

OCTOBER 26-NOVEMBER 1, 2025

SUNDAY POST

HERE . NOW



World Cities Day – October 31

COVER STORY

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Bhubaneswar at a crossroads

MY SUNDAY

Creative Sunday

While Sunday is a rest day for many, it's my busiest — a day to learn new skills, create YouTube content, and grow creatively doing what I truly love.



With late singer Shantilata Barik Chhotray

Melodies & movies

Sundays for me are all about creativity and connection — my husband composes melodies, I write the lyrics, and together we create music. I end the day with a movie or short outing, balancing work, art, and relaxation perfectly.

A day to unwind

In my free time, I enjoy singing, writing songs, designing outfits, and going on long drives. I also enjoy spending time with my family or catching up on missed TV shows and series. It's my way to unwind, relax, and stay connected to life beyond work.

In love with traditional dishes

I love exploring different cuisines and cooking whenever possible. Homemade food feels special, and I'm especially fond of amil or lethya, traditional Western Odisha dishes, simple yet full of love and cherished memories.

ANISHA KHATUN, OP



Jagruti Rath from Bolangir is an actress, dancer, singer, choreographer, fashion icon, and influencer all rolled into one. She rose to fame playing Queen Padmavati in TV show 'Shreemandira', a role that earned her multiple accolades. Jagruti has also showcased her versatility through her performances in the Odia film 'Sunayana' and the renowned stage play 'Debadasi'. A recipient of the Ministry of Culture's Fellowship for Folk Dance, she has represented Odisha on international stages, including in the United States and Russia. Through her performances, fashion presence, and Sambalpuri vlogs, Jagruti continues to celebrate and promote Odisha's rich artistic and cultural heritage to a global audience



With husband

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

There are two kinds of friends : those who are around when you need them, and those who are around when they need you.

Multitasking: screwing up several things at once.

I used to be indecisive. Now I'm not sure.

Sometimes waking up means the best part of your day is over!

Festival of pollution

Sir, This refers to last week's cover story of Sunday POST that focused on how Diwali carries different meaning for people from diverse fields. But for me, the festival, once a radiant celebration of light over darkness, has mutated into a pyre of pollution. As dusk falls, millions ignite not hope but chemical-laden firecrackers; metallic salts paint the sky green, red and blue while belching barium, strontium, lead into lungs. Overnight Delhi's PM2.5 leaps three-fold to 488 µg/m³, twenty-four times the safe limit, wrapping thirty-three million people in a smog equal to smoking ten cigarettes a day. Courts plead for muted "green" crackers, yet streets thunder past midnight, rules burst like cheap fuses. Cold air, stagnant and low, traps the poison, mixing it with diesel fumes and distant stubble smoke until AQI gauges scream above 500. Eyes water, asthmatics gasp, traffic crawls through grey blindness. Politicians trade blame, traders count cash, children learn that festival joy now smells of gunpowder and fear. Thus the Festival of Lights has become the Festival of Pollution, its brilliance measured not in lamps but in toxic particles per breath.

