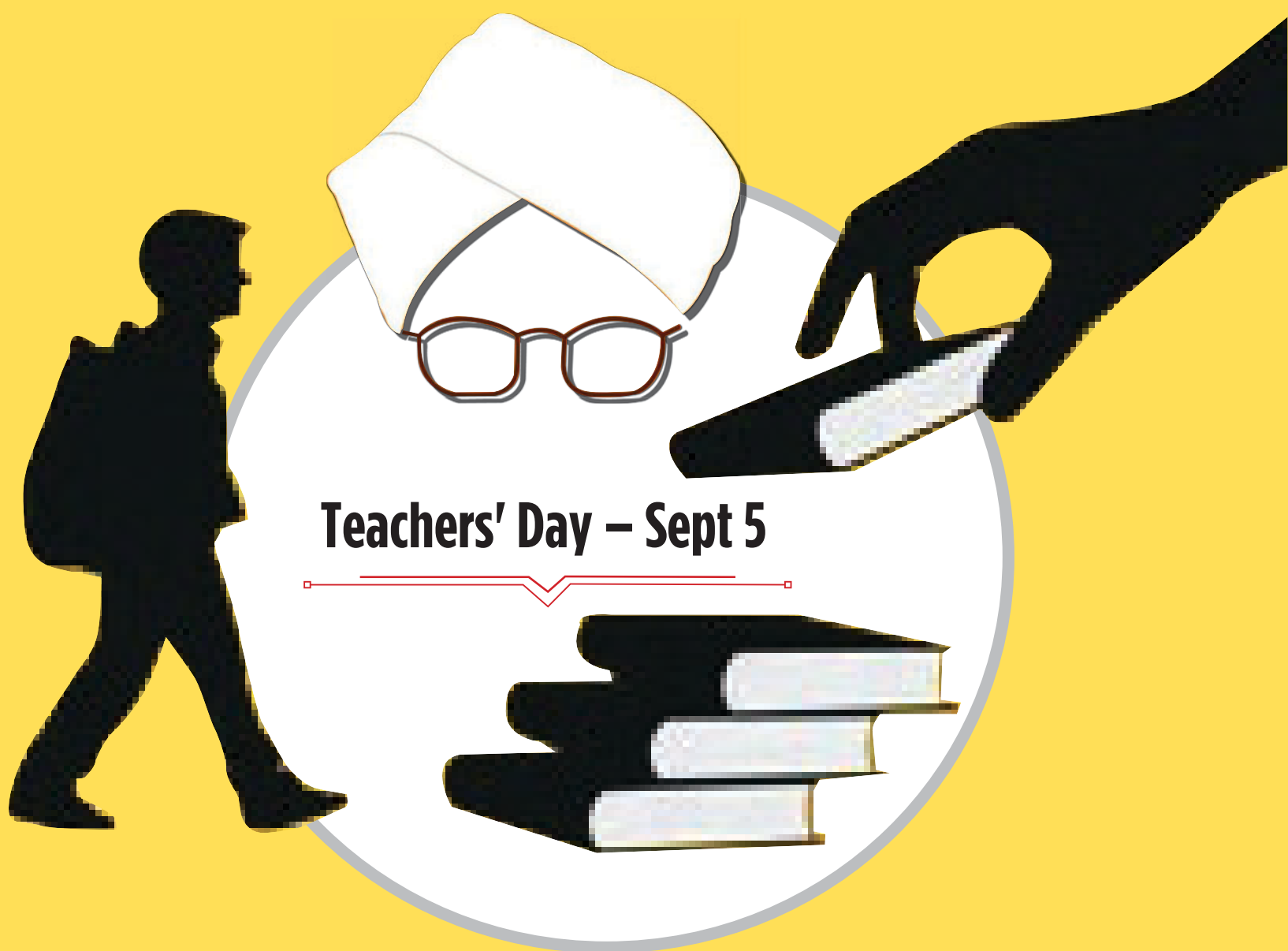


AUGUST 31-SEPTEMBER 6, 2025

# SUNDAY POST

HERE . NOW



Teachers' Day – Sept 5

TECH TOOLS & TEACHERS

COVER STORY

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# Partners in progress



Doing nothing is a perfect holiday

My perfect holiday is all about unwinding at a stunning beach or a serene natural spot with good food and doing absolutely nothing.



