

DECEMBER 1-7, 2024

SUNDAY POST

HERE . NOW

WORLD AIDS DAY - DECEMBER 1

Survival tales

P 3,4
COVER
STORY



Sandeep Mishra wanted to become a cricketer, but fate had other ideas. Starting off as a child artiste in the 1997 movie 'Nari Bi Pindhipare Rakta Sindura', the Cuttack-born actor went on to appear in several music videos and movies, including 'Kahibini Tate I Love You', 'Namaste Kamala Maa Go', 'Kabita Banita Lata' and 'Chori Chori Bohu Chori'. He also played the lead in the TV show 'Manini'. Sandeep, who looks forward to his next release, 'Ghamaghot', enjoys splitting his time between family and friends

Day for extra sleep

In our profession, we don't get Sundays as holidays. But whenever I get one, I prefer having some extra sleep, as other days are mostly occupied with shootings and other assignments.

Health, a priority

I love home cooked food a lot. I even request that they prepare home-style meals for me when we go out.

Fitness freak

Due to busy schedules, I occasionally have to skip my workout. I therefore work extra hours at the gym on my days off.



With co-actors



With wife

With family, friends

Since I don't have much time on other days due to my shooting schedule, Sundays are primarily for my family and friends. We usually watch a movie or dine at a good restaurant.

Passion for cricket

There is nothing better than playing cricket on Sundays as the game was my first love. If I weren't an actor, I would've been a cricketer.

Dance instructor

I own a facility called Paradise Dance Studio, where I teach dance moves. I enjoy hanging out with the students there; we do some crazy things and create reels.



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

- Never tell your problems to anyone...20% don't care and the other 80% are glad you have them...
- A tree house is the biggest insult to a tree. "Here, I killed your friend. Hold him."
- The last thing I want to do is hurt you. But it's still on the list.
- I am so poor I can't even pay attention.



Natural transition

Sir, Last week's write-up on perimenopause made for an interesting read. Though the writer is not an expert on gynaecology, she was spot on a woman's body's natural transition to menopause. Many women in their mid- or late-40s go through this phase but never get to know about it until the stopping of their periods. But it's quite important for younger women to learn about menopause to prepare mentally and physically before they get to that transition. The symptoms include mood changes, including depression, anxiety, crying spells, problems sleeping (often the result of hot flashes), anxiety, and incontinence. Similarly, estrogen acts as an antidepressant, and when its levels fluctuate and drop, it's common to notice mental health symptoms. The symptoms of perimenopause can't be brought under control, but one can get relief from many menopausal symptoms with healthy lifestyle choices.

DR SUDHA NAYAR, CHENNAI

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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ANISHA KHATUN, OP

WORLD AIDS DAY – DECEMBER 1

Survival tales



HIV was once thought to be a death sentence, but with the right care and treatment, it has now become a manageable chronic condition. Moreover, many survivors are leading healthier lives and are at almost zero risk of transmitting HIV to their others

ANISHA KHATUN, OP

From an estimated 18.6 million people with HIV globally in 1995 at its peak to 1.3 million in 2023, there is steady decline worldwide.

It certainly is a remarkable achievement for global health. This progress, fuelled by relentless efforts in prevention, treatment, and awareness, marks a turning tide in the decades-long battle against one of humanity's deadliest epidemics.

However, the war is not over yet. While the decline in cases is a cause for celebration, challenges persist. Stigma, discrimination, and misinformation continue to deter many from seeking testing and treatment.

On the occasion of World AIDS Day, a few survivors share their accounts with Sunday POST that may encourage others to stay positive in tough situations and not to lose hope.

'HIV is not the end of your story'

Suresh (name changed), 45, president of Ganjam Network of People Living with HIV and AIDS, shares, "I was diagnosed with HIV in 2006, and to be honest at that time, it felt like my world had shattered. I was very depressed and even thought of committing suicide. The diagnosis was one of the hardest moments of my life—a moment filled with fear, confusion and questions about the future. But it was also the beginning of a fight that

I refused to give in. Living with AIDS meant facing not only physical health battles but also the weight of stigma and misunderstanding. Initially, my villagers used to say, 'he won't survive longer; he will die in a few months'. Yet, through it all, I discovered the strength within my family, especially my wife, who stood by me through thick and thin. But unfortunately I lost her in this battle as she was also infected with HIV in 2007."