SUNITA RANA, BARGARH

LETTERS

SUNDAY POST

Lights, lives, legacy

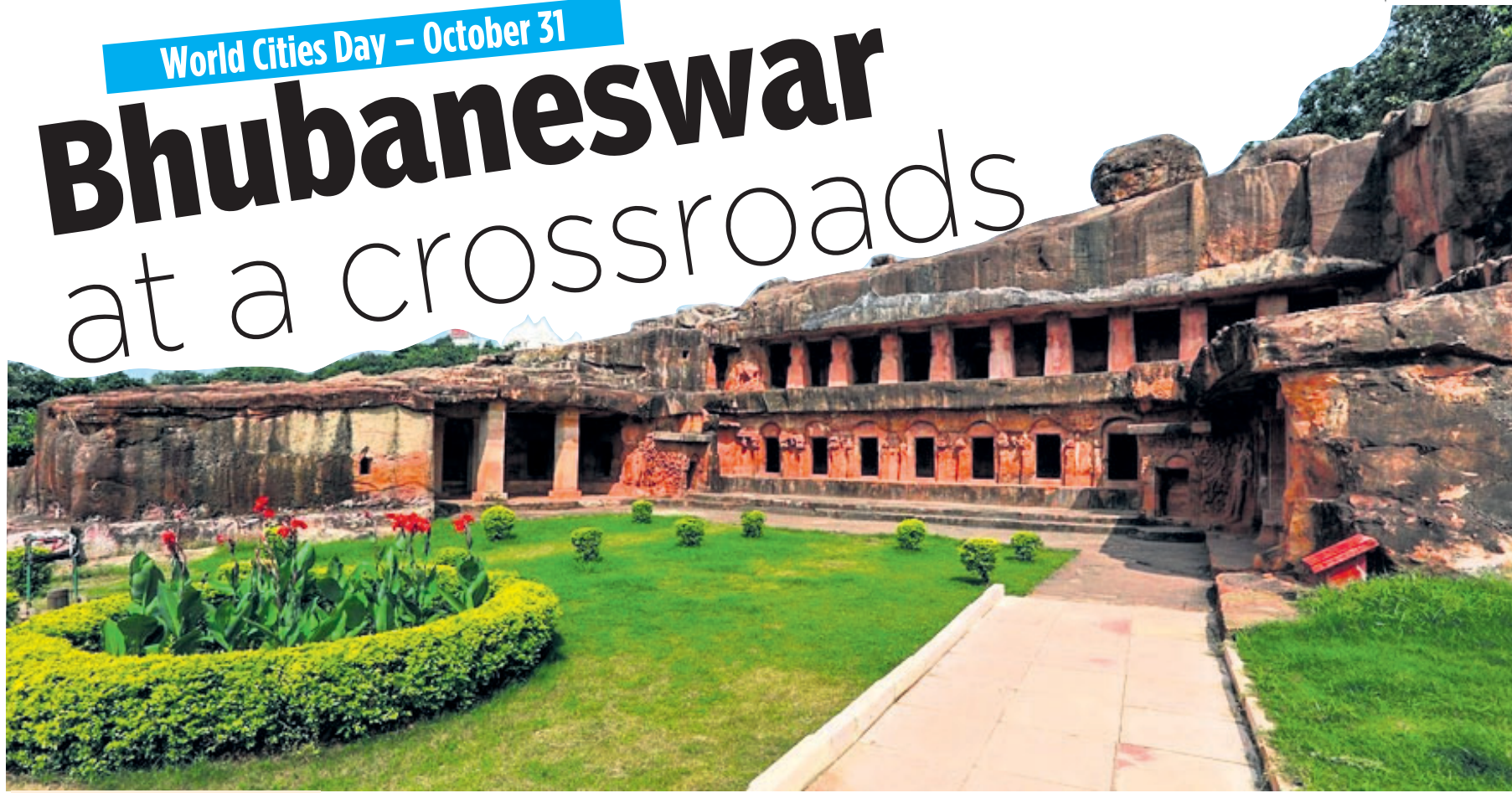
A word for readers

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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World Cities Day – October 31

Bhubaneswar at a crossroads



Let the Temple City not just grow, but grow wisely—rooted in its past, responsible in its present, and resilient for its future, say experts

ANISHA KHATUN, OP

As the world gears up to celebrate World Cities Day, it's a moment to pause and admire the journey of Bhubaneswar—a city where history, culture, and modernity converge in perfect harmony. Born in 1948 as the capital of Odisha, Bhubaneswar has transformed from a tranquil green township into a dynamic metropolis, where wide boulevards meet ancient temples, and thriving IT hubs coexist with flourishing educational institutions.

But has the original vision for the city been fulfilled? Does Bhubaneswar truly meet the benchmark of an ideal smart city? Does it ensure quality of life for its citizens or protect its greenery? Is it a model modern city—economically vibrant, environmentally conscious, socially

inclusive, and deeply rooted in culture? Ahead of World Cities Day, **Sunday POST** spoke to experts to explore these pressing questions.

