

JUNE 29-JULY 05, 2025

SUNDAY POST

HERE . NOW



NATIONAL DOCTORS' DAY - JULY 1

Messiahs in white coats

COVER STORY

P
3,4



Day for a much needed pause

For me, Sunday is the ultimate day of self-care, entertainment, and rest—a much-needed pause in the week that I truly look forward to.



With a co-actor

... ANISHA KHATUN, OP

Hitiesha Bag, a rising star from Balasore, has been captivating audiences in Odia television for the past seven years. Her journey began with a breakthrough role in the hit TV serial Durga, followed by standout performances in shows like Jhia Amara Nua Bohu and the recent Sandhya Ragini. With her magnetic screen presence and unwavering dedication, she has swiftly become a household name. Now, as she gears up for several exciting projects, Hitiesha is set to scale new heights in state’s entertainment horizon



With Sandhya Ragini team

Hanging out with friends

When free from work, I cherish every moment with friends. We catch a movie, share delicious food, and fill the air with laughter.



Relaxing Sunday

Amidst my hectic schedule, I cherish moments to unwind with my favourite hobbies—skincare, painting, and cooking—each a delightful escape into relaxation.

Comfort and joy

On an ideal Sunday, I savour delicious mutton, bask in perfect weather, and enjoy a great film—a perfect blend of comfort and joy.



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

- A good time to keep your mouth shut is when you're in deep water.
- My parents are always telling me that their world doesn't revolve around me. So I guess that means that I'm not actually their sun.
- I'm single by choice. Unfortunately, it's not my choice.
- You are not as bad as people say, you are much, much worse.



Beyond scholarly understanding

Sir, Last week’s cover story ‘Power of faith’, based on Rath Yatra, reflects the magic of Lord Jagannath. The deity of the universe transcends the comprehension of even the most learned scholars. His form, simple yet enigmatic, defies conventional logic. Unlike other deities with intricate iconography, Lord Jagannath appears as a wooden figure with large, round eyes and a serene expression, yet His presence is profoundly divine. The rituals surrounding Him, such as the Rath Yatra, where He rides a colossal chariot, symbolize the journey of the soul. Scholars may study His history, legends, and significance, but His essence remains elusive. He embodies the ineffable, a divine mystery that humbles the intellect. In His presence, one experiences a profound connection that surpasses scholarly understanding, touching the soul directly. Lord Jagannath is a living testament to the idea that true divinity lies beyond the grasp of human intellect, inviting devotees to experience the divine through faith and devotion rather than mere intellectual pursuit.

SOUMEN SAHOO, PARALAKHEMUNDI

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
B-15, Industrial Estate, Rasulgarh, Bhubaneswar - 751010, Orissa.
Phone (0674) 2549982, 2549948



NATIONAL DOCTORS' DAY - JULY 1

Messiahs in white coats

The best way to find yourself is to lose yourself in the service of others
MAHATMA GANDHI



Amidst the soaring costs of medical practice, offering free treatment is no small feat for doctors. Yet, a handful manage to do so with remarkable élan. Motivated by profound empathy and an unwavering moral compass, these doctors place patient well-being above financial gain, viewing their work as a calling rather than a mere job

ANISHA KHATUN, OP

In a world where healthcare often comes at a price, there exist a few souls who redefine the very essence of compassion and service. These selfless healers choose to treat patients for free, not for recognition or reward, but out of a deep commitment to humanity. For them, medicine is not just a profession—it is a mission, a calling to serve the most vulnerable without expecting anything in return.

Every day, they stand as beacons of hope in underserved communities, offering care where it's needed most. From crowded urban clinics to remote rural corners, these doctors carry the weight of responsibility with unmatched grace. They listen, they heal, and above all, they give—time,



knowledge, and kindness. Their work goes beyond prescriptions and procedures; it is about restoring dignity and faith in a world that often forgets the powerless. In times of illness and despair, their presence reminds us that humanity still thrives in its purest form. These doctors embody the true spirit of service, making a difference not through wealth or status, but through unwavering dedication. Their stories inspire us all to believe in a more compassionate, inclusive, and caring world. Ahead of National Doctors' Day, Sunday POST reached out to a few real-life messiahs to understand what drives them to serve selflessly, expecting nothing in return.

'I charge ₹1 to ensure the patients retain their dignity'

Dr. Shankar Ramchandani, Assistant Professor in the Department of Medicine at VIMSAR, Burla, is a remarkable embodiment of how empathy and purpose can redefine healthcare. His journey of service began in childhood, shaped by loss and hardship. Born into a 32-member family, he saw two cancer-stricken relatives die without treatment simply because the family couldn't afford it. "My father was the only earning member, and my mother used to stitch torn clothes to support the family. We couldn't save them. That's why my parents wanted me to become a doctor and serve the poor," he recalls.