When asked about the lifestyle a HIV survivor must maintain to live a healthy life, he says, "You have to change your daily life activities if you want to live longer. Food habits play a crucial role in supporting our immune system and improving our overall quality of life. A balanced and nutrient-rich diet is essential to support our immune function, maintain body weight, and enhance energy levels. Whatever we eat, it should be fresh; stale food is a big no for us as it impacts our gut system. Adequate hydration is also critical. It is equally important to avoid processed foods, excessive sugar, alcohol, and smoking, as these can compromise our immune health. Physical exercise should not be ignored, as they keep you fit and active. Last but not least is medication; antiretroviral therapy (ART) should not be skipped for any reason as it is essential for suppressing the virus and reducing the risk of transmission."

He further states, "Living with HIV has taught me that every day is a gift. I admit that I have made a

few mistakes, but I want to share my story so that it helps others to start life afresh. Remember one thing: HIV is not the end of your story; we can still enjoy a beautiful life with proper medication, support, and self-love."

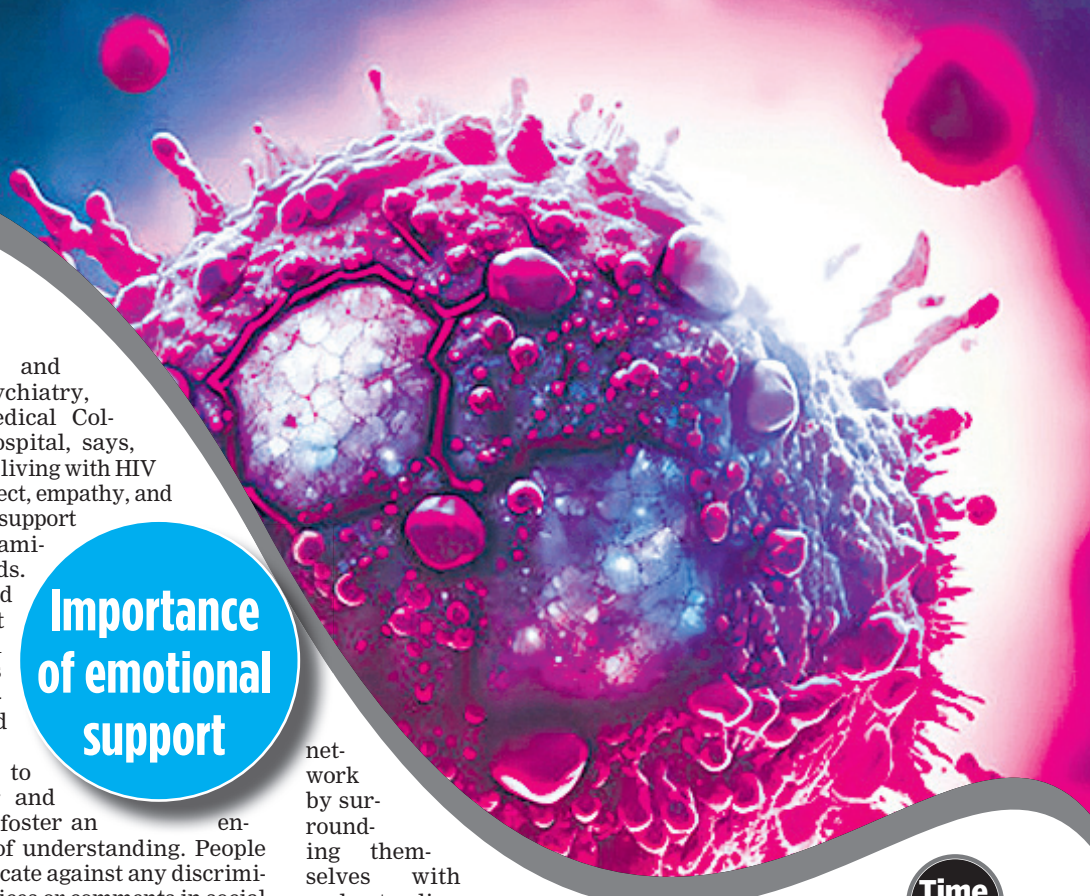
'It has been a journey of transformation'