'Strengthen ward committees'

Reflecting on Bhubaneswar's transformation and the challenges, **Piyush Rout**, a noted urban planner and passionate advocate for sustainable cities, says "Bhubaneswar was founded to serve as the administrative capital of Odisha, focused on white-collar, tertiary-sector activities, excluding brownfield development. Yet, seven decades later, instead of enjoying spring, it has landed on the list of the world's hottest cities. Today, we hardly find any water bodies, canals, or lakes within the city. Worse, concrete jungles have replaced the vegetation capital identity India once knew. And when it rains? Bhubaneswar is marooned, thanks to the absence of hydro-ecological infrastructure."

Over the past decade, Bhubaneswar evolved from a



quiet township into a modern metropolis driven by infrastructure expansion, economic growth, and IT development, acknowledged Rout. However, he warns that this progress has come at an environmental and social cost, as the city struggles with unplanned expansion, loss of green spaces, and water logging.

Rout highlights urban congestion, climate stress, poor mobility, and inadequate housing as major concerns. "To make the city inclusive, planned, and citizen centric, there should be a greater focus on community-driven development, ensuring affordable housing and skill development for all residents, including the informal sector," Rout suggests and stresses on strengthening ward committees, improving infrastructure in neglected areas, and ensuring accessibility for vulnerable groups.

On sustainability, he remarks, "Sustainable urban development is extremely important for Bhubaneswar due to its rapid growth and status as a Smart City." He recommends restoring water bodies, expanding green spaces, promoting renewable energy, shifting to electric public transport, and implementing rainwater harvesting and recycling.

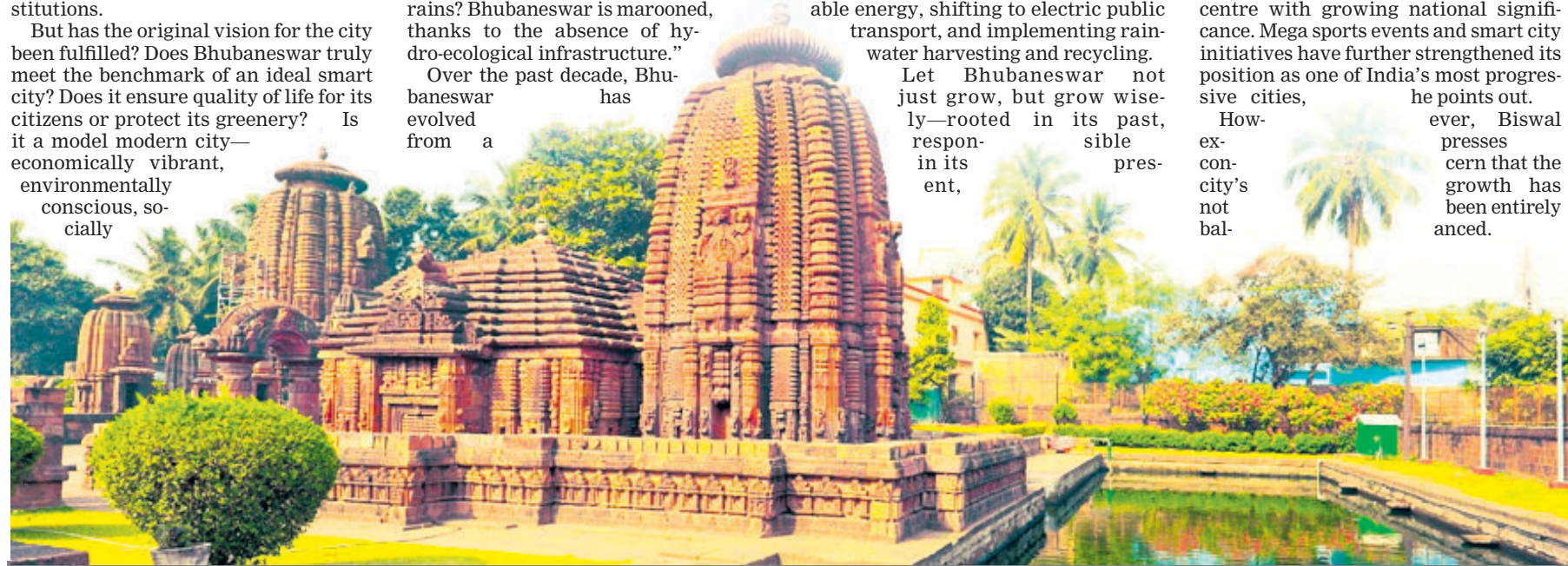
Let Bhubaneswar not just grow, but grow wisely—rooted in its past, responsible in its present,

