

**SUNDAY
POST**

AUGUST 3-9, 2025

HERE . NOW

1817

AN UNSUNG

UPRISING

P 3,4
COVER
STORY



MY SUNDAY

A leading voice in Odia music, Rakesh Dash is celebrated for his evocative lyrics and emotional depth. Since his 2019 breakout with 'Bodhe Prema Heigala Puni Thare' from the album 'Ishq', he has scored more than 250 numbers for albums and films. His stand-out film tracks include 'Kainki Ae Pruthibi (Dasama)', 'Punei Janha (Dot Pen)', and 'Chorabali Nayika (First Love)'. Born and raised in Cuttack, Rakesh, who lives in Canada, is now expanding his craft—working on his first Odia novel

Celebrating fatherhood

On Sundays, I usually take my son out to parks or explore nearby places. In Canada, summer is the perfect time for such outings. In winter, we stay indoors, watch Netflix, and enjoy warm, playful moments together.

Time to unwind

An ideal Sunday is slow, warm, and full of love. I wake up late, enjoy a relaxed breakfast, and spend quality time with family. Be it a friendly catch-up or a peaceful drive, I unwind and creatively recharge.

Love for reading

In my leisure time, I enjoy reading fiction. Stories—whether in lyrics or books—captivate me, offering both an escape from reality and a wellspring of inspiration.

A day with no agenda

At times, I step out, other times I embrace doing nothing. I enjoy comforting Indian food, a cozy couch, and a good movie. Unwinding without an agenda helps reset the mind, especially in a creative profession.

Food fanatic

I love cooking on weekends and take pride in my scrumptious chicken biryani! Biryani and Pakhala are my all-time favorites. A true foodie at heart, I turn to food in every mood—it's more than a hobby, it's comfort, celebration and nostalgia on a plate.



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

- Squirrels always act like it's their first day of being a squirrel.
- Why can't fishermen be generous? Because their business makes them sell fish!
- No one has ever complained of a parachute not opening. Think about it.
- You're never too old to learn something stupid.



Conservation is cumulative

Sir, Conserving nature is woven into every daily act, not reserved for laboratories, protests, or parliaments. A farmer who plants hedgerows, a child who picks up plastic on the beach, a company accountant who chooses recycled paper, and a gamer who powers down unused consoles all shape habitats as surely as satellite data or ministerial decrees. Markets shift when consumers buy shade-grown coffee or refuse single-use bags; local economies revive when hikers choose community guides over mass tours. Parents telling bedtime stories about owls, teachers turning schoolyards into wild meadows, and street artists painting bees on concrete walls seed the cultural soil from which future scientists, activists, and lawmakers grow. Even silence is a choice: the quiet refusal to share climate-denial posts, the hush that lets birdsong return to a city park. Conservation is cumulative, anonymous, and omnipresent—stitched like coloured wool through countless small stitches until the tapestry of a living planet is either mended or unravelled by the ordinary hands that hold it.

SOUBHAGYA MOHANTY, SAMBALPUR

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



TODAY, AS INDIA REFLECTS ON ITS STRUGGLE FOR FREEDOM, THE BATTLE CRY OF BUXI JAGABANDHU AND THE PAIKAS FOR INDEPENDENCE IN ODISHA CONTINUES TO RESONATE, REMINDING US THAT THE SPIRIT OF RESISTANCE CAN NEVER BE SUPPRESSED FOR LONG

1817

AN UNSUNG UPRISING

OP DESK

The National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT), the autonomous body that shapes India's school curricula, has once again courted controversy. After excising chapters on the Mughals and the Delhi Sultanate from Class VII history textbooks, it has now removed Odisha's Paika Bidroha (Paika Rebellion) of 1817 from the new Class VIII social-science textbook—triggering widespread dismay. Back home, it's seen as a move to dent Odia pride.

