

OCTOBER 19-25, 2025

SUNDAY POST

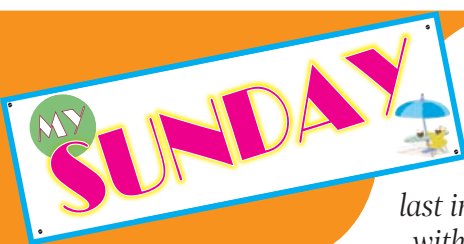
HERE . NOW



Lights, lives, legacy

COVER STORY

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After performing Chhau, Odissi folk, semi-classical, hip-hop, and fusion styles on various platforms, Subhashree Swain needs no introduction. Coming from a distinguished family of artistes, the versatile dancer recently set a national milestone by achieving the maximum Kathak knee spins in circular motion, recognised by the India Book of Records. She has participated in numerous reality shows and performed last in Odia blockbuster Bou Buttut Bhuta. She balances her performing art career with pursuing a law degree at Capital Law College. Actively contributing to her father's Sarala Music and Dance Academy, Subhashree aspires to excel as both a performer and a choreographer



WITH PARENTS

FAST-FOOD FANATIC

I'm a die-hard fast-food enthusiast and love discovering new eateries, exploring unique flavours, and indulging in delicious treats whenever I get the chance.

ANISHA KHATUN, OP

Leisure is learning

While Sundays are fun-days for many, for me, they're practice days. I spend weekends refining my skills and teaching children—turning leisure into learning and growth.

Connecting with nature

During my leisure, I enjoy swimming, reading books, and spending time in nature. These activities help me relax, recharge, and connect with both myself and the world around me.

Love for meditation

I enjoy meditation, whether it's Sunday or any other day. It helps me stay focused, calm my mind, and maintain balance, making it an essential part of my routine.



Day of dance

For me, an ideal Sunday is one immersed in my passion—dance. It's a day to express, create, and lose myself in graceful rhythm and movement.



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This Week

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And we will publish the best ones

THE BEST MEMES OF THIS ISSUE

What do you call the soft tissue between a shark's teeth? A slow swimmer.

I made a graph of my past relationships. It has an ex axis and a why axis.

What's the difference between men and government bonds? Bonds mature.

People who say they've lost their voice are lying.

Collaborative efforts

Sir, Apropos the last week's cover story 'Rebuilding Tomorrow', I appreciate the role played by youths of Odisha in reducing the risk during disaster. It's not just Odisha, across Asia-Pacific, Africa and small-island states, young people are moving from anxiety to action, turning schools, scout troops and phone screens into frontline tools for disaster risk reduction. In Niue, Girls' Brigade teens translate cyclone colour codes into village billboards, amplifying official early-warning messages through grassroots networks. Filipino students crowd-source hazard reports on mobile apps, plugging data gaps that delay road repairs and evacuations. Similarly, Zambian start-up AgriPredict, founded by university graduates, sends AI drought and flood alerts to 50,000 farmers, cutting crop losses and seeding a green-tech economy while Green Girls in Burundi swap charcoal for plant-based briquettes, protecting the forests that buffer their communities from landslides. Backed by UNICEF's Green Rising, 11 million volunteers plant mangroves, drill solar-powered wells and convert classrooms into cyclone shelters, proving that when youth are given skills, finance and seats at policy tables, they don't just adapt to risk—they redesign the future.

NILOTPAL SAHA, MUMBAI

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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Lights, lives, legacy

Across every profession, every home, and every heart, Diwali is a festival of life itself—a reminder that illuminating our surroundings is inseparable from illuminating our souls, and that joy multiplies when shared

ANISHA KHATUN, OP

Beneath the velvet sky, where shadows dance and streets shimmer with light, Diwali awakens the world in a celebration of hope, warmth, and togetherness. It is a festival that wears many faces, each unique yet woven into the same tapestry of joy. For a diya maker, it is the heartbeat of the season—a time when skill meets opportunity and every handcrafted lamp becomes a beacon of livelihood, creativity, and pride. The flicker of each flame tells a story of dedication, perseverance, and the promise of prosperity.