Ajinkya (name changed), 38, a businessman, shares, "I am an HIV survivor, and I am here today to show that life can go on after being diagnosed. When I first learnt I was living with the deadly virus, fear and uncertainty consumed me. I thought my life would be cut short. But then I decided to fight on. Over the time, I found strength in knowledge, in the love of those around me, and in the advancements of medicine. My family was my biggest supporter at that time. Previously, HIV survivors were treated as untouchables, but now this is no longer the case."

Narrating his experience, he adds, "It has been a journey of transformation. It taught me the importance of self-care, the power of community, and the need to fight against stigma and discrimination. Many still misunderstand this condition, and it is my mission to change that narrative. HIV is not a death sentence—it is a call to action for education, compassion, and progress."

Ajinkya shares his story to inspire others, to encourage testing and treatment, and to remind them that survival is possible. He assures those living with HIV or AIDS that they are not alone, and collectively they can create a world where HIV will no longer be a barrier to life, love, or opportunity.





'The virus is part of my life but it doesn't define me'

Sunita (name changed), 34, an Aaganwadi worker, says, "When I was detected, people thought my life was over. But my family and friends were there to support me and see here I stand today, defying every misconception and stigma that tried to break me. Through access to medication, a supportive community, and self-love, I have been able to live a full, meaningful life. One thing that I have learnt from this phase is that life is very precious and is worth living despite all the struggles."

When asked about how she maintained her positivity in such difficult times, she adds, "Yes, initial days were very tough, but as time went by, I realised that my diagnosis was not the end of my story. It became a turning point, one that taught me the power of resilience, self-acceptance, and the importance of surrounding myself with people who truly care. I've had moments of doubt and pain, but I've also experienced immense growth and strength. Living with HIV has given me a deeper understanding of life, compassion for others, and the courage to fight for a world free from judgment. It's not an easy journey, but it's one that has taught me to appreciate every moment and to speak up—not just for myself, but for everyone impacted by this disease."

She further states, "This virus may be a part of my life, but it does not define me. Thanks to treatment, education, and my unshakeable determination, I've reclaimed my health, my happiness, and my purpose. I want to tell others that living with HIV is not a curse, and one should stop blaming himself/herself for it. With proper care and treatment, we can prosper, pursue our dreams, and make a difference."

Amrit Pattojoshi, psychiatrist and HoD of Psychiatry, Hi-Tech Medical College and Hospital, says, "Individuals living with HIV deserve respect, empathy, and unwavering support from their family and friends. People should learn about the medical facts, modes of transmission, and treatments for AIDS to reduce fear and stigma and foster an environment of understanding. People need to advocate against any discriminatory practices or comments in social or family settings. People surrounding the survivors should be aware of any signs of psychological distress, such as withdrawal, sadness, or thoughts of self-harm, and seek immediate help if necessary. People should always respect their confidentiality and invite them to family events and gatherings, ensuring they feel included and valued."

Asked how the survivors can stay positive during this tough phase, Pattojoshi explains, "Survivors should educate themselves and learn about AIDS, its treatment, and advancements to reduce fear and stay informed. They should adhere to treatment by having medications regularly to maintain good health. Negativity is very dangerous for the survivors, as it can lead to suicidal thoughts, so they should build a support

Importance of emotional support

network by surrounding themselves with understanding family, friends, or support groups that uplift them. Patients should practice self-compassion by avoiding self-blame, celebrating small victories, and focusing on strengths."