With friends

Music is my creative outlet

I find joy in listening to diverse music styles and learning about music production to improve my musical compositions. So, music is my primary creative outlet during my leisure.

Connecting with buddies

My favorite way to spend leisure time is staying hooked to the internet, exploring new things, and engaging in long, enjoyable conversations with my friends.

ANISHA KHATUN, OP



From engineering blueprints to raga canvases, **Abhijeet Mishra** carries us on a seamless voyage. His classical roots anchor soaring melodies; modern rhythms propel them skyward, each note a bridge between epochs. Over the years, his numbers such as ‘Jaga Tu Jadugara’, ‘Debadasi’, ‘To Sathe Jebe’ have made audience dive into devotional depths while anthem after anthem—sweet Rasagola, earthy Chhenapoda, proud Kalinga—paints Odisha in vivid sound. His perfect holiday is all about doing absolutely nothing, says the versatile vocalist

I work when others rest

As a musician, I have realised that our peak hours often coincide with others downtime. It’s a unique schedule, but it’s what makes my job exciting. So, there are no days off on Sundays.



With music composer AR Rahman

WhatsApp This Week

Only on Sunday POST!

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

THE BEST MEMES OF THIS ISSUE

■ If by free spirits you mean an open bar, then yes I love free spirits.

■ Do you know why libraries don't have books about suicide? They never get returned.

■ Marriage is the main reason for divorce.

■ If the right side of the brain controls the left side of the body, then lefties are the only ones in their right mind.

From sentiment to strategy

Sir, In last week’s cover story, ‘Canine Conundrum,’ you rightly drew attention to the rising number of dog-bite incidents and the anguish of animal-lovers determined to protect the animals. The proposed solution—rounding up strays and relocating them to purpose-built shelters—strikes a balance between public safety and humane care. The menace is real. Stray dogs, once symbols of resilience, have become a daily threat: children on their way to school, senior citizens on evening walks, delivery riders racing against time—nobody is spared. Shelters can transform this narrative. Clean kennels, regular meals, and veterinary attention can turn anxious strays into healthy, socialised companions. Adoption drives can channel these reformed animals to farms, factories, and industrial estates where their natural guarding instincts are assets, not liabilities. While sterilization curbs population growth, it does little to pacify an already aggressive dog or reassure a terrified neighbourhood. On the other hand, compassion must be pragmatic. Feeding strays on street corners may salve our conscience, but it neither guarantees their welfare nor protects the passer-by who might become the next victim. Let us move from sentiment to strategy—where every wagging tail is matched by a safer sidewalk, and every citizen, two-legged or four-legged, wins.

ABHILASHA GUPTA, MOHALI

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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Digital technology can enhance and support the learning process, but it cannot replicate the crucial human elements of teaching. Teachers ignite curiosity, weave empathy, and sculpt character. Together—algorithm and mentor—they co-pilot learning, amplifying dreams while safeguarding the heartbeat of education: human connection

Teachers' Day  
September 5

ANISHA KHATUN, OP

The march of time has gifted humanity many wonders—printing presses that carried words across centuries, machines that shrank the world, and now, intelligent algorithms that answer in seconds. Yet amidst this dazzling tide of innovation, one figure remains timeless: the teacher.

Technology can scatter information like stars across the night sky, but it takes a teacher to arrange those stars into constellations of meaning. Google may feed a question with countless replies, but it cannot hear the unspoken tremor of doubt in a child's heart, nor can it share in the quiet triumph when a lesson finally blossoms into understanding. Artificial intelligence can mimic knowledge, yet it cannot breathe the warmth of empathy, the discipline of habit, or the fragrance of compassion into young minds.

A teacher is more than a vessel of facts; they are a sculptor chiseling raw curiosity into wisdom, a gardener nurturing tender dreams to full bloom, an architect laying the foundation of character upon which futures are built.

Across centuries of change—from inked manuscripts to glowing screens—their role has never diminished; it has only grown more luminous. In today's labyrinth of distractions and excess information, the teacher becomes the compass, steady and true. Technology may provide the notes, but it is the teacher who conducts the symphony—transforming sound into music, and knowledge into wisdom.

Ahead of Teachers' Day, **Sunday POST** connected with educators across different

A teacher is the one who creates all other professions.  
APJ ABDUL KALAM

streams to capture their insights and explore the true essence of being a teacher.

