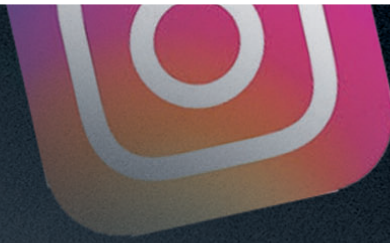


MARCH 9-15, 2025

SUNDAY POST

HERE . NOW



SOCIAL MEDIA TO SILVER SCREEN

LANDING A BIG BREAK

COVER STORY

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3/4

MY SUNDAY

Celebration of family

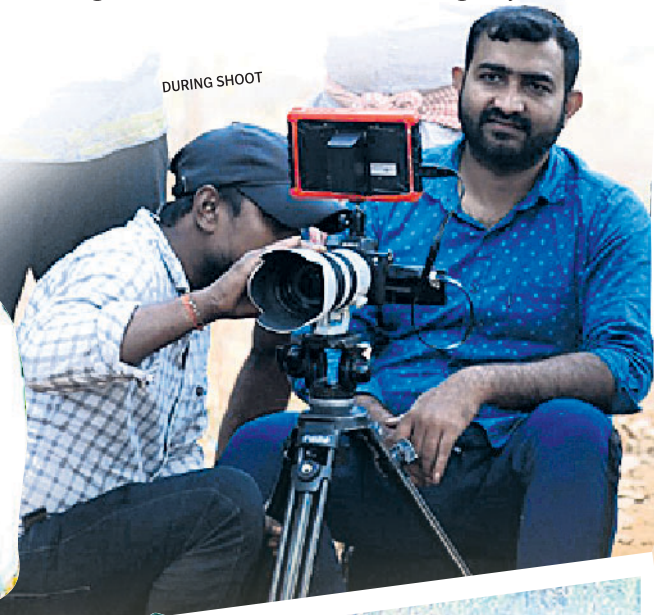
For me, Sundays are more than just a day of rest—they are a celebration of family bonds, joy, and cherished traditions.

Time for traditional Mayurbhanj cuisine

Being from Mayurbhanj, my perfect Sunday is defined by the rich aroma of slow-cooked mutton simmering in an earthen pot over a chullah.



Yash Varman Panda's journey from a civil engineer, lawyer, and MBA to a renowned filmmaker in the Odia film industry is a story of passion and perseverance. In 2018, he left a stable career to pursue filmmaking. What began with wedding videos soon evolved into music videos, short films, and small-budget films. Currently his 'Mastoor', 'Scam99', 'BBSR', and 'Kalava', a few big-ticket projects, feature among the most-awaited movies of Ollywood. Supported by his wife, Ankita, and inspired by his mother, Usha Satpathy --a two-time President Award winner in Social Service-- Yash continues to push boundaries and create impactful stories



Love for melody

Whenever I find time, I love immersing myself in the timeless melodies of Kishore Kumar and Akshaya Mohanty.

Donning chef's hat

On Sundays, I put on the chef's hat, while my daughter, Dazzli, and my wife, Ankita, eagerly step in as my assistants, making the experience even more special.



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

- Wise people think all they say, fools say all they think.
- My love for you is like dividing by zero - it cannot be defined.
- Are you made of copper and tellurium? Because you're CuTe.
- The best things in life are free *plus shipping and handling*.



Shattering glass ceilings

Sir, This refers to the cover story published in last **Sunday POST** ahead of International Women's Day. Women have shattered glass ceilings through a combination of perseverance, advocacy, and groundbreaking achievements. Historically, they faced systemic barriers in male-dominated fields, but they have steadily chipped away at these obstacles. Through education, women have pursued advanced degrees in greater numbers, equipping themselves with the knowledge and skills to excel. In the workplace, they have demonstrated exceptional leadership, innovation, and resilience, proving their capabilities in industries ranging from technology to finance. Advocacy groups and mentorship programs have provided support, amplifying their voices and creating opportunities for advancement. Women have also challenged societal norms, redefining what success looks like and inspiring future generations. Achievements by renowned cinematographer Falgu Satapathy, Odisha's first certified female tattoo artist Baishali Pradhan, and stand-up comic Barsha Mishra are testimonies to their strength, resilience and determination.