During the COVID-19 pandemic, he was struck by the sight of long

queues at OPDs while private clinics remained closed. That moment rekindled his parents' dream. "I remembered their wish and started a clinic in a rented room, charging just ₹1. I wanted to serve physically challenged patients, labourers, rickshaw pullers, and leprosy patients of Burla," he says. He adopted the Junapani Kustha Colony, home to 51 leprosy-affected families, and made it his mission to improve their healthcare, awareness, and education. "I charge ₹1 not because they can't pay, but to ensure they retain their dignity." In five years, his initiative has treated over one lakh patients, offering consultations, medicines, ECGs, and nebulisation—each at ₹1. His wife, Dr. Shikha, has joined the cause, starting a ₹1 dental clinic and an "Asha Badi". "Both of us manage the clinic ourselves—cleaning, dispensing medicines, doing ECGs—after our hospital duties from 9 am to 5 pm," he shares. Despite being a father

to twin daughters, he maintains this delicate balance between profession, service, and family. He spends 25-30% of his salary to buy medicines, ECG paper, and support cancer- and HIV-affected orphans. "I believe my salary is sufficient. Many don't even have food or shelter," he says. Some kind-hearted individuals and medical representatives also help. Once, NABARD donated medicines worth ₹1 lakh, he shared. One experience remains etched in his heart. "A poor farmer from Padampur came with a fever. He had no money but brought vegetables and a hand-painted canvas of me. With tears in his eyes, he said, 'Sir, I have nothing else to give.' That moment will stay with me forever." Inspired by his mother and figures like D. Prakash Rao, Parbati Giri, Padma Shri Dr. Tapan Kumar Lahari, and Prof. Pradip Mohanty, Dr. Ramchandani continues to serve with unwavering purpose—proof that true healing begins with heart.



'Not charity, it's about responsibility & purpose'



Another Assistant Professor from the Department of Community Medicine at VIMSAR, Burla **Dr. Sanjeeb Kumar Mishra, MBBS, MD**, stands as a shining example of compassion in action. His journey of offering free medical treatment began soon after his marriage, when he and his wife moved to the outskirts of Sambalpur. The area, home to several slums and tribal colonies, lacked even the most basic healthcare facilities. "Most of the residents are illiterate when it comes to health. There was no medical facility in the vicinity, and that gave me a reason to start the clinic," he shares.

Though locals initially approached him to start a paid clinic, Dr. Mishra was deeply moved by the socioeconomic condition of the community. "Looking at the demography, we decided to open a free clinic," he explains. Since then, he has been offering his services without charge every evening from 6:30 pm to 8:00 pm—hours carefully scheduled so as not to interfere with his academic duties at the medical college. "When I am out of town or have professional commitments, my wife takes care of the clinic," he adds, highlighting the shared commitment that both he and his wife have toward the cause.

For Mishra, this work is not about charity, but about responsibility and purpose. "Many see profit in monetary terms. I see it in terms of manpower," he says. With both he and his wife employed as Assistant Professors, they are financially stable and able to serve those who cannot afford healthcare. "The patients from slums and tribal colonies are not in a position to pay for consultations, and that motivates me to continue this service."



vice," he says.

Sharing a unique experience, Mishra shares, "A TB patient who was bed-ridden believed that taking medicines would kill her, due to myths spread by a few villagers. We visited her, convinced her, and began treatment. Today, she is doing well." This encounter sparked the beginning of health awareness camps in the area to dispel misinformation and improve healthcare literacy.

"Their smile after getting cured is simply priceless," he says. Recognition from society and the gratitude of the people he serves fuel his mission. Dr. Mishra's work stands as a

powerful reminder that the true essence of medicine lies in service, empathy, and unwavering humanity.

'I chose the path to stand by thalassemic children'

Dr. Biswashree Gyanaranjan Nayak, a homoeopath based in Bhubaneswar, is a testament to how a doctor's heart can become a sanctuary for the suffering. At a time when the medical field is often criticised for commercialisation, Dr. Nayak stands tall as a compassionate healer, offering hope to children battling Thalassemia Major.

His journey into selfless service began not in the pages of medical textbooks, but in the haunting eyes of young patients and their helpless parents.



had brought his daughter to a hospital. Post-treatment, they were referred to Nayak's clinic for further medications—free of charge. "After everything, they didn't even have bus fare left to return home. That helplessness... it was too much to ignore," he says.

Thalassemia, as he explains, is a severe genetic blood disorder that destroys red blood cells and causes extreme anaemia. Children with Thalassemia Major require frequent blood transfusions just to survive. "And yet, many families don't even know what the disease is until it's too late," he adds.