For a homemaker, Diwali is a cherished ritual, a moment to breathe life into traditions that have endured for generations. From drawing intricate rangolis to preparing sweets that carry the fragrance of nostalgia, every gesture is a way to pass culture and values to the next generation. It is a celebration of heritage, love, and the intimate joy of preserving what is precious.

For those tethered to the routine of a 9-to-5 life, it is a pause, a gentle invitation to step away from deadlines and immerse in laughter, family gatherings, and shared memories. It is the chance to reconnect, celebrate togetherness, and find magic in ordinary moments.

Across every profession, every home, and every heart, this festival is more than lights and sweets. It is a festival of life itself—a reminder that illuminating our surroundings is inseparable from illuminating our souls, and that joy multiplies when shared. In every flicker, every smile, Diwali lives as a luminous testament to hope, love, and connection.

As the festival of lights draws near, Sunday POST spoke to people from diverse walks of life to understand what Diwali truly means to them.

'It's the heartbeat of our livelihood'

Ramesh Sahoo, 36, a potter from Cuttack, has been shaping clay lamps (diya) for more than two decades—a craft passed down through generations. “I have been making diyas for over twenty years,” he says. “I started this work with my father, and now my son stands beside me at the wheel. This isn’t just a business—it’s our family’s heritage. For people like us, Diwali is not merely a festival; it’s the heartbeat of our livelihood. All year round, we prepare the clay, mix the colours, and perfect the shapes, but it’s during this season that our work truly comes alive. From the first week of October, orders start flowing in—from households, temples, and even corporate offices. Every diya I shape holds more than just clay and paint; it carries my sweat, skill, and the quiet hope of a prosperous year ahead.”



Describing his daily rhythm during the festive season, Sahoo continues, “I wake up before dawn, long before the city comes alive. The air is cool, the clay is soft, and I begin my day at the wheel—shaping, drying, and painting each diya with care. There’s something meditative about the process—the earthy smell of wet clay, the sight of rows of diyas drying in the sun, the vibrant reds and yellows coming to life under my brush. When customers visit and their eyes sparkle at my designs, it fills me with pride. Each flame they light carries a part of me—and that feeling is beyond money.”

He smiles faintly before adding, “Things have changed over time. The market is now flooded with electric and decorative lights, and the craze for traditional diyas isn’t the same as before. Yet, there are still people who prefer the simple, sacred charm of earthen lamps. They

say they bring purity and good fortune. These days, even companies order diyas as festive gifts for their employees and clients, so we have begun experimenting with new patterns—lotus shapes, painted motifs, and even custom designs—to keep up with changing tastes.”

'Celebration of Diwali is a golden thread that binds generations'

Prativa Priyadarshini, 38, a working mother of an 11-year-old son from Bhubaneswar, beautifully reflects on the importance of traditions and rituals in her home. She shares, “I have grown up watching my mother perform these rituals year after year, and for me, the festival of lights is not merely a celebration—it is the very soul of our home, a golden thread that binds generations with warmth, love, and shared memories. As the days grow shorter and the air fills with the scent of marigolds, incense, and freshly cleaned homes, my heart begins to stir with excitement. What sweets will I prepare this time?



How should I decorate the entrance with rangoli?

li? Which customs should I pass on to my son? For me, this season is not just about festivity—it is about continuity, devotion, and the quiet joy of preserving our roots.”

Carrying on in the same breath, she continues: “I have witnessed both my mother and mother-in-law perform every ritual with deep faith and care—their hands moving with grace as they prepared pithas, arranged rows of diyas, and offered prayers in silence. Today, I follow in their footsteps with the same reverence. As I stir the batter for sweets or fry crispy snacks, the warmth of the stove mingles with the warmth of memory. My son hovers nearby, eager to taste and full of questions. Each ‘why’ he asks becomes an opportunity for me to tell him a story—to connect him to his heritage and the values that shaped our family.”

She adds with a smile, “When dusk arrives and we light the lamps together, I see the glow of those diyas reflected in my son’s eyes, and my heart fills with peace. In that moment, I see not only our present but also our future—a hope that one day he and his wife will uphold these same customs with love and pride, passing them on to their children.”