Deepak Sahoo, KENDRAPARA

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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SOCIAL MEDIA TO SILVER SCREEN

LANDING A BIG BREAK

The combination of a loyal fan base, strong personal branding, marketing skills, and storytelling abilities gives digital influencers a significant advantage when transitioning to movies. In contrast, traditional actors typically rise through auditions and theatre training

ANISHA KHATUN, OP

In the evolving landscape of entertainment, social media influencers are carving a path from digital platforms to the silver screen, redefining traditional routes to stardom. With millions of followers, influencers have built loyal fan bases through engaging content, ranging from comedy sketches and lifestyle vlogs to fashion and fitness tutorials. Their direct connection with audiences, often nurtured over years, has caught the attention of filmmakers and production houses, making them valuable assets in the movie industry. Unlike traditional actors who rise through auditions and theater training, influencers bring built-in viewership

and engagement, which studios see as a marketing advantage. Their ability to generate buzz on platforms like Instagram and YouTube makes them attractive for promoting films, ensuring an initial audience even before the release. This transition, however, comes with challenges. While influencers excel in short-form content, acting in full-length films requires a different skill set—emotional depth, character development, and adaptability to scripted roles. Some successfully make the leap, earning critical acclaim, while others struggle with the transition, leading to mixed reactions from audiences and industry professionals.

Despite skepticism, the trend is gaining momentum. Influencers like Mr. Gulua (Ashis Kumar Das) and the famous Natia (Smruti Ranjan Mohanty) have already ventured into mainstream cinema, proving that digital fame can translate into box office appeal. As the lines between online content creation and traditional filmmaking blur, the industry is witnessing a shift where storytelling extends beyond conventional norms. Whether this trend will reshape the future of cinema or remain a marketing-driven phenomenon is yet to be seen. However, one thing is certain—social media influencers are no longer confined to the internet; they are making their mark on the big screen.

Sunday POST reached out to a few influencers, who have made it to the big screen, for their insights on the transition.

'Producers should focus on talent rather than the number of followers'

Asish Kumar Das, widely recognized as Mr. Gulua on social media, began his professional journey working in a firm after completing his electrical engineering degree. However, his passion for entertainment led him to explore the film industry. Reflecting on his journey, Asish shares, "I made my debut with the movie *Mu Gandhi*

Nuhe, where I played a negative role. Before landing that opportunity, I worked as a crowd artist. Despite these efforts, I struggled to secure more roles in the industry, which led me to explore digital platforms."

He went on to narrate, "Determined to make a mark, I decided to start my own YouTube channel. To my surprise, the platform brought me immense recognition and love from the audience. I never imagined that people would appreciate the character of Mr. Gulua so much. Before stepping into digital content creation, I acted in films, but they did not bring me the recognition I desired. However, YouTube changed my life. What began with a viral WhatsApp audio eventually evolved into a well-known YouTube channel in Odisha, garnering a massive following. Today, my content resonates with countless viewers who appreciate my creativity and trust my ability to entertain."

Asish acknowledges the power of digital media in shaping his career. He believes that platforms like YouTube and Instagram provide talented individuals with opportunities that traditional media often fail to offer. His success story stands as an inspiration for many aspiring artists who struggle to find their breakthrough in mainstream cinema.

As someone who has experienced both the film industry and the digital entertainment space, Asish offers advice to filmmakers who are now casting influencers in their movies. He emphasizes that producers should focus on talent rather than mere follower count when casting influencers in films. He says, "There are different types of content creators on social media; some create meaningful content, while others rely on sensationalism. Many do anything just to increase their followers. Filmmakers should give opportunities to those who are genuinely talented and can perform diverse roles. Recognizing true talent in digital creators will not only enhance the quality of cinema but also send a positive message to the younger generation. It will motivate influencers to refine their craft and prove their mettle beyond social media trends."

'Natia opened the door for movies'

Smruti Ranjan Mohanty, a successful actor and the voice behind the immensely popular Natia character, is also an accomplished IT professional. Despite studying BSc and Engineering, his true calling was always acting.