To bridge this gap and provide consistent, no-cost care, Dr. Nayak launched 'Umeed'—a movement, not just a medical initiative. Under this programme, children suffering from thalassemia receive monthly homoeopathic consultations and free medicines. Camps and awareness clinics are organised regularly to reach underserved communities.

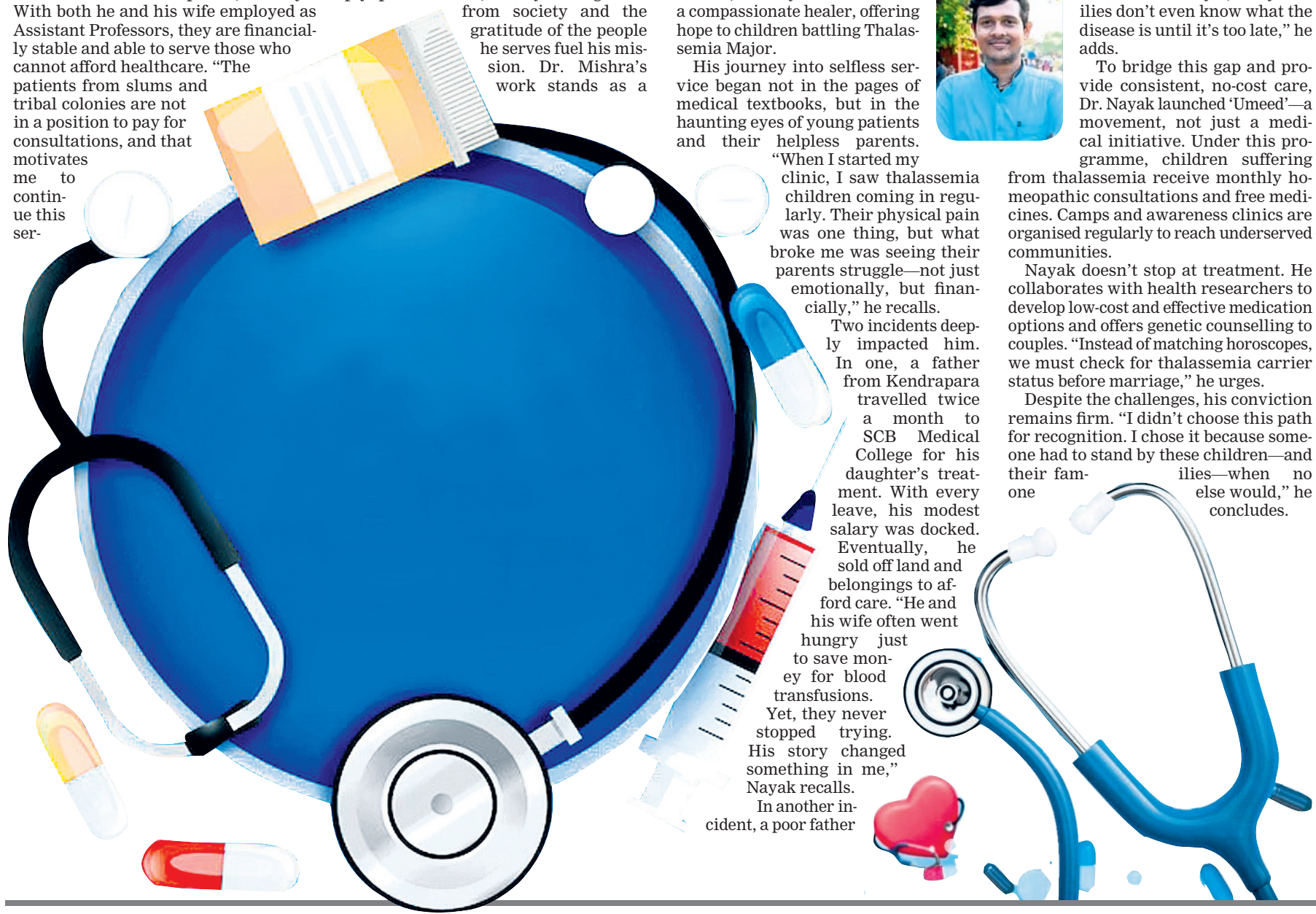
Nayak doesn't stop at treatment. He collaborates with health researchers to develop low-cost and effective medication options and offers genetic counselling to couples. "Instead of matching horoscopes, we must check for thalassemia carrier status before marriage," he urges.

Despite the challenges, his conviction remains firm. "I didn't choose this path for recognition. I chose it because someone had to stand by these children—and their families—when no else would," he concludes.