The omission is glaringly ironic. In 2018, Prime Minister Narendra Modi released a commemorative stamp and coin honouring the rebellion, and the next year then President Ram Nath Kovind laid the foundation stone for a Paika Memorial at Barunei Hills near Khurda. Both gestures had framed the uprising as the "First War of Independence" against British rule. Many historians now see the chapter's abrupt removal as an attempt to airbrush a vital chapter of regional history.

Faced with fierce backlash across Odisha, NCERT has promised

to restore the Paika Rebellion in the second volume of the textbook. Yet the episode has already rekindled Odia pride, reminding the nation why this 1817 revolt matters.

Sunday POST takes a quick glance at the much-talked about Paika Rebellion, a glorious chapter of Odisha's cultural legacy.

The Paika Rebellion of 1817 is one of the most significant yet underrepresented uprisings in Indian history. Predating the famous 1857 Revolt by four decades, this rebellion was a passionate cry for freedom and justice from the people of Odisha against British colonialism. Led by the brave warrior Bakshi Jagabandhu, the Paika Rebellion was a unique blend of armed resistance, tribal unity, and peasant revolt.

All about the Paikas

The Paikas were essentially a militia class under the Gajapati rulers of Odisha, serving both as warriors and landowners. They held land in return for their military service and maintained law and order in their respective territories. Over generations, they evolved into a semi-feudal

warrior caste. However, after the British East India Company annexed Odisha in 1803, the Paikas' privileges, land rights, and their socio-political relevance began to decline drastically. The British replaced the traditional systems with exploitative zamindari structures and heavy taxation policies. This led to widespread discontent.

Rising resentment

The seeds of rebellion were sown when the British imposed harsh land revenue policies and seized lands belonging to the Paikas and local chieftains. The traditional Jagirdari and land-holding rights were taken away, and the Paikas were now treated merely as peasants.

Many lost their land due to inability to pay taxes. This economic downfall, combined with social humiliation and political disempowerment, created deep resentment among the Paikas. The situation worsened when the British disregarded local customs, disrupted temple administration, and interfered in the social fabric of the region.



Images are AI-generated and used for representational purpose only



Buxi : The flame of resistance

At the heart of the Paika Rebellion was Buxi Jagabandhu Bidyadhar Mohapatra Bhramarbar Rai, the military commander (Buxi) of the King of Khurda. A nobleman from a prestigious lineage, he had also lost his estate due to British land policies.

Buxi, deeply angered by the injustices, became the natural leader of the rebellion. With his charisma, he united various segments of society—Paikas, tribals (particularly the Kandhas), peasants, and disbanded soldiers. His leadership transformed a scattered grievance into an organised resistance movement.

The outbreak of Rebellion - 1817

The rebellion erupted in March 1817, starting from Banapur and quickly spreading to Khurda, Puri, Pipili, and even reaching Cuttack. The rebels attacked British officials, looted government treasuries, and set fire to police stations and administrative offices.

Armed with traditional weapons like swords, bows, and arrows, the Paikas displayed fierce patriotism and guerrilla tactics. British officials and collaborators were driven out from many areas. The uprising had all the makings of a full-fledged war against colonial rule.

One of the unique aspects of the Paika Rebellion was the wide range of support it received. Tribal communities like the Kandhas of Ghumusar, peasants, zamindars, and even some village priests stood beside Bakshi. The participation of common people across caste and class lines turned it into a mass movement.

Additionally, local kings like the Zamindar of Paralakhemundi and several chieftains of Kandhamal and Ganjam districts covertly or overtly supported the uprising. The rebellion was no longer just a military reaction—it had evolved into a regional revolt against foreign rule.

British counter-offensive

Alarmed by the scale of the uprising, the British acted swiftly. Reinforcements were sent from Bengal and Madras. Using superior firepower, espionage, and divide-and-rule tactics, the British began to suppress the rebellion.

They arrested several rebel leaders, tortured suspected sympathizers, and brutally quelled uprisings in villages. Key leaders were executed or imprisoned. Bakshi Jagabandhu, however, remained elusive and continued to fight using guerrilla strategies for years.