Reflecting on his journey, he says, "Acting is in my blood. My father, Aratrana Mohanty, was a renowned drama director, and from a young age, I found myself immersed in the world of theatre. As a child artist, I performed in several plays directed by my father, nurturing my deep passion for acting. My professional journey began in theatre, performing with Uttarayani Theatre in Jatni. From there, I transitioned into media, working with various channels where I created short stories. However, my real breakthrough came when I started lending my voice to the beloved character Natia. This character not only earned me widespread recognition but also brought me a dedicated fan base. Natia gave me name and fame. This cartoon character opened doors for me in the film industry."

Following his success as a voice artist, Smruti landed his first major role in *Tu Mo Kamzori*. The film's production was completed during the COVID pandemic, though it was released only last year. Even before its release, he had completed his second film, *Apana Mane Khusi Ta?*, which hit the screens in 2023 and was well-received by both audiences and critics.

When asked about the significance of influencers in mainstream movies and why producers are opting to cast them, Smruti explains, "In today's digital era, I believe that social media influencers play a crucial role in the film industry. Influencers have become an ideal choice for producers because they come with a loyal fan base. For example, if a new director or producer promotes their film on social media, it might reach a few thousand people. But if an influencer with millions of followers shares it, the reach multiplies



significantly. This shift has changed the dynamics of the industry, making digital presence more vital than ever."

Despite his success, Smruti's journey has not been without struggles.

"I didn't become famous overnight. I started as a crowd artist and at times, even worked without payment. However, my familiarity with the stage and audience made my transition into films smoother. The industry was very welcoming. Everyone appreciated my work, which motivated me to move forward," shares Smruti.

To aspiring actors, he offers a simple yet powerful message: "Work hard and create your own identity. Don't follow others; everyone has a different story."

'Influencers always enjoy an edge over newcomers due to their built-in fan base'

Satya Narayan Das, popularly known as Bhaina of Berhampur_Satya, is an MBA and LLB student currently pre-

paring for Civil Services. Despite his academic pursuits, he has gained immense popularity in the digital space, which has now paved the way for his entry into mainstream cinema. Das believes that trends are shaped by public acceptance and can be both positive and negative.

He firmly states, "A thing becomes a trend when people accept it. If this trend were negative, producers wouldn't invest in us. We take this as a positive sign for the long run."

His growing influence in the entertainment industry is a testament to the shifting landscape, where social media personalities are becoming an integral part of the film business. Producers see potential in influencers like him, believing they have the power to pull audiences to theaters.

Discussing the challenges of transitioning from digital media to films, Das shared the uncertainties that influencers-turned-actors face. One of the biggest

hurdles is the delayed payment structure in the film industry.

"We receive payments two to three years after the completion of a movie. This long waiting period creates financial uncertainty and adds pressure on influencers who are new to this space. Moreover, the unpredictability of a film's success looms large over their minds. We constantly question whether the audience will accept us, whether we will be able to sustain ourselves in the industry. Unlike the digital platforms, where our content directly reaches our followers, films involve multiple factors—script, direction, production quality, and audience reception—which make the journey more unpredictable," Das, sharing the other side of success, quipped.

Highlighting the growing trend of social media influencers transitioning into mainstream cinema, Das explains why filmmakers are eager to cast them. "Filmmakers invest in us because they know we are already familiar with the audience. This familiarity gives influencers an edge over newcomers, as we come with a built-in fan base. Producers prefer working with us as we have already established a connection with the masses, making it easier to market films. People know us, they trust us, and they believe we can deliver. This evolving trend in the industry reflects the power of social media, where digital content creators are no longer just entertainers but strong contenders in the film industry. With audiences eager to see their favorite influencers on the big screen, this trend is here to stay."