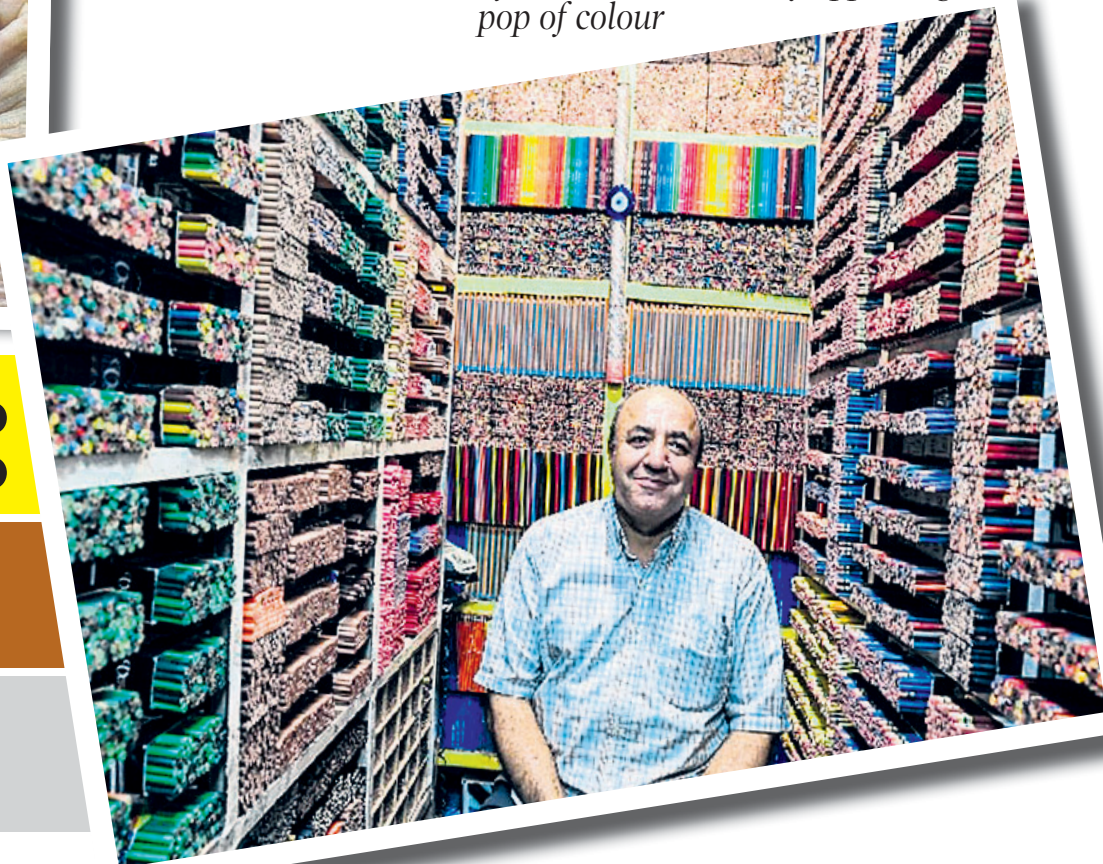
The psychiatrist goes on to add, "They should maintain a healthy lifestyle by eating a balanced diet, exercising, sleeping well, and avoiding substance abuse to boost physical and mental health. Survivors need to set realistic goals for achieving personal growth and celebrate progress to stay motivated. They should challenge stigma with confidence by educating others about HIV/AIDS and focusing on aspects of identity beyond diagnosis."

Time Line

- 1920:** The first transmission of SIV to HIV in humans likely occurred in Kinshasa, Democratic Republic of Congo.
- 1960s:** HIV spread from Africa to Haiti and the Caribbean.
- 1970s:** HIV spread from the Caribbean to New York City and then to San Francisco.
- 1980s and 1990s:** HIV infection rates and AIDS-related deaths grew.
- 2005:** The number of AIDS-related deaths peaked.
- 2016:** The first year since the peak in which fewer than 1 million people died from AIDS.
- 2023:** An estimated 1.3 million individuals worldwide acquired HIV, a 60% decline since the peak in 1995.



Despite the global shift to digital technology, Mohammad Rafi of Tehran has remained loyal to his vocation for the past 35 years, surrounded by thousands of pencils in every possible shade and colour. With the pencils arranged from floor to ceiling, Rafi's small cubicle has been transformed into a visually appealing pop of colour



Medad Rafi: The Pencil Paradise

OP DESK

Legendary yesteryear singer Mohammed Rafi needs no introduction. Unsurprisingly, when his son Shahid last week announced to make a biopic on his illustrious father, music lovers went gaga over the development.

