

MAY 5 -11, 2024

SUNDAY POST

HERE . NOW



World Laughter Day – May 5

P 3,4
COVER
STORY

Elixir of life



Joy of cooking

On Sundays, I indulge in cooking my breakfast. I love to experiment with diverse cuisines, relishing the process of cooking and savouring homemade delights.

Decluttering delight

I reserve holidays for housekeeping activities, tidying up my space in particular. From cleaning the aquarium to decluttering closets, I enjoy organising things, making it a pivotal part of my relaxation.

Subhasree Damini, a Berhampur native, is an engineer by profession, but her passion lies in acting. After appearing in several music videos, the VSSUT-Burla alumna recently made her web series debut in 'B-143'. She is also a trained Odissi dancer. During her free time, Subhasree relaxes with her furry friends



With friends



With family

Quality over quantity

Rather than attending hectic social events, I prefer intimate gatherings with close friends or family. Board games, meaningful conversations, and shared experiences form the cornerstone of my social interactions, offering a source of genuine connection and relaxation.

Self-care routine

On Sundays, I opt for an extended session of meditation, which helps me bust stress and negativity. Besides, I treat myself to spa treatments or rejuvenating sessions at a beauty salon, which are part of my self-care routine.

MADHUSMITA SAHU, OP

WhatsApp This Week

Only on Sunday POST!

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

THE BEST MEMES OF THIS ISSUE

- Why did the scarecrow win the competition? He was 'outstanding' in his field!
- What do squirrels give for Valentine's Day? Forget-me-nuts.
- Why didn't the skeleton dance at the Halloween party? It had no body to dance with!
- What race is never run? A swimming race.

HIP-HOP AS A CATALYST

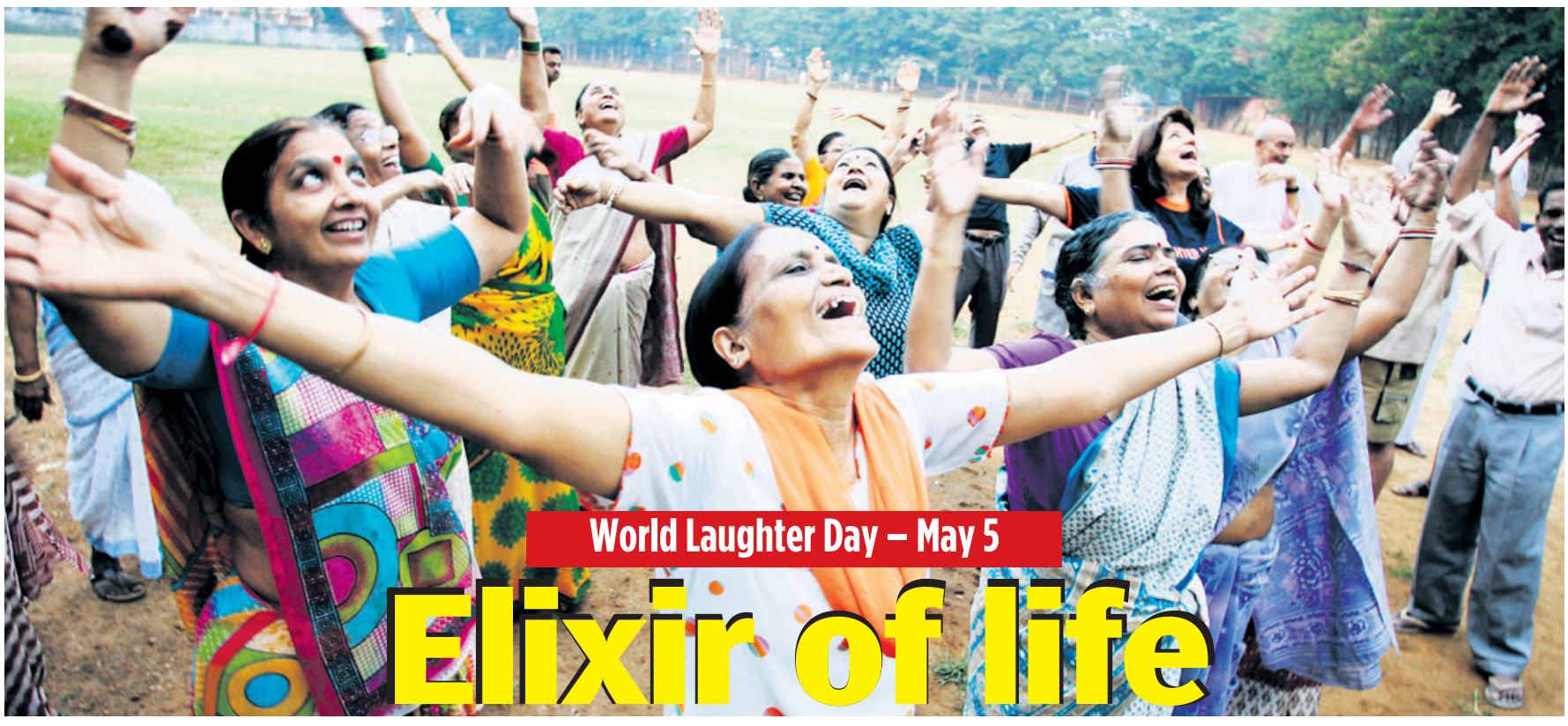
Sir, Last week's cover story highlighted the growing hip-hop scene in Odisha, showcasing a vibrant cultural shift alongside traditional forms like Odissi. It reflects a dynamic fusion of modernity with heritage as hip-hop becomes a platform for self-expression and community engagement. Adarsh Mishra and Smruti Swarup Patra, along with Koustav Mohanty, exemplify the passion and resilience fueling this movement. Their narratives depict hip-hop not merely as a dance form but as a lifestyle and a vehicle for empowerment. Despite challenges, their dedication to fostering talent and representing Odisha globally underscores the transformative power of artistic expression and cultural exchange. I am happy; as a hip-hop dancer, I am seeing the growth in a steady manner and transcending beyond boundaries.