'AI is not a threat but a boon'

**Satyabrata Rout**, a celebrated theatre director, scenographer, author and academic has spent decades shaping both the stage and the classroom. A former faculty member of the National School



of Drama and professor in the Department of Theatre at the University of Hyderabad, Rout's contributions to Indian theatre have been profound. With his deep understanding of performance and pedagogy, Rout offers a compelling perspective on why the teacher's role remains indispensable in a world dominated by artificial intelligence and digital tools.

"Education is not simply the information we get from books or AI tools," says the Sangeet Natak Akademi awardee.

"It is the lived experience of the teacher, and the way that experience is channelled into the student's mind. A teacher's true ability lies not in possessing knowledge, but in igniting curiosity and shaping understanding. No AI can ever do that," adds Rout. For him, teaching is never confined to textbooks or lesson plans. "When I walk into a classroom, I don't just carry books for reference—I carry my entire life with me. I weave that experience into my teaching, and that blend of life and learning is something technology can never replicate. AI may supply information, may even embellish it, but the depth and content within a teacher cannot be replaced."

Rout sees artificial intelligence as a tool with great potential, yet also with risks. "For teachers, AI is not a threat but a boon—it gives us access to vast amounts of information instantly. But for students, it is dangerous. They are becoming overly dependent on it. Many have already stopped reading deeply, and as a result, they are no longer absorbing knowledge in a meaningful way."

At its core, he insists, teaching is about far more than knowledge transfer. "No technology can replace a teacher. A teacher does not only teach—they inspire, they motivate, they instill values. AI cannot reach into the inner psyche of a student, nor can it nurture their character."

According to Rout, the essence of being a teacher lies in recognising individuality. "Every student is different, and a teacher must understand that. The teacher-student relationship should always be transparent. If a teacher does not know something, they should never mislead. Wrong information from a teacher can stay with a student forever. Honesty, clarity, and empathy are what make a teacher invaluable." For Satyabrata Rout, the conclusion is clear: technology may enhance education, but it is teachers who give it meaning, soul, and humanity.











SREEVALSAN TK

# Onam blooms again

Though Onam is a festival that welcomes the return of Mahabali, in some regions the celebrations also get an ironic twist. For many, it is also an occasion to worship Maha Vishnu, who transfigured as Vamana to banish Mahabali to the nether world

Malayalis' eagerly-awaited annual festival Onam stands out as one of the few celebrations in the world that blends mythology, veneration of nature and cultural expressions in a captivating tapestry.

This year, the ten-day Onam season starts on August 26, bringing in its wake a zealously-preserved tradition celebrated by Malayalis since ancient times, cutting across social and economic barriers. The festival culminates with the 'Thiruvonam' Day on September 5.

Onam is defined by its beauty, grace, charm and inclusivity. Though at its core is a Hindu myth, Onam is a festival that blurs borderlines of faith and social rankings. The festival is deeply ingrained in the socio-cultural ethos of Malayalis, whether they live in Kerala or in any part of the world.

Onam, which falls in the month of 'Chingam' in the Malayalam calendar, comes after three months of southwest monsoon, with fresh shoots springing from the bowels of the Mother Earth.

For an agricultural community, which Kerala essentially was until not-so-distant past, the season implied the paddy harvest time, mainly the principal crop rice.

## The Mahabali myth

Onam has a legend linked to it. The region comprising Kerala was eons ago ruled by the Asura King Mahabali. So ideal was his reign that the kingdom was like a paradise on earth—no trace of theft, deception or malice of any kind.

Could such a harmony allowed to be flourished in the mundane world? Of course, it made the Devas envious. They hatched plans to bring an end to the golden era. Instigated by them, Lord Vishnu transfigured into a dwarf (Vamana) and came down before Mahabali. Always keen to welcome guests, the king expressed his willingness to grant anything the visitor would request.

The dwarf asked for three steps of earth.

Mahabali agreed. Ahead of taking his first step, Vamana suddenly grew in size to emerge like a titan. Thus, his one foot covered the whole of earth, the second the whole of heaven. As there was no ground left, Mahabali offered his head for the Brahmin to place his foot on a third time. The emperor was stomped down to the nether-world (Patal). Resolved to his downfall, the king asked for a favour: "Can I visit my subjects once a year?" Yes, said Vishnu generously. And, that's Onam season, the homecoming of Mahabali every year, to be welcomed by his subjects with all honours.