"When I started my clinic, I saw thalassemia children coming in regularly. Their physical pain was one thing, but what broke me was seeing their parents struggle—not just emotionally, but financially," he recalls.

Two incidents deeply impacted him. In one, a father from Kendrapara travelled twice a month to SCB Medical College for his daughter's treatment. With every leave, his modest salary was docked. Eventually, he sold off land and belongings to afford care. "He and his wife often went hungry just to save money for blood transfusions. Yet, they never stopped trying. His story changed something in me," Nayak recalls.

In another incident, a poor father



GAJAPATI KAPILENDRA DEVA'S
590TH CORONATION DAY – JUNE 29

Symbol of Odia pride

Kapilendra Deva instituted a robust administrative system. Evidence from inscriptions at Sri Kurmam and Andhra's Mahavishnu temples show how Telugu-speaking areas were governed by Odia officers

BISHNU MOHAN ADHIKARI

At a time in medieval Indian history when the brutality of Islamic rule was rampant in many parts of the subcontinent, it was Gajapati Kapilendra Deva who fearlessly raised the banner of Odia identity across more than half of India. Epigraphic evidence proves that his royal titles were unparalleled in the Indian subcontinent. He was widely known by his regal epithets such as:

Gajapati Goudeswara, Vijita Navakoti Karnata Kalavargeswara, Maharajadhirajeswara, Parama Maheswara, Parama Vaishnava, Parama Bhattarakaka, Jagannoolakarana Purushottama Putra, Durga Putra, Malava-Dhvamsa-Leelakari, Dillin-dra-Garva-Dhvastakari, Bhramaravara Nrupa, Utkala-Adhisha, Samara-mukha-aneka-ripu-darpa-mardana, Bhuja-bala-parakrama, Trayee-Basundhara-Sammuddharana, Durdama Mahavara-ha, Dharma-raksha-daksha, Maryada Mahodadhi Prachanda, Shri Ramagunala krita Shri Surya-Vanshavalambana-Stambha, Veera Shri Shri Pratapa Kapilesvara Deva.

These titles clearly reflect how vast portions of India were under Odia sovereignty during his reign.

Rise of the Kshatriya flame

In a time of political turmoil under the Eastern Ganga ruler Nishanka Bhanudeva and invasions from the neighboring Kondapalli region, Kapilendra Deva emerged as a Kshatriya torchbearer, restoring Odisha's prestige. Though texts like the Madala Panji, Cuttack Rajavamsavali, and Gangavamsanucharita contain differing legends about his origin, authentic inscriptions confirm his rise as a Suryavamsi Gajapati king and military conqueror.

Inscriptions in Kurnool and other places

The clearest proof of his expansive rule came with the discovery in June 2021 of two Odia copper plates from the ghanta mandapa of the Srisailem Mallikarjuna Temple in Kurnool, Andhra Pradesh. These record Kapilendra's grant of twenty



Gajapati Kapilendra Deva depicted holding a sword and seated in a dominating Lakulisha position at Kapileswar Temple in Old Bhubaneswar

villages to the temple deity, revealing that nearly 80% of present-day Andhra Pradesh once came under his control. The inscriptions list grants from Dandapatas such as Vinukonda, Kundabhidu, Rajahmundry, and Kamavaram, worth 25,000 tankas—highlighting Kapilendra's prosperity and generosity.

Odia as State Language

Fulfilling the aspirations of the Eastern Gangas, Kapilendra Deva elevated Odia to the status of state language. From the Ganga to the Kaveri, his copper and stone inscriptions were inscribed in Odia. The first known written reference to Odisha appears in his Lingaraja temple inscription where he proudly declares, "Amhara Odisha Rajye" (In our Odisha kingdom). His tax reforms at Puri's Jagannath temple abolished traditional salt and cowrie taxes, and he strictly enforced Odia-led governance. Ministers like Gopinath Mahapatra, Bhuvaneshwara Mahapatra, and Ranasure Deba were among the all-Odia council.



Lingaraj Temple Inscription of Kapilendra Deva issuing warning to the vassal kings for complete loyalty to him or else lose their property and be banished from the kingdom



Surrender to Jagannatha

Kapilendra Deva was a true devotee of Jagannatha. In a 1459 CE inscription at the Jagannath temple's Jay-Vijaya gate, he writes:

"O Jagannatha! You know my inner and outer self. All my wealth and gems are yours. This land belongs to whomever you bless—not to me."

During internal strife, he sought solace in Jagannatha, stating:

"O Jagannatha! These samanta kings whom I made wealthy and gave positions as rautas and paikas have now abandoned me. I will punish them as per dharma. You judge my actions."