GITA RANI KAR, BALASORE

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 features.orissapost@gmail.com
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World Laughter Day – May 5

Elixir of life

MADHUSMITA SAHU, OP

Recently, actor Aamir Khan revealed that how he found solace in comedy during a challenging emotional phase in his life. As he graced the set of The Great Indian Kapil Show, the Dangal actor shared laughter became his lifeline during tough times, underscoring the vital role comedy plays in our mental and emotional health.

Yes, in a world often weighed down by stress, anxiety, and the complexities of daily life, there exists a potent remedy that transcends barriers and uplifts spirits—laughter. Picture this: a crowded room erupting into harmonious chuckles, tears streaming down faces, and worries dissipating into thin air. Such is the magic of laughter, a force so powerful that it can heal wounds, mend broken spirits, and transform lives in ways beyond imagination.

Throughout history, humans have turned to humour as a coping mechanism, a source of joy, and a means of connection. From ancient jesters entertaining royalty to modern stand-up comedians addressing societal issues, the art of making others laugh has been intertwined with the very fabric of human existence. But beyond its entertainment value, laughter harbours a plethora of therapeutic benefits that can revolutionise how we approach healing and well-being.

On the occasion of World Laughter Day, SUNDAY POST explores how laughter can transcend barriers, foster connections, and illuminate the path towards healing and self-discovery.

'Laughter is a powerful tool for both mental and physical well-being'

JK Rajhans, president of LN Laughter Exercise Club, Bhubaneswar, says, Laughter, a potent elixir, heals and transforms by fostering connection, reducing stress, and uplifting spirits. Comedy, as therapy, is the heart of a laughter club, enriching lives joyously.



When asked what inspired him to start the club, he said, "The ideation came the day I visited Mumbai for some work and saw some people doing laughter exercises in a nearby park. So after

watching them two to three times, I asked if I could join them. Then, after learning how to start, I came back to Bhubaneswar and started the club with five people."

Talking about how laughter has impacted his life, he says "Laughter has been the cornerstone of my life, transforming challenges into opportunities for joy. Personally, it's been a lifeline, easing stress, fostering resilience, and strengthening connections with others. Through laughter, I've found a profound sense of well-being, unlocking creativity and perspective amidst life's complexities. It's a daily reminder that joy is not just a fleeting emotion but a choice, a powerful tool for navigating life's ups and downs with grace and gratitude."