## Floral carpet

The most enduring and colourful image of Onam is the tradition of laying out floral carpets to welcome Mahabali. It is also known as 'Atha Pookkalam' as it starts at homes on the 'Atham Day' of the zodiac almanac, 10 days ahead of the Thiruvonam.

These days Onam has assumed a larger social dimension, with festivities spilling over to community cultural spaces. So, Pookkalam is laid out in schools, offices and even tech campuses.

A visitor to the state during the Onam is greeted with the Pookalam, laid out with a variety of flowers adorning the front yard of homes. Members of the families, including little ones, give full play of their aesthetic sensibility in making the floral carpet. With fast-paced urbanisation turning vast swathes of land into concrete jungles, the flowers for pookkalam now mostly come from neighbouring states.

## Onam Sadhya, the multi-dish feast

The Onam Sadhya, the multi-dish feast served on plantain leaf, is a mouth-welling

highlight of the festival. Traditionally, the Sadhya used to be prepared by women at homes, with menfolk lending a helping hand to fry banana chips and fritters.

The dishes, laid out in banana leaves, are classically vegetarian. Rice, sambhar, avial, rasam, olan, erissery, pappadam, fried banana chips and pickles make the list pretty long, along with savouries like sweet 'pradhaman.' In parts of the Malabar region (north Kerala) fish and meat are added to enliven the menu.

These days, the full-course Sadhya with even the banana leaf to serve will get delivered at homes. Scores of restaurants and caterers make a roaring business during the season. Onam Sadhya is available in major restaurants and star hotels during Onam in major cities in India and also in the Middle East, USA and UK.

## Women at the centre of festivities

Onam has been a time for people to engage in arts and sports. The season sees the return of many sporting traditions.

At a time when women were essentially home-makers, Onam was an occasion for them to give expression to their artistic talent, though essentially before the joint family audience.

There are choreographic expressions Kaikottikali, in which the dancers clap their hands in unison while moving clockwise and anti-clockwise rhythmically. The themes are drawn on from the Hindu mythology. However, an off-shoot of this in Christian houses is called Margamkali, where the lyrics are largely Biblical. The Is-tap-and-sing tradition of DuffMuttu and Arbanakali are also popular.

## Sporting season for men and children

In parts of Kerala, Onam offers an occasion for men to display their physical prowess by engaging in a pastime fight called Onathallu, which has its body-fighting tactics borrowed from the martial art of Kalaripayattu. They also engage in ma-

ny other rural sports like.

## Tourism Week celebrations

The season also sees inflow of tourists to Kerala in large numbers. For hosting and taking them around the festival venues, the Tourism Department has made special arrangements.

"The week-long tourism festival organised by the government showcases the best of Kerala's classical, folk and ethnic art forms. It provides an opportunity for hundreds of artists to perform in the capital city and centres across the state," said Tourism Minister Shri P A Mohamed Riyas.

This year, the week-long Tourism Week Celebrations, organised by the Tourism Department, will be inaugurated by Kerala Chief Minister Shri Pinarayi Vijayan at Thiruvananthapuram on September 3. The celebrations, dominated by cultural programmes, illumination of main thoroughfares and landmark buildings, will conclude with a grand colourful pageantry on September 9.



## Ironic twist

Though Onam is a festival that welcomes the return of Mahabali, in some regions the celebrations also get an ironic twist. For many, it is also an occasion to worship Maha Vishnu, who transfigured as Vamana to banish Mahabali to the nether world. As part of this tradition, clay cubes that taper towards the tip are made, and floral offerings are made at the base. These are called Thrikkakarayappan or Onathappan. They represent, Lord Vishnu, who is believed to have ended the mythological Mahabali regime. But this in no way dampens the festive spirit whose focus is the visit of Mababali.



CLIMATE RESILIENCE

# Snehasis turns tides on screen

Noted Odia filmmaker Snehasis Das, whose body of work seamlessly blends social commentary with cinematic storytelling, has once again turned the spotlight on a subject close to his heart—climate resilience. His latest documentary, *Boys From the Groves*, sheds light on the inspiring efforts of coastal conservationist Soumya Ranjan Biswal and the villagers of Gundalaba near Astaranga beach in Odisha’s Puri district. The film captures the role of youth and women in restoring mangrove forests to combat cyclones, tidal surges, and flooding—a quiet revolution that has now found its place on the global stage.