Ultimately, in 1825, Bakshi surrendered after being offered safe passage and died in captivity in 1829. The rebellion had been crushed, but the spark it ignited was far from extinguished.

The legacy

Although the Paika Rebellion did not achieve independence, it became a symbolic and powerful expression of India's desire for self-rule. It was a well-organized, armed struggle that challenged the might of the British Empire.

The uprising inspired other anti-British movements in Odisha and elsewhere. It laid the ideological foundation for collective resistance against colonialism.

Also, it became an integral part of Odisha's cultural memory, celebrated in folk songs, dance dramas, and local festivals.

The Paika Rebellion was not just a footnote in Indian history—it was a powerful storm against tyranny and exploitation. It combined the raw courage of warriors, the pain of dispossessed peasants, and the spiritual unity of an oppressed society.

What experts have to say:

Laxmikanta Mishra, retired Professor of History at Ravenshaw University, Cuttack, that the Paika Rebellion rooted in the widespread grievances of the people, particularly the peasants. "The revolt stemmed from the faulty and exploitative land revenue policies imposed by the British. The administration paid no attention to the worsening economic conditions of the locals and continued to raise land taxes, pushing the peasants into extreme distress," he explains.



According to Mishra, the uprising was not merely a spontaneous event but a powerful and organised resistance against British authority. "The Paikas challenged British superiority and shook the confidence of their colonial administration. Their courage and spirit were remarkable," he says. However, he points out that the rebellion ultimately failed to succeed because it lacked coordination on a national scale. "It didn't evolve into a pan-India movement. The rebels were brave, but the weapons they used were no match for the British arsenal," he adds.

Mishra emphasises the importance of remembering and honoring this legacy. "The sacrifice of the Paikas must be celebrated annually. Their valiant resistance should remain alive in public memory. Commemorating their struggle is vital to preserving Odisha's history for the future generations," he concludes.

Tanutrushna Panigrahi, Buxi Jagabandhu Chair Professor at Utkal University, Bhubaneswar, emphasizes the significant role of the Paika Rebellion in shaping Odisha's socio-political identity. "The rebellion was not just a protest—it symbolized resistance against British rule, their oppressive economic reforms, and a powerful assertion of the Paika warrior class' valour," she says. "It was the first large-scale armed uprising against the British, and Buxi Jagabandhu emerged as a legendary figure—epitomizing courage, sacrifice, and anti-colonial resistance in the Odia psyche."



According to her, the rebellion deeply influenced local identity, instilled pride, and nurtured political consciousness in the region. It also served as a foundation for subsequent uprisings in Odisha, becoming a key reference point in the region's historical memory.

However, Panigrahi laments the marginalization of the Paika Rebellion in mainstream Indian history. "It's not just oversight—there was a clear northern bias in historical narratives. Odisha, at that time, was geographically and politically peripheral and didn't receive adequate national representation."

To preserve this legacy, she suggests integrating it meaningfully into Indian and Odia history syllabi, promoting it through folk arts, literature, digital archiving, and museums.