He carried on, "It is a powerful tool for both mental and physical well-being. It triggers the release of endorphins, our body's natural feel-good chemicals, promoting relaxation and reducing stress. Moreover, laughter boosts our immune system by increasing antibody production and activating protective cells. It also improves cardiovascular health by enhancing blood flow and lowering blood pressure. Psychologically, laughter fosters social connection, enhances mood, and reduces anxiety. In our laughter club, we witness firsthand how laughter can uplift spirits and cultivate a positive outlook on life. Through



scientific understanding and shared laughter, we strive to promote holistic wellness within our community."

On how it affected lives of others, he said, "Laughter club members experience profound shifts in mood, reduced stress, and strengthened social bonds. Laughter ignites joy, enhancing overall well-being and resilience. Participants report improved mental clarity, boosted immunity, and deeper connections. Laughter transcends barriers, fostering positivity and empowering individuals to embrace life with renewed vigour."

Expert view:

IT professional and yoga practitioner Sasmita Patnaik, who holds laughter therapy session, sharing her experience, said, "I remember there was person who used to take things seriously. There was no lack of commitment in his work but he never spoke cordially. Once, I had taken a 10-minute laughter therapy session with a few people of which he was a part. Interestingly, after that session, his conduct changed drastically. He started smiling at others. As we know laughter and smiles are contagious, it worked on him."

Sasmita further said,



LAUGHTER HAS LONG BEEN HAILED AS THE BEST MEDICINE. FROM ANCIENT TIMES TO MODERN ERA, ITS HEALING POWER HAS BEEN ACCEPTED AND CELEBRATED



Members of LN laughter club

“When you laugh, you feel so light in your body and mind. You have all the positive energy around you. When people learn to be happy, they pass it on to others. That’s how the connection grows. While trying to be happy, everyone always shares the happy experiences or things that make them laugh. That brings positive thinking, and a person gets time to think about what is missing in life and may start following passion at any age.”

On how laughter was a turning point in her life, Patnaik, “After more than one-and-a-half decades of restless professional career, one fine day I came across one video of self-inspiration. I adopted that principle of looking

post-recovery. Despite attempts at activities like walking and exercise, I struggled to find motivation, especially when doing them alone. One day, while at the park, I heard a group of people laughing together, and I decided to join them, seeking the companionship and joy of shared laughter.”

outlet, offering a respite from the pressures of my studies. It provided a holistic approach to my well-being, relieving tension, enhancing my mood, and promoting a positive mindset. Engaging in laughter therapy sessions not only revitalised my spirit but also improved my focus and productivity. It became an essential tool in managing stress and maintaining a healthy balance between my academic and personal life, ultimately contributing to my overall success as a student and individual.”

She also said, “Laughter therapy has been transformative. It’s a powerful tool that aids in navigating the rigours of academia and personal challenges. Through hearty laughter, I’ve found stress relief, enhanced focus, and a rejuvenated perspective. It’s like a mental reset button, allowing me to approach problems with renewed vigour and creativity. Moreover, laughter therapy fosters resilience by teaching me to find humour even in difficult situations, bolstering

my ability to bounce back from setbacks. Overall, it’s been integral to fostering a more positive outlook and equipping me with the resilience needed to thrive amidst challenges.”

Sikha Dutta, a 27-year-old corporate employee from Bangalore, said,



“I found solace in battling loneliness through the daily episodes of Tarak Mehta ka Oltah Chashmah and Comedy Nights with Kapil Sharma. These shows became my companions, filling my evenings with laughter and warmth. In their humour, I found a temporary escape from the solitude of city life. Watching the antics of characters and the wit of comedians lifted my spirits, reminding me that laughter can be found even in the most mundane moments. These shows became a lifeline, offering respite and connection amidst the isolation of urban living.”



in the mirror and saying to myself that I am beautiful and confident. Believe me, when I tried, and with an open smile, that became my strength with time. For me, keeping a smile without a reason is therapy. I started this just as compliance, but with time, I found that it’s really helping to kick down your sadness.”