The documentary is set to be screened at the prestigious Golden Dunes Dubai International Film Festival this November, a proud moment for the filmmaker and the region.

Born in Jatni, Khurda, Snehasis began his career as a journalist. It was during his time as a reporter for *Down to Earth* magazine that he first became fascinated with climate change. “While researching and reporting on environmental issues—water crises, cyclones, heat-waves—I realised the power of storytelling



ing to create awareness,” Snehasis told **Sunday POST**.

Over the years, Das has built a distinctive voice in climate cinema. His acclaimed film *Kokoli: Fish Out of Water* portrays the devastating impact of sea level rise on a small fishing community near Puri Beach.

Speaking about the origins of *Boys From the Groves*, Das said, “While working on other projects, I came across Soumya and his team. Their commitment to mangrove conservation intrigued me. I met him, we spoke at length, and that’s how the journey began.”

But making a documentary is no easy feat. “The most challenging part,” Das admits, “is convincing people to open up, especially on sensitive topics. Earning their trust and gathering accurate information requires patience and empathy.”

While climate change remains a core focus, Snehasis Das’s cinematic universe is rich with diverse narratives. His film *Suka Bhai ra Sholay* tells the story of Suka, a man from Buguda in Ganjam district, who battles body-shaming by channeling his admiration for Bollywood icon Amitabh Bachchan—recreating moments from *Sholay* in his own life.

Then there’s *Naali Cha*, a charming and insightful series about rural Odisha adjusting to the digital age. The show, also available as a book (*Naali Cha: The Taste of Life*), explores the intersection of tradition and modernity in a “rurban” (rural-urban) setting.

Filmmaking, however, is not without its struggles. “It’s an expensive process,” Das points out. “In Odisha, it’s sometimes difficult to secure funds for the kind of socially-driven cinema I want to make. You have to adapt and work with what you have.”

Despite these challenges, Snehasis remains undeterred. His upcoming projects include a film on organ transplantation, and a sports biopic on Anuradha Biswal, the first Olympian from Odisha. These new ventures promise to continue his tradition of storytelling rooted in human experience and social relevance.

ARINDAM GANGULY, OP

## ShNik’s 2nd single *Kaari* has an Odisha connect

Bhubaneswar: Bollywood’s rising voices, Shashwat Singh and Nikhita Gandhi, are back with their second single as ShNik (Shashwat + Nikhita) — and their new track *Kaari* is already winning hearts.

After the success of their debut single *Kaahe*, the duo returns with an experimental blend of folk textures and hip-hop energy, delivering a fiery take on the unspoken battles of relationships. *Kaari* dives into the raw tension of love, ego, and communication — where often “it’s not what you said, but how you said it” that defines the conflict.

The song isn’t just sung but crafted entirely by ShNik — with Shashwat penning the lyrics, both composing the music, and Nikhita handling audio production.

The video too is a creative extension of the song, conceptualized by ShNik. Featuring the “Ego Sisters” — Aria Sikdar, Nisha Almeida, and Sophia Patrick — it visually portrays the complexities of ego in relationships. Cinematographer Viper brings the emotions alive with striking visuals, while production was smoothly managed by Wasim Afsar (Production Manager) and Saugato Roy Choudhury (Project Manager), with Rambha Palace, Odisha as the location partner.

Speaking about the journey, Nikhita shared: “*Kaari* began in Goa during the first lockdown as a simple folk-inspired tune. Slowly, it became the foundation of our duo ShNik. We fell in love with its urban-folk sound, and from there ‘Kaari’ was born.”

More than just a song, *Kaari* is an emotional journey — a storm of sound and storytelling that captures the push and pull of relationships. It’s a testament to how art, emotion, and modern production can fuse into something timeless.



A screengrab from *Kaari*

PNN

### TITLE ANNOUNCED

## Aaditya Mohapatra to headline *Monster*

**Bhubaneswar:** After making his debut last year with the romantic drama *I Love You 2*, rising actor Aaditya Mohapatra is all set to return to the big screen—this time in an action-packed avatar. His upcoming film, *Monster*, was officially announced last week.

Expressing his excitement, Aaditya said, “The screen will never be the same again. We, the team of *Monster*, promise to take you all on a ride you must have never been on before.”

Produced by Debraj Bidhar under the banner of Gopinath Motion Pictures, *Monster* marks another collaboration between Aaditya and director Sudhanshu Mohan Sahoo, who also helmed his debut film.

