable. But when I was in FTII, I liked the films of Andrei Tarkovsky and Krzysztof Kieslowski. As feature filmmakers they used to communicate complex characters with such ease! Back then silence used to be explored in cinema and filling your film with silence got you international recognition. That used to disturb me. I wanted to speak in my films. I wanted my characters to speak. I loved Agnes Varda because her films were narrative-driven. She was a woman, and she spoke in her films! So that resonated with me.

But I felt more motivated watching Indian films than world cinema. When I saw the films of Satyajit Ray and Mrinal Sen, I was really surprised by their skills at regional filmmaking. Outside of the film institute, I've not been much influenced by other filmmakers.

You have made beautiful narrative documentaries like Backstage. What has that form and process taught you?

Narrative documentary has taught me how to understand reality and how to discover something while making a film. It's a great medium to engage with society as it leverages cinema as a tool for exploration.

It demands that you understand your surroundings in an

I wanted to speak in my films: Lipika

Filmmaker Lipika Singh Darai, a four-time National Film Awards winner, is the only Odia-among 10 from Indiachosen for BAFTA Breakthrough Initiatives of 2023

intimate manner. There are no shortcuts. You've to understand the subject from its fundamental elements. In the process, you understand yourself better and you understand your position in the world better. I've evolved as a person after meeting people, having difficult conversations, understanding different situations, and making decisions about how to portray them in the film.

Subjects of your films, like *Dragonfly and Snake*, seem to be drawn from your childhood. How has your childhood shaped you as a filmmaker?

As a child, I was a heavy dreamer. I could see three or four dreams at a time. And I had a very rich and complex inner world. My music teacher, Prafulla Kumar Das, was the first to understand and help me access this inner world.

Also, I didn't have a conventional upbringing as a girl. My parents never imposed any restrictions. I used to take dance, music, and painting classes, and I participated in all kinds of competitions. All these people, my parents, my teachers—were kind of rebellious, which I also think I am. You cannot make it this far as an independent filmmaker if you're not rebellious!

So, my childhood is my home. In some ways, I'm still in my childhood. If I'm ever lost as a person, I go back to that place, and then I find myself.

Speaking of independent films, what draws you to independent cinema? Don't you ever feel the allure of a mainstream hit?

Independent filmmaking can handle independent voices and encourage a sense of freedom for both filmmakers and

audiences. I am not attracted to the conventional glamour associated with the film industry. I am more interested in the art of filmmaking, which does not have space for celebritydriven chaos.

Do filmmakers today have that freedom? What is your perception of freedom of expression today?

IN CONVERSATION

I think we have witnessed a narrative shift in mainstream filmmaking in the recent past. I would like to believe that contemporary independent filmmakers have a big hand in that. Whether it's documentary or fiction, filmmakers are working on subjects that were never addressed before with so much openness, and it is forcing everyone else to think and discuss various aspects of society, which was not the scene a decade ago.

You've said that you wish to extend your support to emerging female filmmakers. Anything in particular that you've planned?

In the coming years, I will try to create opportunities for emerging filmmakers by creating seed grants in collaboration with funding bodies, free filmmaking workshops, and by trying to start more film societies across the state. Even if I do not receive support, I will try to be of help in any way I can, which I have been doing.

There are currently only a few women filmmakers in Odisha, and we need to take conscious steps to bring about change. One of the ways to do so is to have the Odisha Film Development Corporation (OFDC) and mainstream industry fund a few women filmmakers every

year as part of a scheme or programme. The first step will be to reach out to women film professionals in the state and strengthen their work and creative journey.

PHOTO: BAFTA

Aditya feels pure joy hearing Ananya's name

ctor Aditya Roy Kapur, who was recently seen in The Night A Manager, has said that joy and bliss are the words that come to his mind on mentioning of actress Ananya Panday's name.

The actor graced the latest episode of Koffee With Karan along with actor Arjun Kapoor and was quizzed by show host Karan Johar on his rumoured girlfriend, Ananya Panday. KJo said that he had asked Ananya during a previous episode of the show about her equation with Aditya to which Ananya had replied, saying, "Tm feeling Ananya Coy Kapur".