Publisher : Ebury Press (21 July 2025)
Title : The Art of Decluttering

Print length : 256 pages
Price in INR : 399



PROF (DR) TAPAN K PANDA

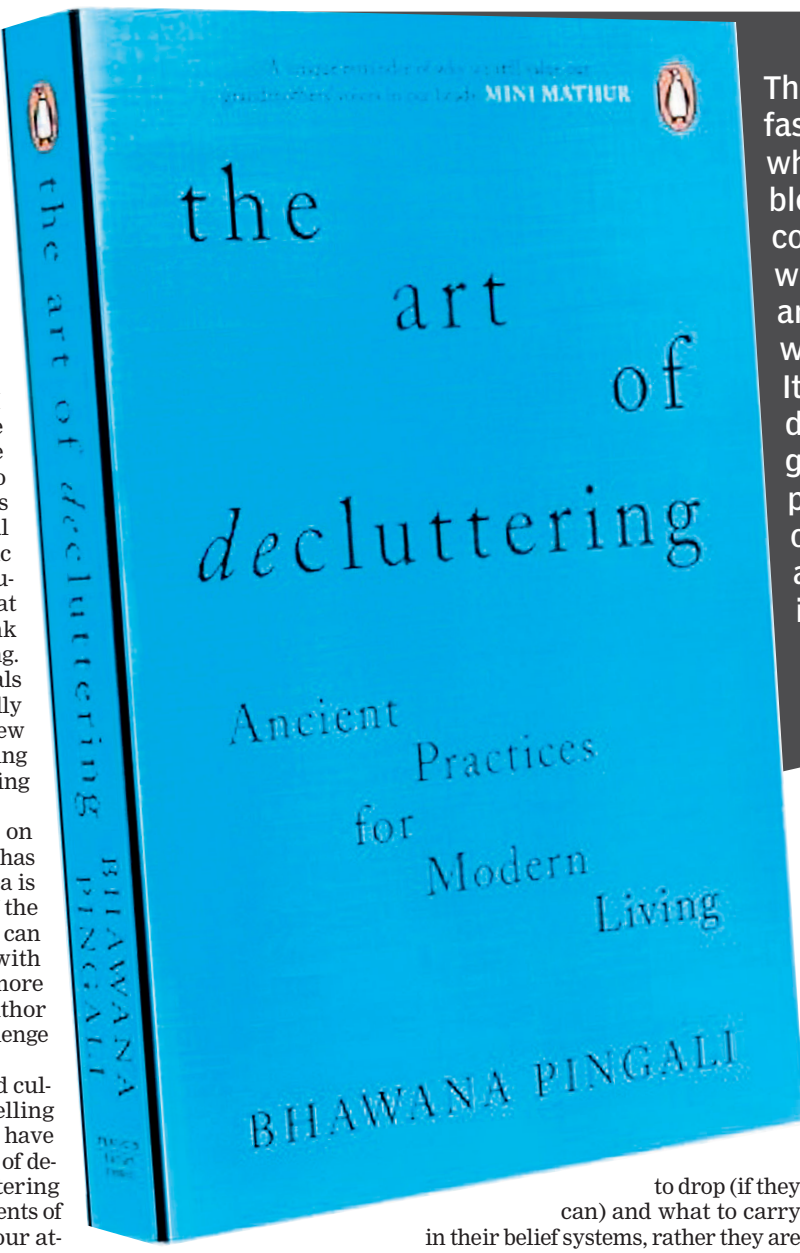
An ode to the quiet wisdom of Indian households

As a management scholar and a researcher in the area of leadership and culture, I have long avoided reading self help and leadership tips books. Long time back, Debashish Chatterjee, my old colleague and current director of IIM Kozhikode, wrote something on contextual leadership. He was fresh from Harvard Business School after doing his post doctoral research under Peter Senge. That's the only time I had enjoyed reading a book that has an element of 'how to' until I encountered Bhawana Pingali's *The Art of Decluttering*. I understand the complexities of the world and how as a human race, we are chasing structured solutions to unstructured and complex problems where there is no ideal or optimal solution. While algorithms and logic tend to derive the 'reason why' of solutions, there are many problems that still continue to push us to the brink in explaining the rules of life and living. This book attempts to explain rituals over rules and makes us think radically about simplicity. This is a complete new metaphorical narrative on the thinking process itself or we can say rethinking process itself.

The global economy has focused on clearing the clutter where simplicity has become a rainbow like spectacle. Idea is to spark joy, toss everything out of the window and start all over again. We can name this as a 'tidying dogma' and with this dominant trend; the book is a more rooted and quieter offering. The author has taken a layered approach to challenge the modern idea of minimalism.