What the beneficiaries have to say:

Jugal Kishore Dash, a former PSU worker hailing from Bhubaneswar, shared, “For the past two years, I’ve been a member of the LN laughter club for the last couple of years. My decision to join the club stemmed from my experience with COVID during the pandemic, which left me feeling less active. As a retiree, I found myself lacking in physical activity



On impact of joining the club, Dash shared, “I’ve experienced remarkable changes. Initially, post-COVID recovery left me lethargic and inactive, but laughter therapy infused newfound energy and positivity into my life. Engaging in communal laughter not only invigorated my physical health but also lifted my spirits, combating loneliness and fostering a sense of belonging. Through shared laughter, I discovered a supportive community, rekindling my zest for life and enabling me to embrace retirement with renewed enthusiasm. Laughter became my daily remedy, transforming isolation into camaraderie and imbuing each day with joy and purpose.”

Pranati Ghosh, a 23-year-old engineering student from Cuttack, said, “As a student, the rigorous academic demands often lead to stress and mental fatigue. Laughter therapy served as a much-needed



Symphony of small moments

URMISHREE BEDAMATTA

In a literary landscape, often dominated by tales of grandeur and strife where wars rage and political conflicts loom large, 'The Life and Times of Banka Harichandan' is a symphony of small moments. No dragons and dystopias; Bankanidhi's battleground is the everyday grind.

Consider, for example, the first chapter, An Inauspicious Morning in the Life of Banka Harichandan. The title makes you expect the universe to unleash a torrent of cosmic calamities upon the poor protagonist. From the very get-go, it's evident that poor Banka is destined for a day filled with the kind of misfortunes that make you snicker uncontrollably rather than cringe in sympathy. First, the hapless boy's toothbrush takes a nose-dive into a drain. Banka's act of stirring the dark, putrid waters within the drain sets an ominous tone for the journey that lies ahead—a journey of a boy teetering on the brink of adulthood, trying to navigate the treacherous waters of adolescence. Next up on the list of misfortunes is an encounter with none other than Chheta, the local goon. Now, one might expect a run-in with a local tough to be cause for concern, but in Banka's world, it's more of a comedic sideshow than a genuine threat. You can practically feel the absurdity oozing from the pages as Banka navigates this encounter with all the grace of a startled flamingo on roller skates. Just when you thought Banka's morning couldn't possibly get any more absurd, along comes Sabi, the lusty maid, with a dose of awkwardness that will have you laughing until your sides ache. When poor Banka finds himself the unwitting target of Sabi's amorous advances, the results are as cringe-worthy as they are side-splittingly hilarious. What makes this chapter truly shine is the juxtaposition between the title's promise of inauspiciousness and the hilariously mundane nature of Banka's misfortunes. To the average adult, these incidents might warrant little more than an eye-roll and a resigned sigh, but to Banka, they're nothing short of earth-shattering catastrophes—a reminder that sometimes life's greatest trials are nothing more than gloriously absurd pratfalls. However, amidst his uproarious escapades, there's a poignant truth: Banka's longing for his mother is palpable, almost pitiful. The fleeting moments he spends pondering her return belies the profound depths of

sadness and loneliness that engulf him.

Similarly, *A Stint in Hell* forebodes the numerous hellish ordeals Banka must endure before finding redemption. In Ai's house, tamarind fish curry vanishes right before Banka's eyes and then among all the relatives gathered at Ai's house, it's Banka that Uncle picks to clean the latrine tank, brimming with fresh feces. Uncle consoles him,

You know what Banka, you are a lucky guy. You had a stint in hell very early in your life. Now the rest of your life will be full of the enjoyment of heaven and more heaven. [p. 38]

Somehow, Banka goes through it all, crying out in despair and faith, now and then, to his only friend, Bajrangbali.

In Dwarf, Banka experiences a familiar

However, Banka is far from a hapless child; he's the hero of the mundane. In his world, the smallest victories hold greater significance than the grandest historical epics. Take, for instance, the Napoleon-Nepoleon episode in the chapter *Alone*, where Banka's history teacher, Kishore, becomes the unwitting target of Banka's irreverence. While some may argue that Kishore did the right thing by correcting Banka's misspelling, who could blame Banka for valuing his own marks over the finer nuances of Napoleon's name? In Banka's world, where the routine demands outweigh historical minutiae, it's the little victories that matter most.