and resilient for its future.

'City's growth is impaired by slums and encroachments'

Pradeep Kumar Biswal, IAS (Retd), former Member of the Odisha Real Estate Regulatory Authority, offers a balanced perspective on Bhubaneswar's growth and development. According to him, Bhubaneswar is one of the fastest growing cities in Eastern India. It's emerging as a hub in sports, IT, Education and Health. Over the past decade, the city has seen remarkable transformation, driven by rapid infrastructure expansion, improved connectivity, and large-scale investments. The establishment of IT hubs, modern educational institutions, and advanced healthcare facilities has elevated Bhubaneswar's profile as a vibrant urban centre with growing national significance. Mega sports events and smart city initiatives have further strengthened its position as one of India's most progressive cities, he points out.

However, Biswal presses the concern that the growth has been entirely unbalanced.





“The planned growth of the city is impaired by mushrooming slums and encroachments,” he notes, highlighting that unregulated urban expansion has led to socio-economic disparities and environmental challenges. The proliferation of informal settlements indicates the need for affordable housing and inclusive planning. “Similarly, the multi-storey buildings substantially exploit ground water and don’t have adequate provisions for waste management,” he adds, underlining how weak regulatory enforcement and unsustainable construction practices have strained urban resources.

Biswal also believes that certain areas have been overlooked, particularly in urban governance, infrastructure maintenance, and environmental protection. He stresses that growth must be accompanied by strict adherence to planning norms and ecological safeguards to prevent long-term damage. “The government agencies have to be careful in enforcing rules and regulations,” he cautions.

To make Bhubaneswar more inclusive and citizen-friendly, Biswal advocates for improved urban governance, better waste management, and the promotion of green infrastructure. He emphasises the importance of planned, sustainable growth that addresses the needs of all sections of society while ensuring responsible

use of natural resources, thereby creating a livable and resilient city for the future.

‘RRR — Reduce, Reuse, and Recycle will be in focus in coming days’

Speaking about city’s transformation and challenges, Bhubaneswar Municipal Corporation (BMC) Commissioner **Chanchal Rana**, says, “Earlier Odisha was below the average urban population of the country, but in the last 5-10 years, the urban population has increased a lot, and more than 50 percent of the entire urban population stays in the state’s capital city. That is why the urban challenges and aspirations are huge.”



To meet these growing demands, Bhubaneswar has adopted bold, inclusive, and innovative measures that are technically sound, socially responsible, and environmentally sustainable. Flagship initiatives like the Jaga Mission have provided affordable housing to slum dwellers while ensuring access to essential amenities such as roads, streetlights, drinking water, and shared community spaces, shares the BMC head.