The author is a fashion writer and cultural practitioner and has a compelling argument in the book - It appears we have misunderstood the whole paradigm of decluttering. What if the act of decluttering is not about discarding objects (elements of materialism) but about deepening our attention to them? Published by Ebury Press in July 2025, the book is not preachy. It doesn't want to prescribe a process or a system but proposes a radical shift in sensibility.

I have written about the layered approach because the book has nine experiential chapters. It takes readers through practices that are at once sensorial, tactile and based on Western-educated Indian's overlooking of domestic traditions. They are not plastic bins for discarding garbage where individuals have choices what



The author being a fashion writer knows where to stitch, where to blend and where to mix colours. No wonder, the work is a part philosophy and part craft book blended with memory archive. It's very evident that she draws on her work with garments and embodied practices to propose a version of decluttering that is not about minimisation, but about intimacy

embodied practices to propose a version of decluttering that is not about minimisation, but about intimacy. Instead of emptying the home, she suggests we re-inhabit it—through texture, smell, memory, metaphor and move on moments. It's smoothening to read as it sidesteps the tyranny of the global wellness – business like complexities. There is no perform-

mative purging here, no shame-laden confessions of consumption. I find the book has childlike curiosity, childlike playfulness, and subtle praise of reclaiming own-self-space through culture rather than commerce.

Pingali's writing has both lyrical ease and sharp intelligence. Though she is well versed with her aesthetic dimensions of her material, she has hardly allowed the theory to overpower tradition and practice. Each chapter is grounded – grounded on what body can do, make, wear, touch, feel and decipher. You feel like a sensorial slow reading, not reading a guide book, but sitting on a riverbank and assembling the curated experiences. In the instant gratification world, this book doesn't have bulleted points, no snapshots to preach before and after images. The author has intentionally resisted that language and flow as the idea is to be transformative than being useful.

For readers and enthusiasts, *The Art of Decluttering* is a quietly radical work, filled with traditions and cultural contexts and invites readers to find stillness not through logical deductions but through reconnections with time, tradition and with the spaces we already occupy. In many ways, *The Art of Decluttering* reads like an ode to the quiet, uncelebrated wisdom of Indian households. It encourages a return to handmade rhythms and seasonal awareness—without the pressure to perfect. It's a timely reminder that decluttering doesn't always mean letting go of things. Sometimes, it means returning to them with new eyes.

This book needs meditative reading. Some readers may find the rituals abstract, poetic, or symbolic rather than practical for immediate household tidying. It's less about room by room organising and more about shifting attention and perception. Readers seeking explicit "keep/donate/discard" systems—à la KonMari or four box method—may feel the book offers fewer step by step methods for physical reorganising. It's more reflective than prescriptive. Hence readers need to reconnect with the existing world through cultural authenticity, awareness about sensory and emotional depth and sensitivity towards sustainable ethos.

The reviewer, a bilingual poet, translator and author, has taught management and Creativity in many overseas Universities and in all the leading IIMs in India. He can be reached at tapanpanda@gmail.com

to drop (if they can) and what to carry in their belief systems, rather they are seeds, sarees, cloth pads and trails that combine past with the present and project towards the future world of simplicity. Let me quote the author to illustrate her charismatic narratives: *bagging seeds to soothe the eyes, drawing to feed ants, draping a saree like trousers to go upside down...* There is no element of eccentricity in these writings but as everyday rituals of awareness passed down in Indian homes and in seasonal rhythms. As a serious reader, I failed to brand this as nostalgia, rather as cultural decolonisation disguised as lifestyle guidance.