The action thriller is slated to begin shooting at the end of November and is scheduled for a 2026 release.



## Ram Rajya: Prem Parijaa makes Odia film debut

**Bhubaneswar:** Anasmish Productions has officially announced *Ram Rajya*, the highly anticipated sequel to the 2023 blockbuster *Kataka: Sesa Ru Aarambha*.

The announcement was made through an official title teaser, which also revealed that Prem Parijaa, known for his role in the web series *Commando*, will make his Odia film debut in this ambitious project.

Produced by Kumar Pritam Sahu and directed by Sudhansu Mohan Sahoo, who also helmed the original film, *Ram Rajya* is being touted as the biggest action film Odisha has ever seen. The production house promises a “staggering star cast,” to be revealed soon.

*Kataka: Sesa Ru Aarambha* left audiences on edge with its dramatic cliffhanger, setting the stage for *Ram Rajya* to expand the saga. With its blend of political intrigue, mythology, and high-octane action, expectations are sky-high for the sequel’s release.

The films shooting is on with its first schedule in Kolkata being wrapped up recently.

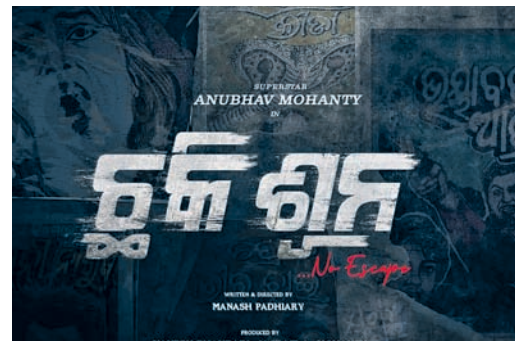


## Anubhav’s next titled *Chhaki Suna*

**Bhubaneswar:** The title of Anubhav Mohanty’s next film was officially announced on Ganesh Chaturthi. Presented by Amara Studio and SM Entertainment in association with 29 Two Nine Films, *Chhaki Suna: No Escape* promises a thrilling cinematic experience.

The movie is written and directed by Manash Padhiary and produced by Naveen Bhandari, Jagrati A. Mohanty, and Suvam.

Anubhav’s fan can look forward to a new journey filled with emotion, drama, and excitement. Details regarding the plot and release date are expected to be announced soon.





# Pancreatic Cancer, The Silent Assassin

The disease strikes without warning, hiding deep until too late; vague symptoms delay diagnosis, only 10% qualify for surgery, and it spreads swiftly—earning its grim title as the silent assassin

**A**mong all malignancies, pancreatic cancer stands out as one of the most aggressive and lethal, leaving patients with grim survival odds. Although India's incidence remains lower than Western nations, cases are surging—especially in the northeast—signaling an urgent need for awareness and action. Britain bears a heavy burden, with Cancer Research UK reporting 10,800 new diagnoses yearly—that's 30 lives shattered daily. Pancreatic Cancer Action underscores its severity, labeling it the UK's 5th deadliest and 10th most common cancer—a stark reminder of its stealth and devastation. "The majority of people diagnosed with pancreatic cancer are dead within three months," says Heather Archbold, health information and research manager at Pancreatic Cancer Action. "Forty-four per cent of cases are diagnosed in A&E, where it is often too late for curative treatment."

Dr Zev Wainberg, from the University of California, Los Angeles, said: "Pancreas cancer (patients) even after all standard treatments, such as chemotherapy and radiation, still have very high risks of the cancer coming back. "Our results show, in the group of patients who had profound immune responses (17/25, 68 per cent) achieved longer survival than we have expected in this cancer, quite a re-

markable finding to occur in a phase 1 trial." One of the major issues with pancreatic cancer is that symptoms can be "vague" and "masquerade as other less threatening illnesses" like irritable bowel syndrome and gallstones, "so a lot of people will not tend to worry about them or present to the physician with them until it's too late," explains Archbold. "Even when they do present, physicians don't often recognise the signs and symptoms, so it's definitely one of the most misdiagnosed of all the common cancers."

"Time is of the essence with pancreatic cancer," she continues. "We encourage everyone to trust their instincts and see a healthcare professional if they notice unusual symptoms, no matter how small they may seem. Early diagnosis saves lives."

## SIGNS YOU SHOULD NEVER IGNORE

These are the early symptoms to be aware of. "It is worth noting these symptoms may appear as a combination and not independently," flags Archbold.