Rana takes pride in Bhubaneswar’s distinction as India’s first Smart City, which ushered in a new era of technological progress. “Many technological innovations came into the city, like fiber optic cabling across Bhu-

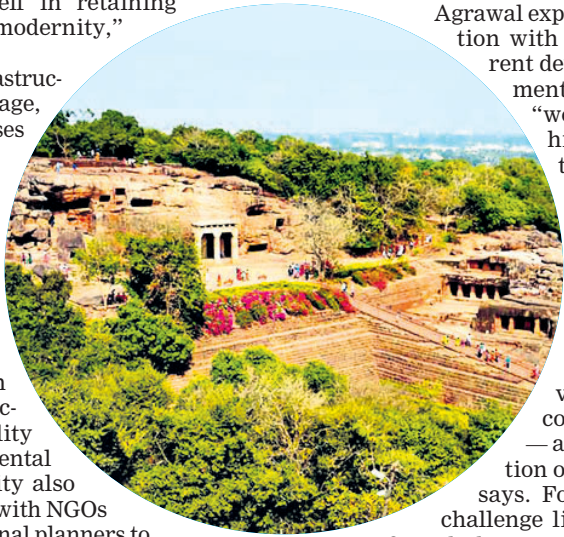
baneswar, smart traffic management, and surveillance systems,” he notes. At the same time, Bhubaneswar has preserved its cultural and architectural heritage through the Ekamra Heritage Project, which has rejuvenated the Lingaraj Temple complex and surrounding Old Town area. This shows how the city is balancing itself in retaining heritage and modernity,” Rana adds.

Beyond infrastructure and heritage, Rana emphasises sustainability and community well-being as the city’s future focus. Reclaimed spaces have been transformed into urban green parks, enhancing livability and environmental health. The city also works closely with NGOs and international planners to incorporate the best global practices. A recent stray dog count survey was undertaken to control rabies and manage animal welfare, explains the officer. Looking ahead, Rana says, “Our main focus in the upcoming years will be on the RRR — Reduce, Reuse, and Recycle — concept and wastewater management,” reaffirming Bhubaneswar’s vision for a greener, smarter, and more resilient future.

‘There’s a need to promote sustainable development’

Describing the city’s journey, architect and infrastructure consultant **Gautam Kumar Agrawal** says, Bhubaneswar has been growing many folds in the last decade. It has gone through a huge transformation. To him, this growth represents more than just physical expansion — it’s a redefinition of Bhubaneswar’s identity, blending

its historical and cultural richness with a modern urban spirit. From improved infrastructure to a changing skyline, the city has emerged as one of India’s most promising and livable capitals.



Agrawal expressed satisfaction with the city’s current development momentum, calling it “wonderful.” Yet, his optimism is tempered with a sense of foresight and caution.

“The present pace is wonderful, but the concern is the future visions of the coming decades — and the preparation of the same,” he says. For him, the real challenge lies not in how fast Bhubaneswar grows today, but in how well it plans for tomorrow. He emphasises the need for visionary policies that anticipate population growth, urban sprawl, and environmental challenges while ensuring that development remains sustainable and inclusive.

Highlighting inclusivity as a key pillar of future development, Agrawal stresses the importance of designing a city that cares for every generation. “Involvement for children-friendly and senior citizen-friendly development is the required area of growth,” he remarks. He believes that the true measure of a progressive city lies in how it accommodates its most vulnerable — ensuring that both children and senior citizens find comfort, accessibility, and joy in public spaces.



On sustainability, Agrawal acknowledges Bhubaneswar’s strong position but insists there is still room for improvement. “Although Bhubaneswar is one of the most developed cities in the country, it still has scope for increasing the green cover and promoting sustainable development,” he signs off.

Saura Art

From mud walls to modern canvas

Though Saura is considered one of the most popular art forms at the moment, there is a risk that it may lose some of its authenticity and cultural significance.

Researchers fear that mass-made murals and imitation works could shadow Saura's sacred strokes

BAISAKHI DAS, OP

Saura Art, an ancient and deeply symbolic art form from the tribal communities of Odisha (especially in Rayagada, Koraput, Ganjam, and Gajapati), has captured the imagination of art enthusiasts for centuries. With its intricate compositions and spiritual undertones, Saura Art stands as a testament to the rich cultural heritage of the Saura tribe. Originating as murals on the clay walls of village homes, it has evolved into a contemporary art form admired both in India and around the world. This art not only reflects the Saura tribe's connection with nature but also serves as a vivid representation of their customs, religious practices, and daily life.