INFLUENCERS WHO MADE IT BIG IN BOLLYWOOD

NAME	MOVIE
Carry Minati	- Runway 34
Prajakta Koli	- Jug Jugg Jeeyo
Kusha Kapila	- Ghost Stories
Dolly Singh	- Bhaag Beanie Bhaag
Arun Kushwah	- Dasvi
Shirley Setia	- Nikamma
Harsh Beniwal	- Student Of The Year
Sahil Khattar	- '83



UNLOCKING SECRETS OF

skin pigmentation



DR. MUKESH BATRA

Homoeopathic remedies effectively address and clear facial pigmentation by targeting the root cause, enhancing the immune system, and gradually restoring pigmented spots to the natural skin colour

Notable conditions associated with hypopigmentation include vitiligo, an autoimmune disorder where the immune system targets and destroys melanocytes, leading to depigmented patches. A study published in the Journal Agent indicates a higher prevalence of hypopigmentation in females, accounting for 66.7%, compared to males at 33.3%.

Causes

Skin color problems happen for different reasons, and one big reason is ultraviolet (UV) radiation. Prolonged exposure to the sun prompts the skin to increase melanin production as a protective mechanism against UV rays. Being pregnant can also lead to a condition called melasma, where dark patches appear on the face. Things like acne or cuts can make too much melanin, causing dark spots even after skin heals.

Homoeopathy treatment

Homoeopathic remedies effectively address and clear facial pigmentation by targeting the root cause, enhancing the immune system, and gradually restoring pigmented

spots to the natural skin color.

Thujaocc is beneficial for addressing hyperpigmentation in individuals with dry skin, while Plumbum met is recommended for those with an oily face. Sepia Officinalis stands out as a highly effective remedy for addressing facial pigmentation. Caulophyllum is particularly effective during the menstrual phase to manage pigmentation concerns. Sarsaparilla is a suitable remedy when hyperpigmentation worsens in the summer, and Cadmium Sulph becomes a useful option when pigmentation exacerbates due to exposure to wind and sun.

The above homeopathic medicines are to be taken in 30 C, 4 pills twice a day – till symptoms subside.

Lifestyle changes

Incorporating vital lifestyle changes, such as consistent application of high SPF sunscreen for comprehensive UVA and UV protection, sig-

nificantly contributes to maintaining healthy and radiant skin. Following a robust skincare routine aids in healing the daily wear and tear caused by factors like pollution. Additionally, try to minimize sun exposure by wearing hats, using umbrellas, and donning sunglasses, especially during peak sunlight hours.

For individuals with inflammatory conditions like acne or eczema, regular use of anti-inflammatory skincare agents is recommended to prevent pigmentation from worsening. Avoid picking at acne, as it exacerbates inflammation and increases the risk of infection. Lastly, enhancing diet with folic acid-rich foods such as dark green leafy vegetables, wheat germ, asparagus, and fruits contributes to overall skin health.

Adopting healthy lifestyle changes helps one's skin remain resilient against external pressures. For finding



the best treatment for skin and color issues consulting a qualified homeopath is essential.

The writer, a Padma Shri awardee, is founder & Chairman Emeritus, Dr. Batra's® Healthcare. For health related queries, please mail to: askdrbatra@drbatras.com
Disclaimer: Please consult your local doctor before taking any medication.



Uttam Mohanty: A lasting legacy

BIJAY MANDAL, OP

Today marks the 11th day since the passing of Uttam Mohanty, the first and perhaps only superstar of the Odia film industry. Despite the passage of time, stories about his career, life, and activities continue to circulate widely, a testament to his enduring popularity.

The outpouring of grief was immense, with thousands flocking to his residence and the crematorium to pay their last respects. During his funeral procession, people from all walks of life lined the roads, eager for a final glimpse of their beloved matinee idol. This was particularly poignant given that it had been 22 years since he last headlined a movie, *E Jugara Krushna Sudama*, co-starring the Dada Saheb Phalke award-winning actor Mithun Chakraborty.

Uttam's popularity travelled across generations. People who saw him reign as the 'king' of the box office were in awe, while younger netizens, who never saw him on the big screen, are equally mesmerized by video clips of his best works and stories of his humble lifestyle despite his superstardom.