Taking from that, Aditya said that he is "Aditya Joy Kapur". He said, "I'm quite joyous". Karan said, "So the first word that comes

to your mind when I say Ananya is 'iov'?" To which, Áditva responded, "Joy, pure joy and

bliss' Koffee with Karan Season 8 streams on Disney+ Hotstar.

ANS

Charu opens up on her comeback

fter winning the hearts of A fter winning the near industry with shows like Devon Ke Dev Mahadev, Baal Veer and others, actress Charu Asopa, who has now made her OTT debut with Johri, shared how this show was a comeback for her.

Talking about the series, Charu said: "When I read the script for the first time, I knew that this is the script I was waiting for. This show was a comeback for me, and I wanted to play a different role that I hadn't played in the past."

"I have always done TV and have portrayed similar kinds of roles. I found Tani's character interesting and apt for my OTT debut,' said the 35-yearold actress. Johri

streams on MX Plaver and Atrangii TV. For the unversed, Charu got divorced with her ex-husband Rajeev Sen, younger brother of actress Sushmita Sen, a few months ago, ending 4 years of marriage. She is now focusing on coparenting their two year old daughter Ziana, to make her feel comfortable

IANS

'I find myself not confined to a box'

ctress Wamiqa Gabbi, who was last seen Ain *Khufiya*, reflects on a remarkable journey so far and is happy that she finds herself not confined to a box.

In an exciting way, Wamiqa shared: "I am in an exhilarating phase of my career, receiving diverse offers that allow me to explore characters ranging from negative roles to fantasy and bubbly, chirpy personas. Fortunately, I find myself not confined to a box."

Reflecting on her journey, she expressed gratitude for the support has received: "This year has been a wonderful ride, filled with challenges and victories. I am thankful for the opportunities and the audience's embrace of the diverse characters I've portrayed."

With Wamiqa's role of Nilofer in Jubilee or the detective in Charlie Chopra or the spy in Khufiya, the year 2023 has unfolded as a monumental success for the actress. These successes even earned her the number four spot of the most popular celebrities in India this year as per the list by IMDb where she shared the space with Alia Bhatt and Shah Rukh Khan. IANS

DP, Ranveer's trolling angered KJo

Producer-director Karan Johar, who hosts the streaming chat show Koffee With Karan, expressed his anger at the trolling that actress Deepika Padukone and her husband Ranveer Singh were subjected to after the first episode. The recent episode of the show saw actors Aditya Roy Kapur and Arjun Kapoor gracing the couch,

KJo addressed the first episode of the season, he said: "I felt that it was one of the most honest episodes and the most heartfelt episodes I did with Deepika and Ranveer. I think all three kind of came clean on so much of our emotional heft, so many of our feelings. And then there was a ridiculous kind of after effect. I just want to put it out there that the reaction angered me."

Talking about Deepika and Ranveer, he shared: "They were outstandingly honest. They were earnest. They shared so much. They were so gracious. And then you're talking about some nonsense. I am like, 'What do you know about somebody

else's personal life and marriage?' Look at what's happening at your own

TINSEL TOWN

home, is what I wanted to tell them. I wanted to show them my middle finger! I am like, you know, just shut up." Koffee with Karan

Season 8 streams on Disney+ Hotstar. IANS

THE SPIRIT OF '45

THE MOVIE TRAVERSES A TIME PERIOD THAT ALSO PARALLELS THE LIFE AND TIMES OF ITS DIRECTOR KEN LOACH, INCLUDING HIS FILMMAKING CAREER

be Spirit of '45 (2013) is Ken Loach's most audacious work. The film covers a time period in the history of Britain from the government of Clement Atlee coming to power in 1945 claiming to lead "a labour movement with a socialist policy", through the Margaret Thatcher regime taking power in 1979 to the present times. Using testimonies from witnesses, footage material from regional and national archives, Loach traverses the post-war period of 70 years, depicting the political processes that led to the idea of building a society based on common ownership and how it has been dismantled over the last thirty years. The film covers the intellectual and political landscape, delineating the key issues, articulating the struggle to build a welfare society in UK. The difficult and layered narrative of the period is simply presented in the format of "oral history, with pictures"