'It's about love, laughter and gratitude'
Ankit Kumar Mahapatra, 28, a marketing professional from Bhubaneswar, reflects on the deeper meaning of Diwali in his life. "For someone like me, who spends most of the year buried under a mountain of emails, meetings, deadlines, and endless calls, this festival of lights and happiness feels like pressing the pause button on life," he says, smiling. "In our profession, days often blur together—we stare at screens from sunrise to sunset, barely noticing the world outside. But Diwali breaks that monotony. It's not just a festival; it's my favourite time of the year because it reconnects me with everything



that truly matters—my roots, my family, and the simple, joyful rhythm of life." Mahapatra explains that the preparation leading up to the festival is as joyful as the day itself. "Shopping for sweets with my siblings, helping my mother pick decorations, and planning small surprises for relatives with my sister—it all becomes a shared adventure. There's a certain energy in the air—an excitement that's both nostalgic and refreshing. For once, there's no rush, no deadlines, no pressure. It's just laughter, warmth, and togetherness filling every corner of the home." He pauses thoughtfully and adds, "When evening arrives and the entire house glows with lamps and fairy lights, I sit back and watch my family's faces bathed in that soft glow. It's a sight that instantly grounds me. In that light, I see happiness



that no professional milestone can match. Success, I've learned, isn't measured in promotions or achievements—it's measured in the smiles of those you love and the peace you feel when you're surrounded by them." Speaking about the deeper meaning of the celebration, he concluded, "For me, this festival is a reminder that life is much more than work and deadlines—it's about love, laughter, and gratitude. Every lamp I light feels like a promise to myself—to pause, to appreciate, and to live fully once again."

'It feels like a fairyland'
For 14-year-old **Sanskarika Subhadarshini**, a Class X student from Cuttack, Diwali is not just a festival — it's an emotion that fills her home with joy, warmth, and togetherness. "For me, Diwali is that time of the year when there's no school, no coaching classes, and no office for my dad. It feels like Sunday — but with ten times more excitement and happi-



ness," she says with a bright smile. Living in her paternal home, Sanskarika eagerly waits the time when her uncles, aunts, and cousins gather under one roof. "Diwali is my favourite festival because there's light everywhere. Every house glows with colourful decorations," she says. Although she loves watching fireworks, she chooses not to burst crackers. "They're harmful to the environment, and honestly, I'm a bit scared of them too," she admits. Preparations in her family start about a week to ten days before the festival. "We begin with shopping," Sanskarika shares. "I go with my parents to buy new clothes and toys — not just for myself but also for my cousins as gifts." Her family also purchases diyas, fairy lights, and other decorative items to adorn their home. "Every year, we find new and creative designs in the market. It's fun to explore what's trending," she adds. While the women prepare food and decorations, the men take charge of lighting and floral arrangements. "In the evening, when the diyas are lit, the whole house looks magical," Sanskarika says. "Everywhere you look, there's light and colour — it feels like a fairyland," narrates the teen.



Diwali is not just a festival of lights — it's also a time when homes shine with creativity, warmth, and joyful decor. While traditional decorations always hold special charm, DIY (do-it-yourself) ideas are rising in popularity, allowing you to personalise your space and infuse fresh style. Below are five of the latest DIY ideas that blend tradition, sustainability, and modern aesthetics — perfect for Indian homes in 2025

DIY decor ideas for a festive home

CREATIVE DOOR HANGINGS

Door hangings (torans) have long been part of Indian festive decor (and are rooted in tradition to welcome Lakshmi). The newer twists combine mirror work, macrame threads, beads, or recycled materials.

HOW TO DO IT:

- Use jute rope or thick cotton string as the base.
- Hang beads, small mirrors, bells, fabric cutouts or paper cut motifs.
- You can incorporate small fairy lights or LED strands interwoven through the hanging.
- Another option: macrame rear-knots with tassels at the bottom and small embellishments (wooden beads, shells).
- For a mirror toran, glue small mirror pieces on colored fabric strips and hang them.