His influence extended beyond his on-screen persona. Popular actor Papu Pom Pom credits his career and success to Uttam Mohanty, while a roadside vendor recounts how the top actor helped him get out of police custody. National Award-winning director Sabyasachi Mohapatra describes how producers exploited Uttam's simplicity, often not paying him his due. Veteran actor-filmmaker Prashanta Nanda admits he doesn't know how much Uttam was paid for the five or so movies he directed him in, signifying he did the movies for little or no upfront pay. Another touching anecdote comes from actor Rusi Pattnaik, who recalls how Uttam rode pillion on his bike for some work, highlighting the actor's frugal lifestyle.

Uttam's legacy lies not just in his acting but in the way he lived his life. His off-screen persona resonated deeply with those he touched. The secret behind his enduring appeal, according to eminent writer and filmmaker Sanjoy Patnaik, lies in Uttam's representation of the post-Emergency Indian youth—fearless and willing to fight for the right cause. His well-built physique and modern attire marked a transition from the traditional Sarat Pujari or Akshay Mohanty of the 1960s.

Uttam's versatility was unmatched. He was not just a representative of modern youths but also an all-around actor who excelled across multiple genres. Former news producer Jayant Seth highlighted this in a social media post. The consummate actor's contribution to Odisha's cultural life is unparalleled. He is the only cine actor from Odisha to perform in most movies adapted from mythology and literature. From Govind Tej's *Ramayana* to Radhapanda's *Bhakta Salabega*, Shyamal Mukherjee's *Jayadeba*, and Nitai Palit's *Raghu Arakhita*, Uttam was the first choice. Similarly, screen adaptations of novels like Pratibha Ray's *Nadi Nistaranga (Aparichita)*, Sukamini Nanda's *Anuraga (Jhiati Sita Pari)*, Kanhu Charan's *Tunda Baida*, and Shasti and Bibhuti Patnaik's *Badhu Nirupama* all featured Uttam in lead roles.

The ultimate validation of Uttam's fame came from National Award-winning actress Rituparna Sengupta, his co-star in several Bengali movies. She quipped, "Just as

Mahanayak Uttam Kumar is popular in Bengal, Uttam Da is equally popular in Odisha."

Uttam Mohanty has certainly set an incredibly high bar in acting that will be difficult for others to match. His memory will continue to live on in the hearts of millions for many years to come.



Parineeti's childhood struggle

Parineeti Chopra recently opened up about her family's financial struggles while growing up in Ambala, Haryana. She shared that her parents faced hardships raising three children, sometimes unable to afford basic luxuries like a birthday cake. Instead, her father would buy a single piece of rasgulla or rasmalai, which they would cut as a substitute for a cake. Parineeti recalled, "I've seen the struggle of my parents when they used to not have money to get a birthday cake for me. My dad used to go to the market and buy one piece of Rasgulla, just a piece, not a kilo, one piece of Rasgulla or Rasmalai, and we used to cut that Rasmalai like a birthday cake."

Despite the modest life in Ambala, Parineeti experienced a stark contrast during her vacations in Kenya with her affluent maternal grandparents. She described how she would spend two months each year living a luxurious lifestyle, far removed from the challenges of her everyday life in Ambala. On the work front, Parineeti was last seen in *Amar Singh Chamkila*, directed by Imtiaz Ali. She is set to appear next in Anurag Singh's thriller *Sanki*, alongside Varun Dhawan. Parineeti also has *Shiddat 2* and her Netflix debut in a mystery thriller set in Shimla, co-starring Soni Razdan and Jennifer Winget.

AGENCIES

Shruti shares her 'life story'

Actress Shruti Haasan has shared the story of her life and revealed that she is "not a morning person".

Shruti, daughter of cine icon Kamal Haasan, took to her Instagram stories, where she shared a picture of herself. The image appears to be a selfie of Shruti sitting on the backseat of a car. She has wet or damp hair, and a natural, minimal makeup look. She has a mildly serious expression.

There is a text overlay at the bottom of the image that reads: "Not a morning person. Story of my life."

Shruti's British psychological thriller film *The Eye* made its India premiere as the opening feature of the 5th Wench Film Festival.