Pingali being a fashion writer knows where to stitch, where to blend and where to mix colours. This is a part philosophy, part craft book blended with memory archive. It's very evident that she draws on her work with garments and



About the author

Bhawana Pingali is a mother of a teen and has been a fashion writer and academic for over two decades. After a stint as fashion features editor with *Femina* (Times Group), she contributed independently to *The Hindu*, *Mint Lounge*, *Time Out*, *Lonely Planet*, *Travel + Leisure*, *Maxim*, *Orissa POST* and *Signature Oman*, among others. She has taught at the National Institute of Fashion Technology (Mumbai), Pearl Academy, Symbiosis Institute of Design, CEPT University, Ahmedabad, Indian Institute of Management Ahmedabad, British Council, and GD Goenka and Ansal universities. Her heart now lies in teaching yoga pranayama, restoring old saris and old-world practices and rituals through the spiritual fashion-learning platform *Revastra*.

Timeless treats

Rakhi festival brings with it the joy of family, traditions, and of course, sweets. Delicacies like Rasmalai Delight Cups, Gur Gulab Jamun Bites, and Sewai —light, rich, and filled with nostalgia -- are three of my favorite festive indulgences. These treats are perfect for celebrating the bond of love with a delicious, homemade touch



PRITYSHA DAS

Rasmalai Delight Cups

Soft, spongy, and soaked in fragrant saffron milk, Rasmalai is elegance in every bite. A traditional Bengali sweet made celebratory for Rakhi, it's light, luscious, and absolutely festive. Serve chilled in mini dessert cups for an extra touch of charm.

How to make:

- Soak store-bought or homemade rasgullas in thickened saffron-cardamom milk.
- Let it rest in the fridge for 3-4 hours for maximum flavour absorption.
- Serve in individual cups, topped with crushed pistachios and a few strands of saffron.



Kesar Pista Sewai Delight

Delicate, creamy, and gently fragrant, Kesar Pista Sewai is a timeless Rakhi favorite. Infused with saffron and cardamom, this comforting dessert feels like a golden thread tying hearts together. Served warm or chilled, it's a nostalgic finale to the festive thali — elegant, light, and utterly soul-satisfying.

How to make:

- Roast vermicelli in ghee until golden brown.
- Simmer in full cream milk with sugar, saffron strands, and crushed cardamom.
- Cook until thick and creamy. Garnish with chopped pistachios and a drizzle of rose water. Serve warm or chilled, as preferred.



Gur Gulab Jamun Bites

A rustic twist on the classic, Gur (jaggery) Gulab Jamun adds a rich, earthy depth. Sticky-sweet and melt-in-mouth, it's a warm Rakhi treat that feels like a hug from home. Great for sharing and perfect post-thali indulgence.

How to make:

- Prepare dough with khoya and a pinch of semolina; shape into small balls.
- Deep fry on low heat until golden brown..
- Soak in jaggery syrup infused with cardamom and a dash of rose water. Serve warm.



FRIENDSHIP DAY TODAY

A calling, not a transaction

In an age that weighs every bond by emotional, or professional benefit, genuine friendship transcends transactional give-and-take relationship rooted in selfless commitment rather than societal measures of gain

"A friend is someone who knows all about you and still loves you."
ELBERT GREEN HUBBARD

ANISHA KHATUN, OP

There was a time when friendship bloomed in the quiet shade of shared sunsets and unhurried conversations. It wasn't loud, nor was it curated—it was organic, textured with warmth, built through time, trust, and togetherness. Today, amid a labyrinth of digital noise, that gentle grace feels like a relic of a slower, more tender world.

We live in an era where connection is constant, yet often colourless—reduced to fleeting pings, heart-shaped icons, and algorithm-fed updates. What once thrived in soul-baring exchanges now tiptoes through timelines, draped in filters and captions. But true friendship... it does not seek attention; it offers presence. It is felt in the silent hand on your back during a storm, the shared laughter without reason, and the glance that speaks volumes when words fall short. In our relentless pursuit of speed and spectacle, are we losing the quiet sanctuaries of soulful companionship? Are we trading the eternal for the ephemeral?

As the world celebrates this cherished bond today, Sunday POST reached out to a few individuals to get their perspectives on what true friendship means.