Keep those drinks well out of reach because An Account of a Pilgrimage will have you snorting liquid through your nose. Debashis, Banka's friend, saunters in like he owns the place, tossing around promises of pleasure-filled escapades to places like Cuttack and Puri. Banka's mother might be giving him the stink-eye, but our boy Banka? Well, let's just say he's secretly doing cartwheels of joy on the inside. So off they trot, Debashis leading the charge, and Banka in tow like a hapless sidekick in a B-grade buddy comedy. Debashis, that crafty devil, has a scheme up his sleeve that makes Banka curse himself. His grand plan? To pay a visit to his sweetheart Pramila, who once upon a time starred alongside Banka in their very own high school rendition of the Ramayana. Debashis spins his web of lies, leaving poor Banka feeling like a ship lost at sea in a storm of conflicting emotions. And just when Banka thought he was in for a spiritual journey to cleanse his soul in the holy waters of Puri, he finds himself on a one-way ticket to hell and back, courtesy of his so-called pal Debashis. Oh, what a pilgrimage indeed!

sense of betrayal. For once, he believed someone was genuinely kind to him, but soon discovers Alok's friendliness stemmed from his affection for Banka's sister. This realisation leads Banka to simulate the life of a writer, a journey marked by introspection and perhaps a quest for meaning.

The deeper we enter the dump, the clearer it becomes how personal and unpretentious Bankanidhi's world truly is.

In the chapter *On the Edge*, the saga of Banka continues with a twist of comedic calamity. An epitome of timidity, Banka suddenly morphs into a linguistic warrior, armed with nothing but his wobbly grasp of the English language and a heart full of misplaced valour. As fate would have it, the battlefield is set in the hallowed walls of the college classroom, where our

hero finds himself face-to-face with his arch-nemeses—the English-medium students. Summoning every ounce of courage he can muster, Banka decides to take a stand for the Political Science teacher, Ananda Rao, only to be lifted away to be dumped on the lawn full of water and slush. Banka's dreams of English-speaking glory crumble like a poorly constructed sandcastle at high tide. The train of events that follows forces Banka to strike out on his own.

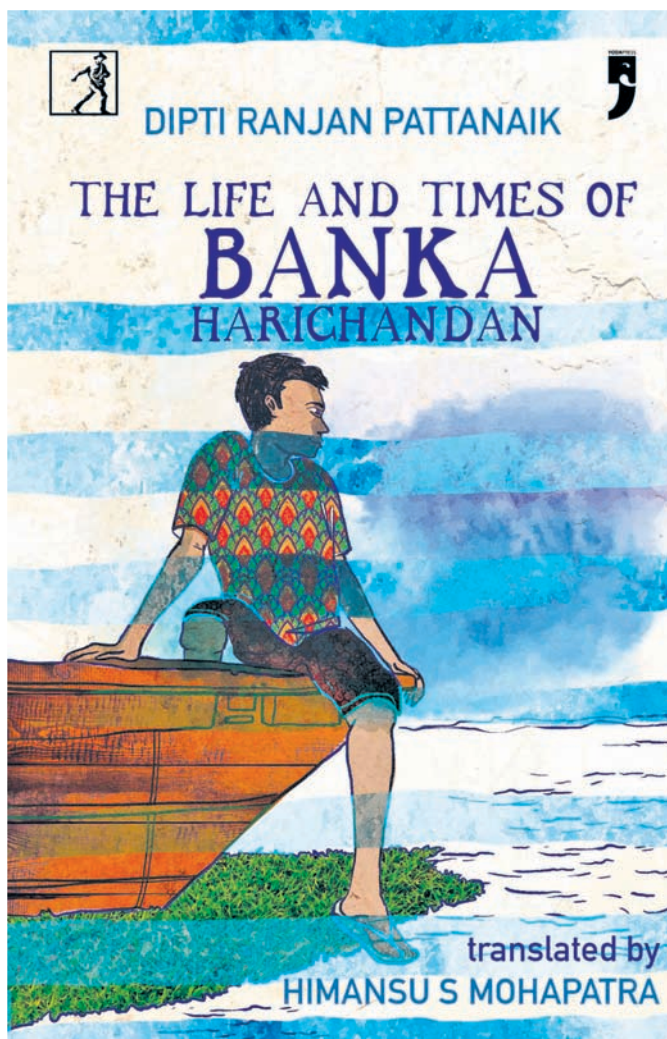
Translator Himansu S Mohapatra's meticulous and thoughtful introduction offers a profound meta-narrative of Banka's existence, suggesting a predestined path for his life. Divided into sections such as *A Tribute to and a Record of Childhood*, *All-of-a-twist: Guilt and Fear as Keynote*, *Reveries, Desires, Dreams: First Steps towards Freedom*, and *Epiphanies: Soul Freedom*, the introduction provides a panoramic view of Banka's journey, imbuing his escapades with significance and purpose. Highlighting its essence as a coming-of-age narrative,