But here's another Rafi, who lives about 2,800 km from Mumbai where the legendary singer used to work and coincidentally, he too is an icon, though in a different profession.

Meet 50-year-old Mohammad Rafi from Tehran, a shopkeeper. Yes, he's a shopkeeper by profession but he's also a famous man for his unique pencil store, *Medad Rafi*, which he opened in 1990.

In a dimly lit corner of Tehran's Grand Bazaar, Rafi is surrounded by all colours of the rainbow in his tiny shop that sells nothing but art pencils.

The world may have gone digital, but Rafi has stayed

true to his passion of the surrounded by thousands of pencils in every hue and shade imaginable.

With the pencils stacked from floor to ceiling, his tiny cubicle has become a photogenic splash of colour, hidden deep in the market known as a 'city within a city'.

In addition to its extensive and vibrant inventory, Rafi's personal touch has made the store legendary among both locals and artists. Thousands of pencils adorn the shelves and walls of *Medad Rafi*. Many of these are rare, vintage jewels that have become collector's items rather than your typical retail pencils. The inventory is so extensive and eclectic that it would be chaos to anyone else, but not to Rafi.

"*Medad Rafi* is a treasure trove of rare and vintage pencils, celebrated for his personal touch and extraor-

dinary memory. It's more than a store—it's an experience cherished by locals and artists since 1990," shares a netizen.

"Mohammad Rafi often hosts workshops where kids learn not just to use pencils but also the art of preserving them, turning his shop into a cultural hub," adds another.

"I don't know how many pencils there are, but I have about 200 colours available," says the proud owner of the *Medad Rafi*.

Rafi himself takes up much of the three-square-meter (30 square feet) shop in the market's arts and crafts section, where he has welcomed generations of customers.

"Every time a customer shows up, I enjoy it, even if they don't buy anything," smiles Rafi.

"Depending on what the customers want to do with it, I advise them on the colour, the texture, or the brand," said Rafi, who only sells the pencils individually, not by the box.

He is proud to cater to all budgets, offering domestically made pencils and ones imported from Europe and America.

"The most expensive pencil costs 100,000 toman (around two euros)," he said, adding, "but it is one of the best."

What really sets the store apart is his memory for where each pencil resides. Over the decades, he has developed an almost supernatural ability to find exactly what a customer is looking for, no matter how obscure. Because of this ability, his store has become more than just a location to buy pencils; it is now a destination for an experience and a one-on-one conversation that has drawn artists back. Today, *Medad Rafi* remains a beloved nook in Tehran, a sanctuary for people who value the finer things in art materials. A drawing lover since childhood, Rafi has always adored pencils and, after his technical studies in the 1980s, began his professional life in a pencil manufacturing company before opening his shop.

He knows that, in the days of high-tech and touchscreens, the humble coloured pencil has had its golden age, looking back nostalgically at the past century when all children carried them in their school bags.

Unlike many other shop owners in the bazaar, he will not pass on the business to his son, a trained physician who "is not interested in this work."

Until he retires, however, Rafi plans to keep serving his loyal customers, meeting their every creative need.

Offering not only pencils but also stories and a piece of local history, *Medad Rafi* is more than simply a store; it is a tribute to Rafi's commitment to his craft and customers.





PeeCee's inspiration

Actor Jackie Shroff, who is a favourite of Gen Z on Instagram owing to his simple yet delectable recipes and philosophies, has caught the fancy of actress Priyanka Chopra, also known PeeCee to her fans, as well because of his outlook towards showing up at work every day.

Priyanka took to the Stories section of her Instagram, and shared a video of Jackie from the media event in which he could be seen talking to the media and sharing his wisdom on how it's important to get up and go for work every day unless someone is down or under the weather.

The video showcases the actor's inspiring take on dealing with daily life struggles and moving forward with it. Priyanka also tagged him and included a folded hand and rose emoji. She captioned the video saying, "My attitude on the work every day."