### Abdominal or back pain

Don't automatically assume you've slipped a disc or pulled a muscle. Abdominal (the tummy area) or back pain could be a warning sign, "particularly if it's a mild discomfort and worsens over time, or it can be eased by leaning forward," says Archbold. The back pain usually occurs "where a woman's bra strap would sit." "It's the stomach and back pain that tends to drive patients to A&E," she adds. Back pain tends to occur when "the tumor



will have spread beyond the pancreas and will be pressing against the spine".

### Unexplained weight loss

As with many cancers, "weight loss without trying" is a red flag for pancreatic cancer. So if your jeans are suddenly much looser without your diet changing, speak to your physician.



pres-darker skin. That's why we always ask people to look at the whites of their eyes."

She adds that "jaundice can cause intense itching" on the body too.

### Changes to urine and stools

Things to look out for are "stools that won't flush" as well as "darker urine", but any noticeable changes that are out of the ordinary for you are worth seeing a GP about,

including pale, greasy looking stools.

### New onset diabetes

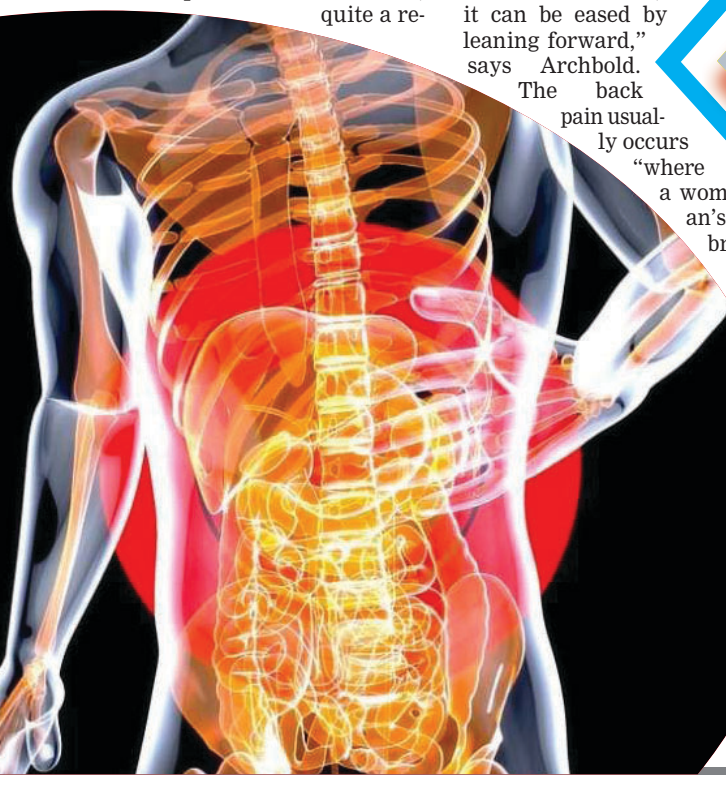
According to Diabetes UK, early signs of diabetes include peeing more frequently, especially at night, being very thirsty, feeling more tired than usual, losing weight without trying, genital itching or thrush, cuts and wounds taking longer to heal, blurred eyesight and increased hunger – some of which overlap with the other early signs of pancreatic cancer.

### A persistent or a sudden drop in energy

This isn't being knackered for a couple of days after a busy week or a bad night's sleep, but "persistent fatigue, no matter how much sleep you are getting," says Archbold.

## A game-changer in the making

**T**ragically, only 1 in 10 patients learn they have pancreatic cancer early enough for curative surgery—most are caught too late. A first-in-class therapeutic vaccine is now rewriting the odds for both pancreatic and bowel cancer patients. Nature Medicine reports that, in an early-phase trial, the jab slowed tumor progression and extended survival. The shot trains the immune system to hunt down KRAS-mutant cancer cells, the engines driving many tumors. Among the pancreatic-cancer participants, median survival jumped to 2 years 5 months post-vaccination—offering a ray of hope where little existed before.







# 335 years of war

NO SHOTS FIRED

On 17 April 1986, the harbour-front of Hugh Town on the Isles of Scilly filled with bunting, brass bands and bemused islanders. Dutch Ambassador Rein Huydecoper stepped ashore, shook hands with the local council chairman, and signed a parchment that formally ended hostilities. The crowd cheered—then burst into laughter—because no one could remember hostilities ever beginning. Yet the document declared that the Netherlands and the Isles of Scilly had been at war for 335 years.