Kalinga to Kaveri conquest

Inscriptions from Gopinathpur, Warangal, Belda (West Bengal), and Sri Kurmam trace his military campaigns. He defeated the Bahmani Sultan Humayun Shah, the Bengal Sultan Ahmad Shah, the Reddi king Veerabhadra, the Sultan of Jaunpur, and the Vijayanagara ruler Mallikarjuna. His sons Hamvira Deva, Raghudeva Narendra, and ministerial aides like Gopinath and Ranasure led these expeditions. This pan-Indian campaign remains unmatched in Odia history.

Temple endowments and religious patronage

Kapilendra Deva furthered the charitable legacy of the Gangas. He ensured endowments for Madhukeswara, Kurmanatha, and Simhachalam temples. Odia inscriptions reveal arrangements for ritual offerings like chaka-enduri pitha, panasa, arisa, and floral garlands, especially for Lakshmi-Narasimha at Vishakhapatnam. He honored Odia dance and service communities like Somadrimali, Phulaani, and Ambararani in temple duties.

Administrative system and currency

Kapilendra instituted a robust administrative system. He reorganized the state into Dandapatas, delegating powers to Parichha and Mahapatras. Evidence from inscriptions at Sri Kurmam and Andhra's Mahavishnu temples show how Telugu-speaking areas were governed by Odia officers. Land purchases, resales, and regrants were systematized. Unlike the earlier Ganga use of "madha," he introduced "tanka" as standard currency. He established agraharas like Jageshwarpura, Belamapura, and Kapileshwarpura for Brahmins along the Godavari.

Donor of the Sunabesha ornaments

Kapilendra donated over 1,400 gold ornaments to the Jagannath temple following his military victories. These included gem-studded crowns, earrings, necklaces, jeweled fans, flower garlands, armbands, anklets, conch-chakra icons, and decorative ornaments still used during the famous Sunabesha.

Language and literature

During Kapilendra's reign, the Odia script reached a more refined form than its ancient predecessors, though still distinct from the modern alphabet. His era witnessed the zenith of Odia literature before Sarala Das, suggesting an earlier peak. Works like Bilanka Ramayana, Mahabharata, Devi Bhagavata, and Chandi Purana are products of this flourishing literary culture. His Sanskrit drama Parashurama Vijaya proves his personal literary engagement.

Sanskrit, Telugu, and Tamil inscriptions from his reign—such as those at Srirangam, Tirupati, Chiruburuli, and Kumbhaveda in Bengal—confirm his rule as a multilingual yet just administration, admired even by non-Odias.

Legacy and reflection

On this day in 1435 CE, Kapilendra Deva ascended the throne. While rulers like Shivaji, Ahilyabai Holkar, Krishnadevaraya, and the Cholas are widely celebrated today, Kapilendra's heroic legacy remains under-recognized. This demands reflection. Time will change. Odisha's forgotten glories will rise again.

The writer is an Odia Epigraphy Researcher. Views are personal.

Urmila takes a trip down memory lane

Actress Urmila Matondkar took some time to reflect on her praiseworthy journey from 1995 to 2025 - which happens to be full of "love appreciation, affection, and warmth". She took to her official Instagram account and dropped two pictures of herself - one from 1995 and another one from 2025. In both these stills, the *Rangeela* actress sizzled in a short black dress.

Her post also included the caption, "1995...tooo 2025 n on n on n on I go basking in the love, appreciation, affection n warmth showered by all of you on me."

Showing her genuine gratitude, she went on to share, "Saw someone post this on 'X' and couldn't resist sharing it with all of you. What else can I have except heart full of genuine gratitude n persona drenched in humility."

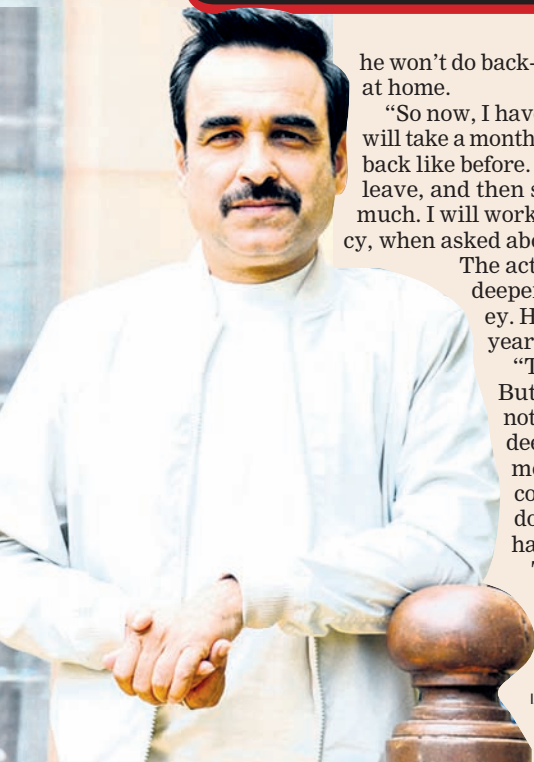
Back in May, Urmila offered prayers at the famous Kamakhya Temple in Assam.