In the video, Jackie Shroff can be heard saying, "It's life, and work will come and go. Keep doing it. It will keep on coming, take it, enjoy, and look forward to the next day! If you've woken up with good health, head on to work."

IAN S



Farah yearsns to direct Tom Cruise

Farah Khan has recently expressed her desire to work with Hollywood star Tom Cruise.

The director made her wish known when she commented on a post shared by Cruise, which featured a behind-the-scenes picture from his upcoming film, "Mission: Impossible—The Final Reckoning." Tom took to Instagram to share a photo that showed him training for underwater stunts.

In response, Farah Khan commented

ed, "TOMMMMMMMMM... waiting to work with you," followed by a heart and a folded hands emoji.

The Hollywood actor captioned the post, "The training and preparation we put into this film is a culmination of all before it. From the depths, to the skies, I can't wait to share more with you."

On a related note, Helmed by Christopher McQuarrie, the upcoming film is the final installment of the Mission: Impossible franchise. In the same, the 62-year-old actor reprises his role of spy Ethan Hunt.

IAN S



Zarina shares secret behind longevity of marriage

Zarina Wahab recently recalled how people doubted the longevity of her marriage to actor Aditya Pancholi, with many predicting it wouldn't last more than five months.

In a recent interview, the veteran actress opened up about her interfaith marriage of 36 years with Aditya and mentioned that despite the early skepticism, their relationship stood the test of time. Zarina also addressed whether their different religious backgrounds ever posed challenges in their marriage, revealing that although Aditya didn't convert to Islam, he

changed his name for the nikaah ceremony.

Asked if their diverse religious backgrounds ever created obstacles in their relationship, Wahab told, "When I got married to him, everyone said, 'He's so handsome, he's so young, this won't last more than five months'. But now it has been 36 years. Look around; there are so many temples in my house. I do the namaaz. We don't distinguish on the basis of religion in our house, there are no differences, we have everything we need... Even my in-laws are very nice. There were no hurdles."

Zarina also explained that they had a nikaah ceremony, and when asked if Aditya converted to Islam, she clarified, "He didn't convert, but as is customary with Muslims, he had to change his name, so he did that."

For the unversed, Zarina and Aditya met on the sets of their film *Kalank Ka Tika*, and despite the actress being six years older and facing opposition from her mother, the couple followed their hearts and got married in 1986.

IAN S

Parineeti's 'scientific' take on sleep struggles

Actress Parineeti Chopra recently shared a "scientific" take on the universal struggle of sleep deprivation.

The actress took to Instagram to post a candid photo of herself, humorously mentioning that although she slept for 8 hours, she looked like she had only slept for 4 hours. Labelling her observation as a "scientific fact," Parineeti's humorous post instantly resonated with fans.

Sharing the image, the actress wrote in the caption, "When you have slept for 8 hours, but need 16 hours, so you look like you have slept for only 4 hours. Follow me for more scientific facts."

On the work front, Parineeti was last seen in *Amar Singh Chamkila*, directed by Imtiaz Ali, where she shared the screen with Diljit-Dosanjh. In the Netflix biopic, the actress played the role of Chamkila's wife, Amarjot Kaur. For the film, she underwent a significant transformation, gaining 16 kgs for her role.

The actress is next set to star in Anurag Singh's highly anticipated thriller *Sanki*, alongside Varun Dhawan. In addition, she will be seen in *Shiddat 2*, directed by Karan Sharma, where she will share the screen with Sunny Kaushal and Amyra Dastur.