This kind of decorative hanging adds vertical charm and is ideal over doorways, archways or walls.



MODERN RANGOLI WITH A TWIST



Rangoli is a classic, but recent trends show creative variants: using flower petals, coloured rice, diya, and even fairy lights instead of just powder.

HOW TO DO IT:

- Use stencils to create clean shapes (peacock, lotus, Ganesha motifs).
- Fill with coloured rice, pulses, or sand for texture.
- Outline the design with small diya or LED lights for an illuminated effect.

- On steps, floors, or thresholds, combine rangoli with decorative elements like beads, mirrors, or dried petals.

This modern rangoli gives a luminous, artistic flair without the mess of powder.

FLORAL FLOATING BOWLS & CANDLE ARRANGEMENTS

Flowers have timeless appeal, and combining them with candlelight adds elegance and fragrance. The idea of mixing blooms with floating candles or petals is widely endorsed in festive decor guides.

HOW TO DO IT:

- Take a shallow bowl (metal, ceramic, or glass).
- Fill it with water.
- Float fresh flower petals (marigold, rose, jasmine) or even whole small blooms.
- Place floating candles or small tealights among the petals.
- Optionally, surround the bowl with garlands or rangoli powder designs.

These arrangements are especially beautiful in the pooja room, entrance, or on dinner tables.



By blending tradition and innovation, these five DIY ideas let you transform your home beautifully and meaningfully for Diwali.

UPCYCLED GLASS JAR LANTERNS

One of the most trending DIY decor ideas is repurposing old glass jars or mason jars into decorative lanterns. As reported recently, many home décor articles encourage using metallic paints, fairy lights or tea-lights, and jute or satin ribbons to transform jars into glowing centrepieces

HOW TO DO IT:

- Clean and dry a used jar (jam jars, pickle jars, cookie jars work great).
- Paint the outside with metallic acrylics (gold, copper, bronze) or use frosted spray paint.
- Once dry, place a string of LED fairy lights or small tealights inside.
- Adorn the rim with twine, lace, beads or sequins.
- Use them on table corners, window sills, balconies or cluster several at different heights.

These lanterns offer a soft, ambient glow and are budget-friendly, eco-friendly, and elegant.



DIY diya/candle holders

Reimagining everyday objects into diya holders is a growing trend. Think using old tins, cups, glass bottles, even clay pots — all painted and customized.

HOW TO DO IT:

- Pick a container (tin can, clay cup, glass bottle base).
- Paint in festive tones (reds, golds, turquoise) or wrap with washi tape, mirror cutouts, lace, or sequins.
- If you have glass bottles, you can cut off the top and use the base as a tealight holder.
- For clay pots, you can carve simple motifs and highlight them with contrasting paint.
- Add small decorations like beads, rhinestones, or small mirrors.
- Place the diya or candles inside safely (consider heatproof liners or small glass inserts).

These unique holders also make thoughtful handmade gifts.

Khushi's beauty secret

Actor Khushi Kapoor, known for her effortless glow, believes true beauty starts with feeling comfortable in her own skin. In a recent conversation, *The Archies* star shared her skincare essentials, festive favorites, and the philosophy behind her luminous radiance.

When asked about her “glow soundtrack,” Khushi smiled and said, “I’m walking on sunshine,” perfectly reflecting her refreshing and uncomplicated approach to beauty. She revealed that she feels most beautiful not under makeup, but when she wipes it all off. Her go-to product for cleansing is Rice Water Bright Cleansing Foam Face Wash, which she says leaves her skin fresh and happy.

For Khushi, skincare means simplicity and hydration. “Moisturizer is your best friend,” she noted, naming Rice and Ceramide Emulsion as her must-have for healthy, nourished skin. Her instant glow fix? The Vegan Mucin Serum, which she calls her non-negotiable.