Posting a couple of glimpses of her religious visit on the photo-sharing app, she wrote, "Kamakhya Temple... heavy rain... road closed.. the city at a standstill... but had to pay a visit...so like many other things in life, I left this also to maa...And today the call came for a visit."

IAN S



Pankaj to work less now



IAN S

he won't do back-to-back work to spend some quality time at home.

"So now, I have decided that I will do one thing, and I will take a month's leave for 20 days. I won't do it back to back like before. I will finish one work, take a month's leave, and then start another. Now I won't do that much. I will work less," Pankaj told this news agency, when asked about staying so busy.

The actor had once said that he acts for deeper reasons beyond fame or money. Has that reason changed over the years?

"The reason has changed a little. But earlier I used to say that I am not doing it for fame or money. But deep down, if it was for fame or money, then only I would have come to become an actor. Yes. So I don't know. But now I feel that it has changed a little," he added.

The actor currently awaits the release of *Metro...In Dino*, which delves into the complex and modern relationships.

Acclaimed actor Pankaj Tripathi has his diary full of work with *Metro...In Dino*, *Criminal Justice Season 4* and an upcoming film with Amit Rai. However, the star has said that

Hooda. IAN S

Saiyami comfortable with action

Actress Saiyami Kher says she loves doing action as it comes naturally to her courtesy her background in athletics.

Speaking about her comfort with action, Saiyami shares, "I love doing action. I've been into sports ever since I was a kid running, cycling, swimming, everything."

The actress, who will be seen in the second installment of *Special Ops*, said: "Training for the Ironman Triathlon taught me discipline, resilience, and how to push my limits. So I am always up to doing exciting stunts. I learnt MMA for a project which I enjoyed. Whether it's hand-to-hand combat or high-octane chases, I'm always very excited."

Special Ops 2 stars Kay Kay Menon, Vinay Pathak, Tahir Raj Bhasin, Karan Tacker, Saiyami Kher, Arif Zakaria amongst other actors. The show will start streaming from July 11.

Special Ops, which was first released in 2020, is an action espionage thriller series directed by Neeraj Pandey. It stars Kay Kay Menon as Himmat Singh, a member of Research and Analysis Wing, forms a team of five agents, in order to track down a person, who is the mastermind of the terror attacks which took place in India.

The actress was recently seen in *Jaat* starring Sunny Deol and Randeep Hooda.

IAN S



Sonakshi on social media negativity



AGENCIES

Sonakshi Sinha, known for her bold personality and candid nature, is not one to shy away from calling out online hate—especially when it involves her loved ones. In a recent conversation, the actress opened up about the emotional toll social media negativity can take, admitting that while she tries to ignore it, some lines simply cannot be crossed.

Sonakshi explained that although she prefers to avoid engaging with trolls, the constant wave of negativity online can often feel suffocating. "It's exhausting to tackle it all," she said, emphasising how difficult it is for one person to take on the entire digital hate machine. However, her stance changes the moment her family is dragged into the chaos.

"If it gets personal, especially about my family, I will speak up. There's no room for silence in such cases," she stated firmly. Last year, Sonakshi tied the knot with longtime partner Zaheer Iqbal in an intimate ceremony after eight years of dating. The couple, known for their light-hearted social media presence, continue to charm fans with their playful chemistry.

On the work front, Sonakshi is currently promoting Nikita Roy, helmed by her brother Kussu Sinha. She will also return in *Dahaad 2* and is set to make her Telugu debut with *Jatadhara*.

MIGHTY MINIS

As technology continues to evolve, one exciting trend in 2025 is the rise of compact yet highly functional gadgets. These small wonders prove that innovation isn't always about size—it's about smart design, versatility, and seamless integration into everyday life. Whether enhancing productivity, boosting creativity, or simply adding fun to your day, these gadgets offer big benefits in tiny packages. Here are five standout small tech devices making a big impact this year

HUMANE AI PIN

The Humane AI Pin is transforming the concept of personal assistants. This sleek, screenless wearable clips onto your clothing and uses voice, touch, and gesture controls for a truly hands-free experience. Instead of relying on a screen, it projects a simple interface onto your palm and responds using advanced contextual AI. From sending messages and translating conversations to fetching online information, it handles everyday tasks with ease. Designed to be smaller than a brooch, the AI Pin is a bold step toward a future where tech blends seamlessly into daily life—smart, subtle, and always ready.