'We're always 'online' but never truly present'

Shradha Mohanty, 28, marketing professional, Bhubaneswar, says, "Somewhere along the way, friendship became transactional—something you maintain with gestures rather than genuine connection. We've reduced it to ticking boxes: 'Wish them happy birthday? Check.' 'Send a meme once in a while? Done.' But that's not real friendship, is it? I often find myself thinking back to my college days, sitting on hostel rooftops with my closest friends. We would talk for hours—about dreams, heartbreaks, fears, or just about nothing at all. It wasn't about having something to say every minute. It was about being there—fully present."

ent, emotionally invested, and unfiltered. Now, those long, soul-deep conversations have been replaced by hollow phrases like, 'Let's catch up soon!'—a line we all know is more polite than real. The pace of modern life has made emotional availability feel like a rare luxury.



We're hyperconnected through screens, but our relationships have become increasingly shallow. The irony is striking—we're always 'online' but never truly present."

Mohanty goes on to add, "There's also a growing fear of vulnerability. Everyone wants to appear strong, independent, and perfectly in control. Admitting you're lonely or that you miss someone feels like weakness. But I've realised that it's in those moments of honesty that real friendships begin. Soulful connections are born not out of constant updates, but through the courage to be seen—fully and authentically. They are the friendships that don't require explanations, only presence. To me, a meaningful friendship means someone who shows up without needing a reason, someone who listens without trying to fix, someone who sees beyond your curated life and loves you anyway. It's not about sharing a post or liking a story; it's about sharing a moment, a silence, a space that allows you to be completely yourself."

"I've started to make small but meaningful changes. I now call instead of just sending a quick text. I try to meet friends face-to-face, even if it's just for 20 minutes. I listen without checking my phone. I want to show people that their presence matters more than their posts. In a world that constantly pushes us to be productive, choosing to slow down for a friend is, in my opinion, one of the most radical and beautiful acts of love. We don't need more followers—we need more true friends," she signs off.

'Every week, I meet at least one friend in person'

Ankit Mohapatra, 30, journalist, Bhubaneswar, says, "I've had the privilege of having some truly meaningful friendships in my life. The kind that felt like home—safe, steady, and always there. But if I'm honest, they've changed. Not because of a fight or falling out, but because life simply took over. Jobs, relation-

ships, moving to different cities, chasing dreams—we all got caught up in the hustle. Somewhere in that chase, we began treating friendships not as essentials but as afterthoughts, things we'd 'get back to' when life slowed down. The problem is, life never really does. It wasn't until I went through a rough phase last year—emotionally, creatively, and even financially—that the reality hit me. I didn't know who to call. It wasn't that my friends didn't care. It's just that we had drifted so far apart, so quietly, that I hadn't nurtured the connection enough to feel comfortable leaning on them. Our conversations had shrunk to emojis, reactions to stories, or the casual 'Let's jam sometime' with no follow-through."

Mohapatra further shares, "That's when I realised how much we've allowed friendship to become performative. We showcase the fun bits—the trips, the parties, the selfies—but hide the messy, unfiltered parts. But real friendship lives in the in-between moments. It's in knowing when your friend's silence means something is wrong. It's in texting without a reason or showing up without being asked. It's remembering they hate sugar in their tea or that a particular song brings them comfort on hard days."



"I've made a conscious decision to reconnect, to go back to the basics. Now, every week, I meet at least one friend in person. We talk without distraction—no phones, no Instagram posts—just real conversation. It's strange how foreign that felt at first, and how healing it quickly became. We laughed more. We talked deeper. We remembered why we became friends in the first place. I don't think we've lost the art of deep friendship—we've just forgotten how much we need it. Like music, it doesn't demand to be loud to be felt. The best friendships are like those timeless songs—you might not hear them every day, but when you do, you remember every word, every note. And suddenly, everything feels right again. All it takes is a little effort, a little presence, and the willingness to go beyond the surface," he concludes.