## How it all began

On 30 March 1651 the Isles of Scilly, a granite knot of islands off Cornwall, became an unlikely diplomatic flashpoint. English Civil War Royalists, bottled up in Hugh Town's harbor, were using licensed privateers to snatch Dutch cargo in the Channel. Admiral Maarten Tromp arrived with a dozen men-of-war, demanded restitution, and—according to an 18th-century Dutch chronicle—issued a formal declaration of war "against the said Isles of Scilly." Three months later the Parliamentarians retook the islands, Tromp weighed anchor, and everyone assumed the paperwork had followed. It had not. The Dutch States-General never rescinded the declaration, and London, busy executing a king and inventing a republic, lost the file. A tempest that never truly raged became a war without a single shot, casualty or even a shouted insult.

## Centuries of blissful belligerence

For the next 334 years the "belligerents" coexisted in perfect oblivion. Islanders fished, farmed and welcomed holiday-makers; the Netherlands became a world power, then an ally of Britain through two world wars. Dutch fishermen sold herring off Scillonian quays; Scillonian daffodils filled Amsterdam's flower markets come spring. When the Dutch Republic became the Bat-

avian Republic, then a kingdom, then an ally in two world wars, nobody noticed that a microscopic speck of Cornwall was still, on parchment, an enemy. Islanders fought in the same trenches as Dutch soldiers at Ypres and shared anti-aircraft batteries during the Blitz. Tourist brochures boasted of "365 days of peace a year," unaware that 335 years of theoretical war were ticking quietly overhead like a grandfather clock with no chime.

## The historian who accidentally sued for peace

Enter Roy Duncan, a retired local headmaster compiling an innocuous pamphlet on Scillonian charters. In the Isles of Scilly Museum's attic he found a dusty reference to "the late Dutch war." Teasing the thread, Duncan wrote to the Dutch Embassy, asking whether any

**In 1651, Dutch Admiral Tromp declared war on England's Isles of Scilly, then sailed away. Everyone forgot. Islanders and Dutch traded, married, and vacationed for 335 years until a historian spotted the missing treaty; a smiling ambassador signed peace in 1986, ending the longest bloodless war on a single page**

## Surrender nobody demanded

On a bright spring morning, Ambassador Rein Huydecoper stepped off the RMV Scillonian III wearing a top hat and a grin. Before a crowd of school-children dressed as 17th-century sailors, he

treaty could be located. The reply came back in polite bewilderment: no treaty, no record of peace, nothing. The Foreign Office in London confirmed the gap. Realising the comic goldmine, both governments agreed to end what had never really begun. Within months a brass band rehearsed, bunting flapped, and the BBC booked hotel rooms.

signed a single-page treaty on goat-skin parchment. "After 335 years," he declared, "it gives me great joy to end hostilities without a single casualty—except perhaps to Dutch herring stocks." Island Council Chairman Ted Moulton counter-signed, then presented the ambassador with a tongue-in-cheek pewter medal: "For 335 Years of Uninterrupted Peace." Cannons fired confetti; a local baker iced cupcakes with tiny orange flags. The Times of London ran the headline: "Dutch Declare Peace on Isles They Forgot They Were Fighting."

Ambassador Huydecoper's speech that April day dripped with comic relief: "It must have been harrowing for the Scillonians to know we could have attacked at any moment." Islanders responded by presenting him with a pewter "war medal" engraved 335 Years of Uninterrupted Peace.

## What the paper war still teaches

Today the treaty hangs in the Isles of Scilly Museum, opposite a painting of Admiral Tromp looking vaguely guilty. Tour guides retell the story to visitors who arrive expecting tales of pirates and shipwrecks and leave laughing at the most bureaucratic war in history. Diplomats cite it in training courses as a cautionary tale about the importance of dotting every "i" in international law. And every 17 April, island pubs serve a special ale—"Treaty Tipple"—to commemorate the day the Netherlands and a scattering of Cornish islands surrendered to the obvious: that peace, even when nobody remembers the war, is always worth signing.

However, historians still debate whether Tromp's original declaration had any legal force—the Isles of Scilly have never been sovereign—but the episode endures as the world's longest, gentlest and most bloodless conflict.

OP DESK