INSTA360 GO 3 CAMERA

The Insta360 GO 3 takes portability and content creation to the next level. Weighing only 35 grams, it is the world's smallest stabilized action camera. With magnetic mounting, voice control, and 2.7K video capability, the GO 3 lets users record immersive videos from unique angles—whether clipped to

a shirt, mounted on a bike, or attached to a pet's collar. The upgraded version also includes a "camera pod," which serves as a display screen and controller while doubling as a power bank. This tiny gadget is perfect for vloggers, travelers, or anyone wanting to document life without carrying bulky gear.

FLIPPER ZERO

Don't let the playful Tamagotchi-style screen fool you—Flipper Zero is a hacker's dream. This compact cybersecurity tool fits in your pocket and is capable of emulating remote controls, scanning RFID tags, analyzing signals, and testing wireless protocols. Ethical hackers and cybersecurity pros love it for penetration testing and device tinkering. It's also popular among tech hobbyists who enjoy learning how electronic systems interact. Its charm lies in being approachable yet deeply capable—empowering users to explore the digital world around them.



THERMBOT SMART THERMOMETER

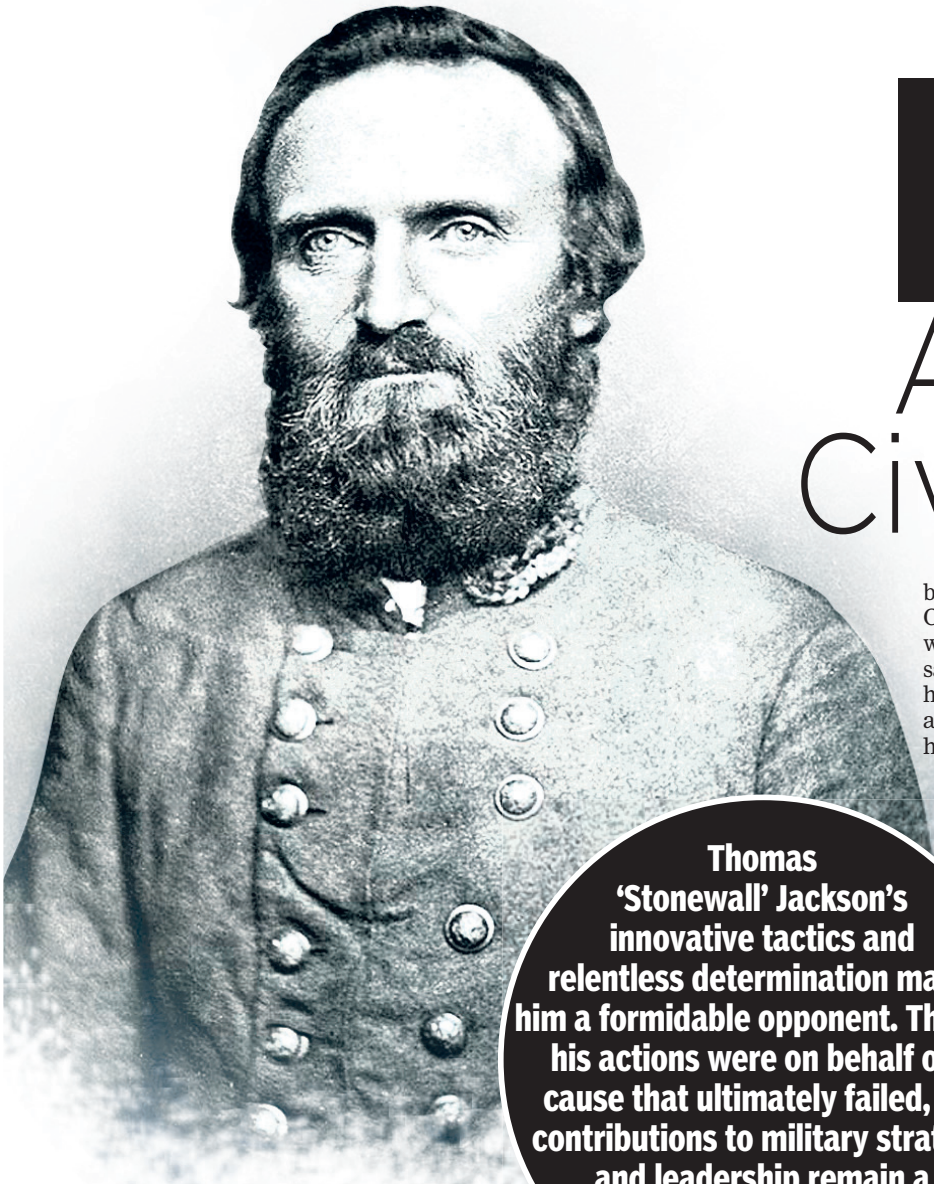
In a post-pandemic world, portable health tools have become essential. The ThermBot is a credit card-sized infrared thermometer that plugs directly into your smartphone's charging port—no batteries, no charging required. It delivers accurate, contactless temperature readings within seconds and syncs data with a companion app for easy tracking. Whether you're checking your own health, your child's temperature, or monitoring symptoms during travel, the ThermBot is a smart, discreet, and hygienic solution.