- **Title:** *The Life and Times of Banka Harichandan*
- **Author:** Dipti Ranjan Pattanaik
- **Translator:** Himansu S Mohapatra
- **Publisher:** Simon & Schuster India and Yoda Press
- **Price:** Rs 399; Paperback
- **ISBN:** 9789392099991
- **Year of publication:** 2023
- **Number of pages:** 261

the translator, in his introduction, has adeptly interwoven the threads of *Joyce's Dubliners* and *The Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*, alongside J.D. Salinger's *Teddy*, to illuminate Banka's moments of epiphany and his profound mental and emotional metamorphoses.

Banka's life, far from being mere random chaos or triviality, emerges as a testament to the notion that every individual's existence carries weight and importance. Through Banka, we glimpse the profound impact of destiny and the hand of a higher power, elevating his experiences beyond the ordinary. For all us folks who bemoan the banality of our own existence, Dipti Ranjan Pattanaik's Banka is the slap in the face we never knew we needed. It's a masterclass in how to spin straw into literary gold.

The reviewer is an associate professor, Department of English, Ravenshaw University





Heeramandi: Richa leaves audience with gooseflesh

Actress Richa Chadha, who is garnering praise for her work in auteur Sanjay Leela Bhansali's OTT debut *Heeramandi: The Diamond Bazaar*, shared that she was offered a different role in the show but she chose the character of Lajjo.

The actress shared that despite being offered a role with more screen time, she decided to portray Lajjo owing to her heartbreaking arc in the show.

Reflecting on her decision, Richa said: "When I was approached for *Heeramandi*, at the time Sanjay was the showrunner, and I had been offered another part, the one with more screen time for sure. But because an actor also needs to see what's in here that's new for me, I chose Lajjo."

She continued, "I have experimented with characters that have a grey shade, like *Bholi Punjaban* or Tara in *Madam Chief Minister*. Basically, I get accused of playing only empowered characters, so I felt the need to break that stereotype and surprise the audience. I wanted to play a part of a hopeless romantic and leave the audience with gooseflesh. That's exactly what's happening. People are calling me in tears."

Heeramandi: The Diamond Bazaar is streaming on Netflix.

IANS



Kajol shares wisdom on craziness

Actress Kajol, who was last seen in the streaming anthology *Lust Stories 2* and *The Trial*, has shared a bit of wisdom on craziness.

Last week, the actress took to the Stories section of her Instagram and shared a meme that read, "Relax, we are all crazy. It's not a competition."

The actress is quite active on Instagram and often shares quirky posts. Recently, the actress shared a funny text on her Instagram Stories where she spoke about how she is running out of patience.

She wrote, 'My patience is basically like a gift

card.

Not sure how much is left on it, but we can give it a try."

Earlier, she had also shared a funny picture from her pilates class. In the photo, the actress was seen lying down on the pilates machine, wearing athletic wear and sunglasses.

She wrote in the caption, "Since everyone wants to know what my workouts look like... Here is a pic..."

Meanwhile, on the work front, the actress has quite a few projects in the pipeline, including *Sarzameen*, *Do Patti*, and *Maa*.

IANS



Experimental movie Yogini wins hearts

Bhubaneswar: *Yogini*, an experimental film of 90 minutes duration, was screened for a select audience in Bhubaneswar recently.

The film, inspired by the poetic work of Sahitya Akademi Award winner Haraprasad Das, unfolds the stories of Yoginis—resilient women from marginalised communities who resist exploitation. Weaving together 28 choreographed songs into an artistic narrative, the film captivated the audience. The movie is produced by singer Susmita Das and National Award-winning filmmaker Biyot Prajna Tripathy, who has also directed the movie.