IAN S





Subrat Beura

From folk tales to big screen

Title: Ugetsu

Year of release: 1953

Language : Japanese (B&W)

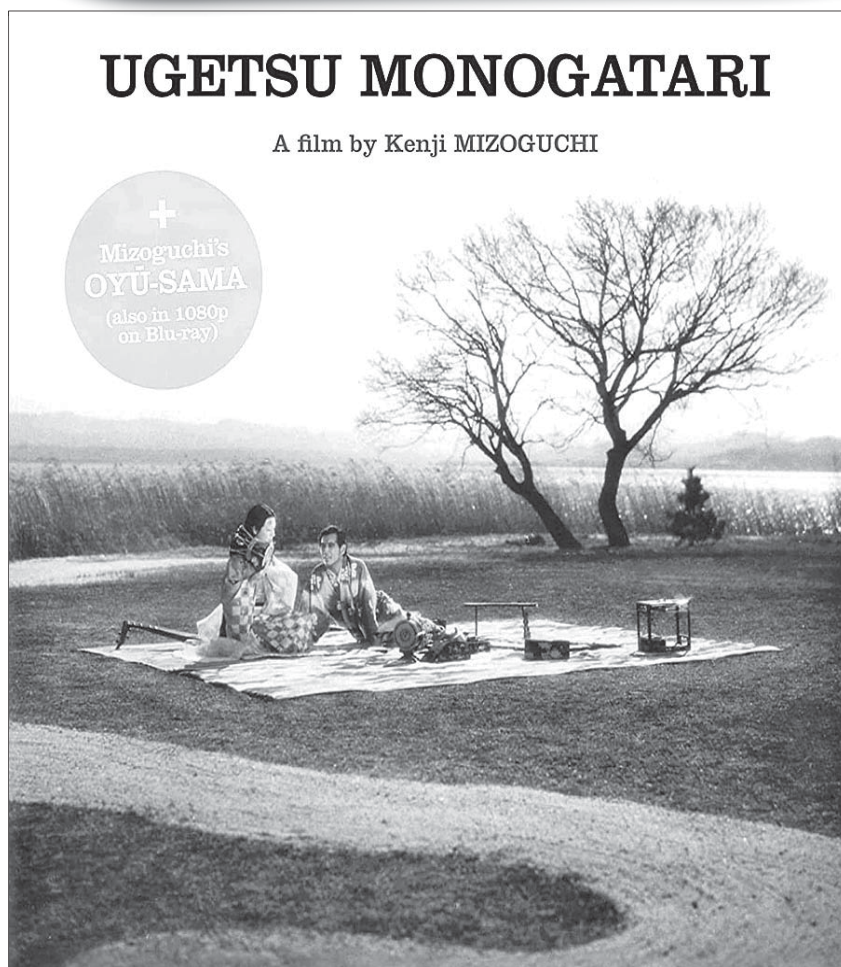
Duration: 97 minutes

Ugetsu is a story of two couples. The main pair is a poor potter, Genjuro, who is eager to make war profits by selling his wares to competing armies, and his devoted wife, Miyagi, who would prefer he stay at home with their little boy and not take chances on the road. The second couple is peasants, Tobei, assists Genjuro in his workshop but would rather become a samurai, and his wife, Ohama, who ridicules her husband's fantasies of military glory.

The men pursue their aggressive dreams, bringing havoc on themselves and their wives. These men care for their wives; they only want to triumph in the larger world, so as to return to their wives made into bigger men by adventures and costly presents.

Director Kenji Mizoguchi engaged with the past not to recapture nostalgically some lost model of serenity but, if anything, to reveal the opposite. In preparing Ugetsu, he was drawn to sixteenth-century chronicles about civil wars and their effect on the common people. As a starting point, he and screenwriter Yoshikata Yoda adapted two tales from an eighteenth-century collection of ghost stories, Akinari Ueda's Ugetsu monogatari (Tales of Moonlight and Rain), retaining much of the imagery while altering elements of the stories. The perennially dissatisfied Mizoguchi stressed in his notes "The feeling of wartime must be apparent in the attitude of every character. The violence of war unleashed by those in power on a pretext of the national good must overwhelm the common people with suffering—moral and physical. Yet the commoners, even under these conditions, must continue to live and eat. This theme is what I especially want to emphasize here. How should I do it?"