When asked about beauty envy, Khushi’s reply reflected her confidence: “You shouldn’t steal anyone else’s glow — just glow from within.” Describing her skin as “happy, healthy, and hydrated,” she credits The Glow and Short Skit trio — featuring an Sun Sefitum Ceramide and Crea this festive glow



Genelia sets fitness goals

In her social media story, Genelia shared a video from her intense workout session where she was seen performing 30 kgs on full squats and captioned it as “Diwali nights, kids early morning schedules, what to do, what to do, what to do.” Dressed in a blue athletic outfit, Genelia looked determined as she worked through her training routine.

The actress’ fitness post comes right after she turned heads with the recent festive looks on her social media account. The actress recently shared a carousel post of pictures where she was seen dazzling in a cream and red embroidered lehenga by designer Vikram Phadnis and paired it with art silver jewellery. She captioned the post with photo credits to a stylist and designer, radiating traditional elegance.

In another series, she strung together a gold and bronze sari by Manish Malhotra and accessorised it with an ethnic bun decorated with ‘ghungroos’. She sported the look for Manish Malhotra’s grand Diwali bash.

Pari highlights issue of child sexual abuse

Bhubaneswar: Upcoming Odia movie *Pari* is all set to make an emotional impact on audiences. Based on the heartbreaking story of a young, innocent girl who becomes a victim of sexual abuse, *Pari* highlights the harsh realities faced by many children in today’s society.

Directed by Tripati Kumar Sahu and produced by Sanjay Mohanty along with co-producers Chandan Swain and Anil Baliarsingh, the film’s plot follows *Pari*, a bright and cheerful child whose life takes a dark turn due to the brutality of sexual predators. Her parents are left helpless in a system where money and politics often overpower justice. The film stars Jyoti Ranjan Nayak, Anuradha Panigrahi, Sritam Das, and talented child artistes Divyanshi and Sneha in key roles.

“*Pari* is not just a movie – it’s a message. It reminds us of the need to protect our children and ensure justice is served,” shared one of the producers. The makers are planning to release the movie in the first week of November.



Actress Genelia D’Souza setting major fitness and fashion goals this week. The actress, who has been attending several Diwali bashes, was recently seen hitting the gym early in the morning, balancing her festive indulgence and dedication to her health.

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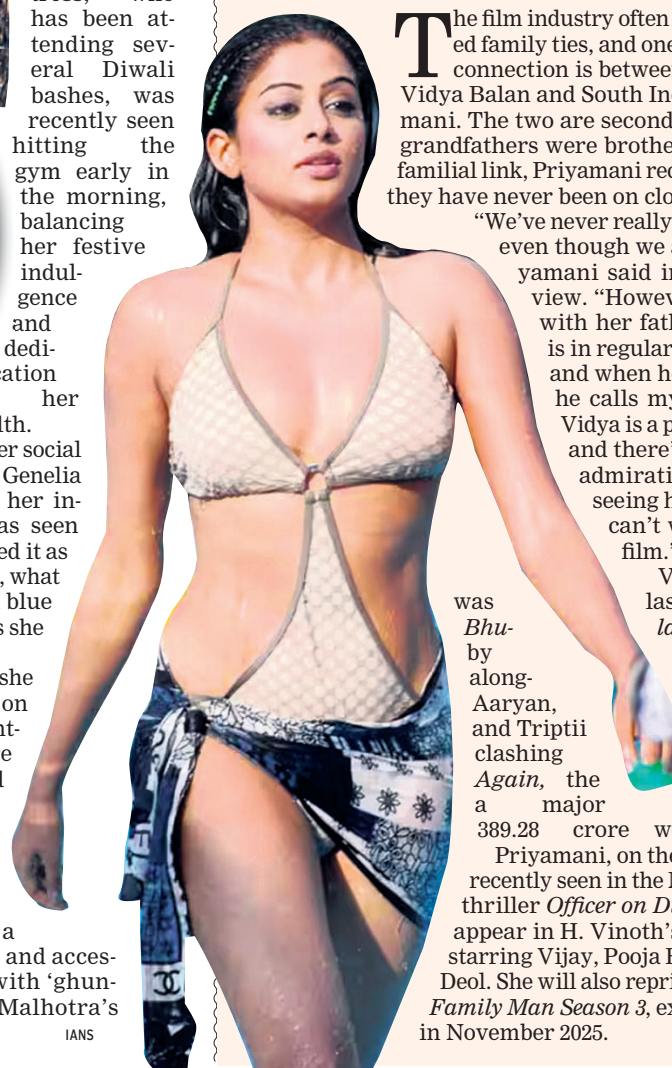
Priyamani’s startling revelation on Vidya