Tripathy's adept handling of this complex subject earned widespread acclaim. The enchanting music by Omprakash Mohanty and Das' soulful rendition further elevated the cinematic experience.

Notable figures in the audience, including actor Partha Sarthi Ray, director Snehasis Das, and others, commended the unique initiative taken by the makers in addressing the theme of women's empowerment.

PNN

Sajid bags rights for Rajini biopic

Ever since producer Sajid Nadiadwala announced his collaboration with superstar Rajinikanth, it has been trending and making news for all the right reasons.

Now, as per the report in *Bollywood Hungama*, Sajid has signed a massive contract with Rajinikanth for his biopic rights. The report stated that Sajid is not only a huge admirer of Rajini's acting but also admires him as a person.

He strongly feels that Rajinikanth's remarkable journey, from a bus conductor to a superstar, is a story that deserves global recognition. Sajid is personally overseeing the script development and is committed to transforming the film into a spectacular cinematic experience. The filmmaker has been in constant contact with Rajinikanth and his family for several months to ensure the authenticity of the story. "The aim is to create a film that endures through time. It's a remarkable rags-to-riches narrative, emphasising Rajinikanth as a person," the report mentioned.

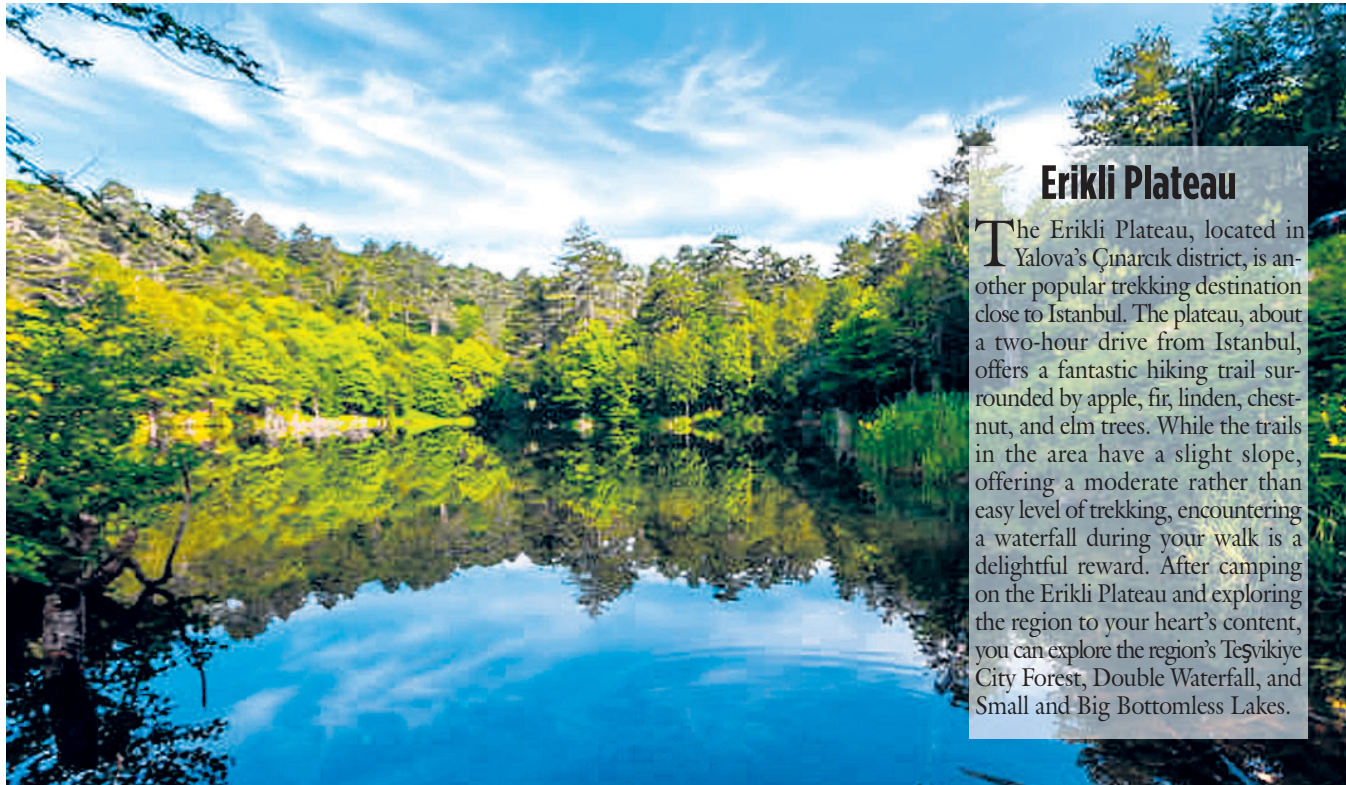
Recently, Sajid shared a happy photo with Rajinikanth to announce their collaboration. He wrote, "It's a true honour to collaborate with the legendary Rajinikanth Sir! Anticipation mounts as we prepare to embark on this unforgettable journey together!" The biopic will go on floors in 2025, and the casting will be done once the team has finalised the script.