The first two-third of *The Spirit of '45* depicts the challenges the post-war government faced in establishing a socialist policy, using the Beveridge report to build the NHS (National Health System), nationalizing key sectors of the industry from mines to docks, in essence building a welfare state. Using testimonies, for example like that of

A cry of rage & grief

former

train driver Ray Jackson who describes his delighted amazement when his family moved into their council house with its French windows and indoor facilities. "There was all this light! And there were stairs! And there a bathroom!" Prof. Harry Keen, a north London general medical practitioner, recounts a visit he made on the day of the NHS inauguration "Today, July the 5th, it'll cost you nothing!' I've never forgotten that moment". Not that nationalisation in reality meant power to the people; as Tony Benn observes, the whole process was inherently top-down, and "the idea that people who worked in an industry had any say in how the industry was run was completely foreign." Another ex- miner remembers his disgust at seeing Lord Hyndley, a prominent mine-owner who had campaigned long and vehemently against nationalisation, being made chairman of the National Coal Board. "What sort of nationalization have we got? The same old gang back in power!"

DIRECTION:

KEN LOACH

EDITING:

JONATHAN MORRIS;

MUSIC:

GEROGE FENTON;

SOUND:

PAUL PARSONS, KEVIN

BRAZIER, IAN TAPP;

PHOTOGRAPHY:

STEPHEN STANDEN

The post-war dispensation in the UK marked a determined move to bury the prewar world– forever,

war world- torever, it was hoped - where "everything was run by rich people for rich people." Labour's 1945 election manifesto was explicit in blaming the slumps of the 30s, it stated, "were the sure and certain result of the concentration of too much economic

power in the hands of too few men... the cost of economic freedom' is too high if it is brought at the cost of idleness and misery for millions." Here, as elsewhere in Loach's film, the echoes of the present-day conditions are resonant.

Then the narrative jumps ahead to the fateful year of 1979 and Margaret Thatcher taking power. One by one the nationalisations of the post-war era are reversed – gas, water, steel, electricity, the railways and all the sectors of industry are sold back into private hands at bargain rates. At the same time, we see the key elements of the welfare state being dismantled including the Royal Mail, the NHS and council houses sold off. Interspersed with this are the significant setbacks to the working class power, like the failuresof the miners' strike

of 1984 and the Liverpool dockers' strike of 1995. An outraged miner denounces the police brutality: "Why do the police come with such venom? They seem to enjoy inflicting pain and suffering on the working man. Why? Who tells them to go beat a picket's head? Who tells them to inflict pain, try to kill him? Who is it? I want to know." Loach by way of response cuts straight to Thatcher at that year's Tory party conference, beaming in triumph at a jubilant ovation. 'Spirit of '45' is Loach's most sustained account to date of what was gained in post-war Britain and then, four decades later, systematically torn out, by the very people "who grew up with and benefited from that system." The film ends with shots of mass

that system." The film ends with shots of mass protests – Occupy, UK Uncut, Defend the NHS – Loach seems to be alluding that resistance will not be easy but too optimistic to say that it's impossible. Openly Polemic but not didactic, Loach's work is a cry of rage and grief at what the people

once had and what the people themselves have allowed to be taken away from them.

What is worth noting is the fact that *The Spirit of '45* traverses a time period that also parallels the life and times of Ken Loach, including his filmmaking career. If one looks at Loach's films dealing with the working class in Britain and the recurrent themes that these films explore, then *The Spirit of '45* could also be seen providing the most direct political and historical context to that body of work.

LOACH ON THE SPIRIT OF '45

"The danger of course is it's a breeding ground for fascism. There's mass unemployment, targeted scapegoats, no representation for the left politically. We have no representation, not in a political movement, not in broadcasting, not in the press...

The articulate left barely exists and yet there's a huge groundswell of anger about what's happened, but it's not focused in a political movement, and kept out of focus by the mainstream media." Ken Loach.



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