The film industry often reveals unexpected family ties, and one such fascinating connection is between Bollywood star Vidya Balan and South Indian actor Priyamani. The two are second cousins — their grandfathers were brothers. Despite their familial link, Priyamani recently shared that they have never been on close talking terms.

“We’ve never really interacted much, even though we are related,” Priyamani said in a recent interview. “However, I speak more with her father. Balan uncle is in regular contact with me, and when he can’t reach me, he calls my father instead. Vidya is a phenomenal actor, and there’s always mutual admiration. I truly miss seeing her on screen and can’t wait for her next film.”

Vidya Balan last seen in *Bhoolaiya 3*, directed by Anees Bazmee, alongside Kartik Aaryan, and Triptii Dahiya. Despite clashing with *Singham Again*, the film emerged as a major hit, grossing 389.28 crore worldwide.

Priyamani, on the other hand, was recently seen in the Malayalam action thriller *Officer on Duty* and will next appear in H. Vinoth’s *Jana Nayagan*, starring Vijay, Pooja Hegde, and Bobby Deol. She will also reprise her role in *The Family Man Season 3*, expected to release in November 2025.





SHAHNAZ HUSAIN

As we immerse ourselves in the festivities, people, especially women, are set to sparkle brighter than the fireworks and shine more than the diyas to look perfect

Diwali is just around the corner! What better time than now to make sure you shine your brightest.

The days running up to Diwali are more hectic than wedding season in terms of cleaning, shopping, house decoration etc which generally dampens your mood leaving you looking exhausted, tired and

dull at the end of the day.

As you indulge in family gatherings and step out to celebrate, It's time to get a radiant glow with organic homemade ingredients for Diwali which is an absolute favourite with most Indians.

Here are simple things to shine brighter than the festive lights from the comforts of your home.

Shine your brightest this Diwali

MOISTURISING

■ As Diwali approaches, the weather also changes. Seasonal changes also influence the skin. The humidity becomes less and the skin loses moisture to the atmosphere. So, one needs to keep the skin moisturised and also protect it from sun exposure. Moisturisers are available in cream and liquid form. For dry skin, at night, after cleansing, apply a nourishing cream and massage it on the face. Wipe off with moist cotton wool. You can apply a serum afterwards.

■ Oily skins also need moisture. But, if they apply creams, they can get pimples. To moisturise oily skin, mix one teaspoon pure glycerin with 100 ml rose water. Keep it in an airtight jar in the fridge. Use a little of this lotion after cleansing. This moisturizes the skin, without making it oily. Use cleansing milk or face wash to cleanse the skin.



GET RID OF DRYNESS

As Diwali and winter approach, try some home remedies to relieve dryness. Apply honey on the face daily for 10 minutes and wash off with water. If you have an aloe vera plant at home, the gel, found in the inner portion of the leaves, can be applied on the face to moisturize it. Grate carrots and apply on the face for 15 to 20 minutes. Carrot is rich in Vitamin A and good for nourishing the skin in winter. It suits all skin types. Mix half a teaspoon honey, one teaspoon rose water and one teaspoon dried milk powder. Mix into a paste and apply on the face. Remove after 20 minutes with water. Applying mayonnaise or egg yolk on the skin also helps to relieve dryness.

SCRUBBING

The use of facial scrubs helps to brighten the skin and add a glow. Use a facial scrub twice a week. Mix ground almonds (badaam) or rice powder with curd and a pinch of Haldi. You can also add dried and powdered orange and lemon peels. Apply on the face and rub gently on the skin with small circular movements. Then wash off with water.