As Mizoguchi's great cinematographer, Kazuo Miyagawa, stated in a 1992 interview, they used a crane 70 percent of the time in filming Ugetsu. The camera, almost constantly moving—not only laterally but vertically—conveys the instability of a world where ghosts come and go, life and death flow simultaneously into each other, and everything is, finally, transient, subject to betrayal. At her wedding to Genjuro, Lady Wakasa sings: "The finest silk / Of choicest hue / May change and fade away / As would my life / Beloved one / If thou shouldst prove untrue." The camera's viewpoint is always emotionally significant: Mizoguchi achieves



UGETSU MONOGATARI

A film by Kenji MIZOGUCHI

+
Mizoguchi's
OYU-SAMA
(also in 1080p
on Blu-ray)

CREDIT

Direction - Kenji Mizoguchi
Producer - Masaichi Nagata
Main cast - Machiko Kyo (Lady Wakasa), Masayuki Mori (Genjuro), Kinuyo Tanaka (Miyagi), Sakae Ozawa (Tobei), Mitsuko Mito (Ohama), Kikue Mori (Ukon), Ryosuke Kagawa (Village headman), Ichiro Amano (Boatman), Sugisaku Aoyama (Old priest), Ichisaburo Sawamura (Genichi)
Original story - Ugetsu monogatari by Akinaru Ueda
Screenplay - Matsutarō Kawaguchi & Yoshikata Yoda
DoP - Kazuo Miyagawa
Editing - Itsuzo Miyata
Original music - Fumio Hayasaka
Sound - Iwao Otani & Akira Suzuki
Art - Kisaku Ito

this feat by varying the direction between a sober, almost documentary, long-distance view of mayhem and several carefully choreographed set

ing down on mortal confusions, ambitions, vanities, and regrets. While all appearances are transitory and unstable in his world, there is also a powerfully anchoring stillness at its core, a strength that emanates from a deep space. The periodic chants of the monks, the droning and the bells, the Buddhist sutras on Genjuro's back, the landscapes surrounding human need, allude to this unchanging reality side by side with, or underneath, the restlessly mutable. The ability of the moving camera to create atmosphere, used with a freedom and a daring is unusual in cinema – it is perfected here in this film. The film went on to be recognised with the Silver Lion at the Venice Film Festival. Mizoguchi was recognised three years in a row for The Life of Oharu (1952) and Sansho the Bailiff (1954) at Venice film festival.

The reviewer, a member of Film Society of Bhubaneswar, can be contacted at Subrat.beura@gmail.com

About the director

Kenji Mizoguchi (1898-56) was born in Tokyo to humble parents, his father was a carpenter. His elder sister helped raise him and support his education. Mizoguchi studied Art and theatre before joining Nikkatsu film studio as a set and costume designer. He began his career in the silent era and made dozens of fluent, entertaining studio films before arriving at his lyrical, rigorous visual style and patented tragic humanism, around the age of forty. In the 1950s, he created those sublimely flowing, harrowing masterpieces that represent the pinnacle of his directorial achievement: The Life of Oharu (1952), Ugetsu (1953), A Story from Chikamatsu (1954), Sansho the Bailiff (1954), New Tales of the Taira Clan (1955), and Street of Shame (1956). Except for the last, these pictures were all set in earlier times: Mizoguchi, drawing on Saikaku, Chikamatsu, and other classical writers, had become a specialist in the past, reinterpreting national history and insisting, on accurate historical detail, borrowing props, kimonos, suits of armour from museums and private collectors. He attributed his fascination with traditional Japanese culture partly to his own relocation from Tokyo to the Kyoto area.

pieces, such as the phantom ship. After the potter leaves his wife and child, we see the misfortune of the wife, the bestial behaviour of the hungry, marauding soldiers descending on the potter's wife is shot from above, with a detached inevitability that makes the savagery more matter-of-fact, the soldiers pathetically staggering about in the background (brings to mind some of the works coming out of the French New Wave). Perhaps the most striking instance of this visual style is when Genjuro returns home from his journey, looking for his wife: the camera inscribes a 360-degree arc around the hut, resting at last on the patient, tranquil Miyagi, who we had assumed was dead, having seen her speared earlier. We are relieved, as is Genjuro, to see her preparing a homecoming meal for her husband and mending his kimono while he sleeps. The detached accepting eye also resembles that of a ghost, look-

Barsha



WANT TO BECOME A MODEL?

Send us your photographs at features.orissapost@gmail.com