ANBERNIC RG35XX PLUS

Gaming nostalgia meets modern convenience in the Anbernic RG35XX Plus. This palm-sized retro handheld console packs a punch with dual-core performance, a crisp IPS screen, and support for thousands of classic games from platforms like NES, SNES, Game Boy Advance, and more. It's perfect for gamers who miss old-school titles or want to introduce a new generation to the magic of classic gaming. Despite its tiny footprint, the battery life is impressive, and its plug-and-play setup makes it ideal for spontaneous gaming sessions on the go.





Stonewall

An American Civil War legend

Thomas 'Stonewall' Jackson's innovative tactics and relentless determination made him a formidable opponent. Though his actions were on behalf of a cause that ultimately failed, his contributions to military strategy and leadership remain a significant part of American history

Not many in American history enjoy the legendary status like Thomas Jonathan Jackson does. Better known as "Stonewall", Jackson, is one of the most iconic figures of the American Civil War. His life story is a testament to perseverance, dedication, and military genius. From his humble origins to his legendary status as a Confederate general, Jackson's journey is both inspiring and complex.

Early life

Born January 21, 1824, in Clarksburg, Virginia (now West Virginia), Jackson's early life was marked by hardship. Both of his parents died by the time he was seven, and he was raised by various relatives. Despite these challenges, Jackson displayed a strong work ethic and a thirst for knowledge.

In 1842, Jackson secured an appointment to the United States Military Academy at West Point. His academic journey was not easy; he started at the bottom of his class but gradually improved through sheer determination and hard work. He graduated 17th out of 59 in the class of 1846, a remarkable achievement considering his initial struggles.

Military service and career

Jackson's first taste of military action came during the Mexican-American War (1846-1848). He served under General Winfield Scott and quickly distinguished himself with his bravery and leadership. His actions earned him several promotions, and he left the war with a reputation for

bravery and competence.

After the war, Jackson returned to civilian life and took up a teaching position at the Virginia Military Institute (VMI) in Lexington, Virginia. He taught natural and experimental philosophy and artillery tactics. His teaching style was strict and often criticized, but he was deeply committed to his students and their education.

Role in Civil War

When the Civil War

broke out in 1861, Jackson sided with the Confederacy. His first significant action was at the First Battle of Bull Run (Manassas) in July 1861. It was here that he earned his famous nickname. Confederate General Barnard Elliott Bee Jr., trying to rally his troops, reportedly exclaimed, "There is Jackson standing like a stone wall!" The name stuck, and Jackson became a symbol of Confederate resistance.

The Shenandoah Valley Campaign

Jackson's greatest military achievements came during the Shenandoah Valley Campaign in 1862. Tasked with preventing Union forces from reinforcing their troops in Virginia, Jackson executed a series of brilliant maneuvers. He marched his men at an extraordinary pace, earning them the nickname "Jackson's Foot Cavalry." His victories at McDowell, Front Royal, Winchester, Cross Keys, and Port Republic demonstrated his tactical genius and ability to confuse and outmaneuver his opponents.

The rise to legend

Jackson's reputation grew as he contin-

ued to serve under General Robert E. Lee. His role in the Seven Days Battles and the Second Battle of Bull Run further solidified his standing as a key Confederate leader. At the Battle of Fredericksburg in December 1862, Jackson's troops played a crucial role in repelling the Union assault.

Freak death

In May 1863, Jackson led his troops in a daring flanking maneuver at the Battle of Chancellorsville. It was a stunning success, but during the chaos of the night, Jackson was accidentally shot by his own men. His left arm was amputated, and he initially seemed to be recovering. However, he contracted pneumonia and died May 10, 1863.

Legacy

Thomas "Stonewall" Jackson's death was a profound loss for the Confederacy. His innovative tactics and relentless determination made him a formidable opponent. Despite his stern demeanor, he was deeply respected and admired by his troops. His religious faith and personal integrity added to his mystique.

Jackson's legacy endures as a symbol of military brilliance and dedication. His life story, from humble beginnings to Civil War legend, continues to inspire. Though his actions were on behalf of a cause that ultimately failed, his contributions to military strategy and leadership remain a significant part of American history.



PIC: landmarkevents.org