NIGHT CLEANSING

It is an absolute must, especially for city dwellers. Chemical air pollutants, dirt and grime hang in the air. They are potent skin irritants. Make up should also be removed at night. All these can cause dryness of the skin, or disrupt the normal acid-alkaline balance of the skin, leading to rashes and other eruptive conditions, like pimples and acne.



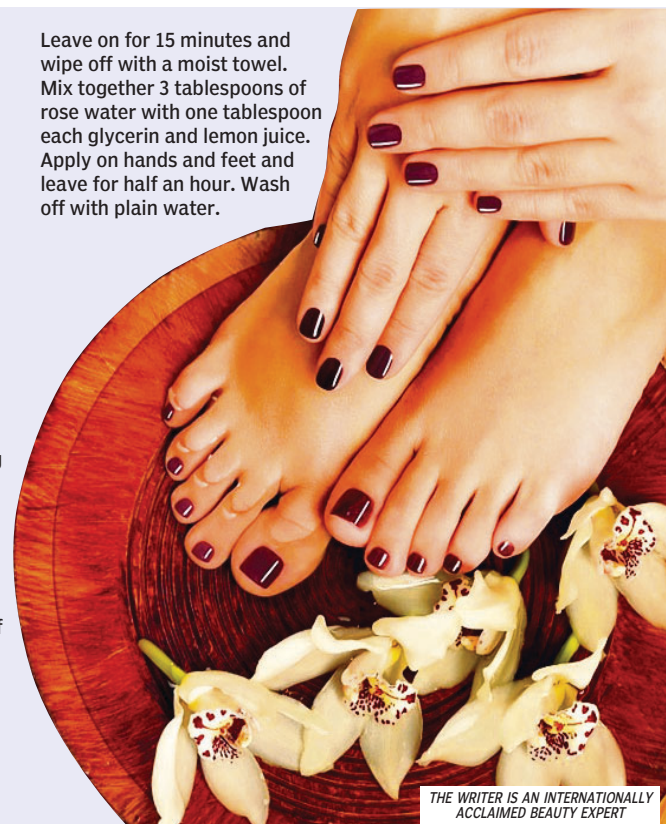
PEDICURE & MANICURE

■ If you have been working hard just before Diwali, a few "pick me up" tips will help. Give yourself a manicure and pedicure the day before. In fact, after soaking the hands and feet in warm water, massage with a rich cream, so that the skin is smooth and soft. A good pick-me-up treatment for the hands is to rub them with sugar and lemon juice. Pay attention to details like waxing and threading too, at least a day in advance.

■ A "pick-me-up" face mask can leave your skin clean and glowing. Cleanse the skin. Mix honey with egg white and apply it on the face. Wash off with water after 20 minutes. For those with very dry skin, mix half a teaspoon honey, egg yolk or pure almond oil and one teaspoon dried milk powder. Mix into a paste and apply on the face. Leave it on for half an hour and rinse off with water. After washing off the pack, give the skin a compress with cotton wool pads soaked in rose water.

■ For hands and nails, mix almond oil and honey in equal parts and massage into the nails and cuticles.

Leave on for 15 minutes and wipe off with a moist towel. Mix together 3 tablespoons of rose water with one tablespoon each glycerin and lemon juice. Apply on hands and feet and leave for half an hour. Wash off with plain water.



WORK ON HAIR

■ Nourish the hair with oil treatments. Heat olive oil and apply on the scalp and hair. Then dip a towel in hot water, squeeze out the water and wrap the hot towel around the head, like a turban. Keep it on for 5 minutes. Repeat the hot towel wrap 3 or 4 times. This helps the hair and scalp absorb the oil better.

■ Egg white is a wonderful natural cleanser for oily hair and its protein content helps to add body. Apply egg white on the hair about half-an-hour before your shampoo. To nourish dry

hair, massage egg yolk or mayonnaise into the scalp. Leave it on for half an hour and then wash the hair. It helps to soften the hair and is very useful for hair that has suffered damage through colouring, straightening or perming.

■ If your hair is looking dull give it a quick conditioning treatment before your shampoo. Mix one teaspoon each of vinegar and honey with one egg. Beat them together well. Massage the mixture into the scalp. Then wrap the hair in a hot towel for twenty minutes, before washing the hair. Your hair will have more body and look shiny and manageable.