Set against the breathtaking landscapes of Greece, *The Eye* follows Diana (played by Haasan) as she embarks on an emotional journey, scattering her late husband Felix's ashes on a remote island. What begins as an act of closure soon entangles her in the chilling and mysterious 'Evil Eye' ritual, weaving an unsettling tale of grief, fate, and the supernatural.

The film is directed by Daphne Schmon and produced by Fingerprint Content, and marks Shruti Haasan's much-anticipated international debut. IANS



HOLI'S MYRIAD HUES



More than just a festival of colours, the spirit of Holi continues to be celebrated across the world, serving as a reminder of the power of joy, unity, and tradition in bringing people together

Holi, the vibrant festival of colors, is celebrated with great enthusiasm across India and in many parts of the world. While most people are familiar with the colorful celebrations and the joyous spirit of Holi, there are several lesser-known facts about this festival that add to its rich cultural tapestry.

Ecological significance

While Holi is primarily a cultural and religious festival, it also has ecological significance. The Holika Dahan is traditionally performed using wood from specific trees that have medicinal properties. The heat from the bonfire is believed to purify the air and kill bacteria, which is particularly beneficial at the onset of spring when diseases are more likely to spread. This practice highlights the ancient wisdom of using natural elements for health and well-being.

Traditional colours

The colors used in Holi, known as "gula" and "abir," were traditionally made

from natural ingredients like flowers, herbs, and minerals. For instance, yellow was made from turmeric, red from flowers like kesuda, and green from neem leaves. These natural colors were not only safe for the skin but also had therapeutic benefits. In recent years, there has been a resurgence of interest in using such natural colors to avoid the harmful effects of synthetic dyes.

Holi in different regions

Holi is celebrated differently in various regions of India, each with its own unique customs and traditions. In Mathura and Vrindavan, the birthplace of Lord Krishna, Holi is celebrated with great fervor and is known as "Lathmar Holi." Here, women playfully hit men with sticks, symbolizing the playful antics of Radha and her friends with Krishna. In the state of Manipur, Holi is celebrated for six days and is known as "Yaosang," where people build and burn a thatched hut to signify the burning of Holika.

Historical significance

Holi has been celebrated for centuries and has been mentioned in ancient texts and inscriptions. The festival is described in the 7th-century Sanskrit drama "Ratnavali" by Harsha, and it is also depicted in ancient paintings and murals. This historical

continuity highlights the enduring nature of Holi as a cultural and religious festival.

Role of music and dance

Music and dance play a crucial role in Holi celebrations. Traditional songs, known as "Holi geet" or "Phagwah geet," are sung during the festival, often accompanied by instruments like the dhol and manjeera. These songs celebrate the love of Radha and Krishna and the joy of spring. In some regions, there are specific dance forms associated with Holi, such as the "Dhamal" dance in Haryana, which is performed to the beats of the dhol.

Global influence

Holi has gained popularity worldwide, with many countries adopting the festival's colorful and joyous spirit. In countries like the United States, the United Kingdom, and Australia, Holi celebrations are becoming increasingly common, often organized by Indian communities and attended by people from diverse backgrounds. This global influence has also led to the creation of events like the "Col-

or Run," a 5-kilometer race where participants are doused with colored powder at various checkpoints.

In art and literature

Holi has been a source of inspiration for many poets, writers, and artists. It has been depicted in numerous works of literature, paintings, and sculptures, capturing the essence of the festival's joy and vibrancy. The festival's themes of love, devotion, and the triumph of good over evil have been explored in various forms of art, making Holi a significant cultural symbol.

Post-Holi rituals

After the day of Holi, there are several post-festival rituals that are observed in different regions. In some parts of India, people apply sandalwood paste on their bodies to soothe the skin after being exposed to colors. In others, special sweets like gujiya and mathri are prepared and shared among family and friends. These rituals add a sense of closure to the festival and reinforce the bonds of community and family.

Holi is more than just a festival of colours; it is a celebration of life, love, and the triumph of good over evil. Its rich history, diverse traditions, and cultural significance make it a unique and cherished festival. As Holi continues to be celebrated across the world, it serves as a reminder of the power of joy, unity, and tradition in bringing people together.

OP DESK



Kiran



PHOTO : KAMAL PHOTOGRAPHY

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