The historic artefact and its graphic style are internationally renowned and have often inspired popular culture. Whether for media, merchandising products, cinema, cartoonists – this 11th century work of art is often used as a reference to illustrate a period, convey political ideas and many more



Works inspired by the Bayeux Tapestry

Whether through monumental needlework, digital friezes or editorial cartoons, the 11th-century Tapestry continues to seed new cycles of storytelling.

Renaissance masters – Paolo Uccello's Battle of San Romano, Andrea Mantegna's Triumphs of Caesar, Rubens's Marie de' Medici cycle and Jacob Lawrence's Migration Series are all cited as belonging to the same monumental narrative tradition.

Fine artist David Hockney created the 90-metre iPad frieze A Year in Normandie after studying the Tapestry's unfolding scenes; the two works were exhibited face-to-face in Bayeux in 2022

Hélène Delprat, known for burlesque figurative painting, is designing an official "completion" panel to be woven at Paris's Gobelins Manufactory.

Contemporary narrative embroideries such as the Overlord Embroidery (1974), Prestonpans Tapestry (2010) and Sandra Sawatzky's 67-metre Black Gold Tapestry (2017) openly credit the Bayeux model

The Bayeux Tapestry

A masterpiece of memory & myth

Long before films and photographs captured the sweep of history, a group of skilled artisans documented one of Europe's most pivotal moments using nothing but needle, thread, and linen. The Bayeux Tapestry, stretching nearly 70 meters, tells the dramatic story of the Norman conquest of England in 1066, led by William the Conqueror. Often misidentified as a tapestry, it is technically an embroidery—crafted with woolen yarn on linen cloth. Believed to have been commissioned by Bishop Odo of Bayeux, William's half-brother, it was likely displayed in the Bayeux Cathedral in Normandy. With its bold narrative style and ex-

traordinary preservation, the tapestry offers an unparalleled glimpse into medieval European society.

A scene-by-scene epic

The Bayeux Tapestry unfolds over 58 scenes, portraying key events from King Edward the Confessor's death to the Battle of Hastings, where Harold Godwinson fell, and William triumphed. It includes moments of diplomacy, betrayal, celestial omens like Halley's Comet, and intense battle sequences.

Despite its flat, two-dimensional figures, the tapestry pulses with movement and emotion—soldiers charging on horseback, ships crossing the Channel, and royal councils plotting their

next move. It blends historical accuracy with stylized storytelling, capturing not only the facts but also the drama behind them.

Life in the margins

One of the tapestry's most intriguing features lies beyond its main narrative. In the borders, artists stitched scenes of medieval life—animals, mythical creatures, farming, hunting, and feasting. These illustrations are not just decorative but also symbolic, providing insights into 11th-century beliefs, humour, and daily routines. This layering of battle and domesticity makes the tapestry both a political document and a social mirror, reflecting a world in transition.

Politics, propaganda & perspective

Historians widely agree that the tapestry serves a political purpose. By presenting Harold as an oath-breaker and William as the rightful king, the embroidery subtly justifies the Norman invasion. The inclusion of specific events—like Harold swearing loyalty to William—suggests it was meant to legitimize Norman rule in England.

In this sense, the Bayeux Tapestry is one of the earliest surviving examples of visual propaganda, carefully curated to influence historical memory.

UNESCO recognition

In 2007, the Bayeux Tapestry was added to the UNESCO Memory of the World Register, a prestigious list that recognises documents of global importance. This inscription acknowledges the tapestry as a cultural treasure, not just of France, but of humanity. It ensures its preservation and global recognition as a vital record of medieval European history and artistry.

A timeless thread of history

The Bayeux Tapestry is more than just a record of war. It is a medieval multimedia narrative, a stitched story that spans centuries and still speaks to us today. From battlefield strategies to domestic scenes, it captures the complexity of its time with unparalleled depth and artistry.

Thanks to continued conservation and UNESCO protection, this woven wonder will continue to inform and inspire for generations to come.