Knocker-uppers

Dawn's unsung heroes



A knocker-upper rouses a client in Lancashire in 1900.

Before the age of smartphones and digital alarms, waking up on time was a job for people, not machines. In the smoky mill towns and docklands of 19th- and early 20th-century Britain, a peculiar profession thrived—the knocker-uppers. These early risers were the human alarm clocks of the Industrial Revolution, ensuring factory workers, dockers, and doctors made it to their shifts before the whistle blew or the tide turned.

The human alarm clocks

Imagine the scene: it's 4 a.m. in Manchester. The streets are dark, the air thick with soot. A lone figure walks briskly, lantern in hand, armed with a long bamboo cane or a peashooter. Their mission? To tap—gently but firmly—on the bedroom windows of paying clients. One by one, lights flicker on behind frosted glass. The city stirs. The knocker-upper moves on.

These workers were vital in an era when alarm clocks were expensive and unreliable. For a few pence a week, households could hire a knocker-upper to ensure they rose on time. The service was especially crucial in industrial towns where shift work ruled life and being late could mean losing a day's wage—or worse, your job.

Tools of the trade

Knocker-uppers were nothing if not inventive. While some used sticks or

rubber tubes to rap on windows, others—like Mary Smith of East London—became local legends for their unique methods. Smith, a prominent knocker-upper in the 1930s, used a peashooter to fire dried peas at upper-story windows. Her daughter, Molly Moore, followed in her footsteps, becoming one of the last known knocker-uppers in Britain.

To avoid waking non-paying neighbors, knocker-uppers had to be precise. Some clients even installed “knocky-up boards”—slates on their walls where they'd chalk their shift times. This allowed the knocker-upper to tailor their rounds, ensuring only the right windows were tapped at the right time.

A job for the determined

The work was not for the faint-hearted. Knocker-uppers often began their rounds as early as 2:30 a.m., braving all weather conditions. Many were elderly men and women, or off-duty police officers looking to supplement their income. For some, like Mrs. Waters, a knocker-upper from northern England, the job was a lifeline. Over her 30-year

The knocker-upper profession started during the Industrial Revolution when alarm clocks were neither cheap nor reliable. A knocker-upper's job was to rouse sleeping people so they could get to work on time. The knocker-upper would not move on until received confirmation that the drowsy client was up and moving

career, she supported an invalid husband and funded her son's education, waking up to 80 clients a week.

Despite the grueling hours, knocker-uppers were respected members of their communities. They knew the rhythms of the town, the names of the workers, and the quirks of each household. Some even became confidants, offering a cheery “good morning” or a listening ear through the window.

The challenges

One problem knocker-uppers faced was making sure workers did not get woken up for free.

“When knocking up began to be a regular trade, we used to rap or ring at the doors of our customers,” Mrs Waters, a knocker upper in the north of England told an intrigued reporter from Canada's Huron Expositor newspaper in 1878.

“The public complained of being disturbed... by our loud rapping or

ringing; and the knocker-up soon found out that while he knocked up one who paid him, he knocked up several on each side who did not,” she continued.

The solution they hit on was modifying a long stick, with which to tap on the bedrooms windows of their clients, loudly enough to rouse those intended but softly enough not to disturb the rest.

End of an era

By the early 20th century, the tide began to turn. Affordable alarm clocks flooded the market, and the need for human wake-up calls dwindled. The profession lingered in a few towns—the last known knocker-upper retired in 1973—but by then, the world had moved on.

Still, the legacy of knocker-uppers lives on. They were more than just timekeepers; they were guardians of routine, enablers of industry, and quiet witnesses to the dawn of modern time discipline. In a world before snooze buttons, they were the ones who made sure the gears of the Industrial Revolution kept turning—one tap at a time.



An aging knocker-upper is seen on a London bylane between 1901 and 1918



Mary Smith is seen shooting dried peas at sleeping workers' windows in East London in the 1930s

OP DESK