AGENCIES



Istanbul's scenic treks

ISTANBUL, A BUSTLING METROPOLIS BLENDING MODERNITY WITH HISTORY, OFTEN LEAVES ITS INHABITANTS YEARNING FOR A BREAK FROM THE URBAN HUSTLE. FORTUNATELY, JUST A STONE'S THROW AWAY FROM THE CITY LIES A TREASURE TROVE OF NATURAL WONDERS AWAITING EXPLORATION. FROM LUSH FORESTS TO CASCADING WATERFALLS, SUNDAY POST PRESENTS A GUIDE TO SOME OF THE MOST PICTURESQUE TREKKING DESTINATIONS NEAR ISTANBUL



Erikli Plateau

The Erikli Plateau, located in Yalova's Çınarcık district, is another popular trekking destination close to Istanbul. The plateau, about a two-hour drive from Istanbul, offers a fantastic hiking trail surrounded by apple, fir, linden, chestnut, and elm trees. While the trails in the area have a slight slope, offering a moderate rather than easy level of trekking, encountering a waterfall during your walk is a delightful reward. After camping on the Erikli Plateau and exploring the region to your heart's content, you can explore the region's Teşvikiye City Forest, Double Waterfall, and Small and Big Bottomless Lakes.

Belgrade Forest

The Belgrad Forest in Sarıyer district is ideal for nature lovers in Istanbul. Belgrad Forest, described as the lungs of Istanbul, covers 5,300 hectares and offers tree-shaded picnic areas and different hiking routes. The 6.5-kilometre-long Neşet Suyu Trail is a favourite among runners and walkers. Belgrad Forest features the Bahçeköy Wildlife Production Station and ancient dykes, some of which were built during the Roman Empire period to carry water from northern forests to Istanbul.



Ballıkayalar

Ballıkayalar Nature Park is just an hour's drive from Istanbul. This natural park in Tavşanlı village of Gebze, located in a 2-kilometre valley with a stream, is well-known among nature lovers, rock climbers, and hikers. It offers easy-to-moderate trekking experiences. The valley's lake, waterfalls, and travertine terraces leading to the Ballıkaya Stream are spectacular. Furthermore, the park's abundance of fauna and flora contributes to its popularity. While trekking, you may observe roe deer, wild rabbits, wild boars, moles, martens, and various bird species in their natural habitat. Ballıkayalar, home to rare birds, butterfly species, and 20 types of orchids, is an essential route near Istanbul for bird, butterfly, and flower watchers for its outstanding biodiversity.

Uçmakedere

Uçmakedere, located in the Şarköy district of Tekirdağ, is a popular destination for nature lovers and trekkers from Istanbul. The region is covered with lush pine forests and offers incredible views of Ganos (Işıklar) Mountain and the Marmara Sea. This natural area is known for its local village products, lifestyle, and culture, making it a popular route for cyclists, motorbike travellers, and campers. Uçmakedere is also perfect for paragliding. Professional guides will take you paragliding on Nişantepe, 650 metres high. Şarköy, famous for its vineyards, also offers lovely Turkish wines.





Sonali Panda

WANT TO BECOME A MODEL?
Send us your photographs at
features.orissapost@gmail.com

PHOTO: KUMAR SHARAT, OP