Symbolism & methods

Originally, Saura paintings (called 'Ikons' or 'Idital') were not made for decoration. At the heart of Saura art is the figure of Idital, the deity worshipped by the Sauras. The painted area, called the 'Kothi', is divided into ten symbolic sections or spaces. Each section has ritual and spiritual meaning, representing the Saura people's cosmology — their understanding of human life, nature, ancestors, the divine, deities, celestial space, protective spirits, life cycles, festivals, and the sacred boundary. The imagery in these paintings is rich in symbolism, with recurring motifs such as the sun, moon, elephants, horses, birds, monkeys and the sacred Tree of Life.



In traditional Saura homes, these ten sections were not painted randomly — they were created according to the ritual need (birth, harvest, marriage, death, etc.) and the direction of the wall. For Saura people, each and every symbol has a certain meaning which carries out the memory associated with it. Painting is not only considered as a skill, but a ritualistic performance, performed during the festivals, marriage, child birth and even housewarmings. Each of these aspects has a very important place among the Saura cultural practices, where they are expected to bring fertility, protection and most importantly, a perfect balance to their life.

Traditionally, Saura Art is created on the red or brown clay walls of village homes, using natural materials such as rice powder, white stone, and flower and leaf extracts. The paintings are made with a brush crafted from tender bamboo, which helps to create the fine lines that characterize Saura Art.

Distinct from other tribal art forms

Saura Art shares some similarities with other tribal art forms from India, most notably Warli art from Maharashtra. Both styles utilize geometric shapes and earthy tones, but there are subtle differences that distinguish Saura Art. While Warli figures are angular, often depicted as sharp triangles, Saura forms are more elongated and less angular, giving them a sense of fluidity and grace. Additionally, Saura Art tends to be larger and more elaborate, with no distinct physical differentiation between male and female figures, focusing instead on universal symbols that transcend gender.

One of the most notable features of Saura art is its sacred nature. While Warli art is more focused on depicting everyday

life, Saura Art carries a more formal and spiritual undertone. The motifs used in Saura paintings often revolve around sacred symbols and deities, making the art a vital part of religious and cultural practices.

The transformations

In the 21st century, Saura Art has undergone significant transformations.

What began as murals on mud walls are now being created on a wide range of mediums, including canvas, paper, and even textiles like sarees. Acrylic paints and pens have replaced traditional natural dyes, allowing artists to experiment with new techniques and materials. Despite these changes, the essence of Saura art remains intact, with its spiritual depth and symbolic significance still at the core of the paintings.

Barun Raj Kisku, a contemporary artist on the art's adaptability said note that the style is now being used in modern materials and spaces — far beyond the rural mud walls where it began.

"We are using this same style in glass-bottle work, decorating the walls of Bhubaneswar, and even creating Saura Art on canvas," added Kisku. "The motifs and stories are traditional, but we give them a modern touch," he further said.

The challenges

The increased commercialisation of the art poses threat to sustaining its originality. As the art form becomes more popular, there is a risk that it may lose some of its authenticity and cultural significance. Mass production and imitation works could dilute the uniqueness of Saura paintings. To address this, there have been calls for stronger intellectual property protections, including copyright laws and trade-marking, to ensure that artists receive fair compensation for their work and that the integrity of Saura art is preserved.

Tribal art researcher Jagannath Mohanty said this transformation has not come without a cost.

"Today, every colour is being used to make the art look more beautiful, but in the process, the authenticity and original essence of Saura painting get affected. The old tribal works carried deep stories, now many modern pieces lack that narrative depth," he added.

Guardian of the art form

Behind the enduring tribal art stands one extraordinary artist — Laxman Sabar, the man whose lifetime dedication has helped Saura art survive and flourish in the modern world. Born in Rayagada, Sabar has devoted over 45 years of his life to preserving and promoting this heritage. His artistic journey began in his youth, inspired by the elders who painted walls to honor ancestral spirits. Over time, he not only mastered the symbolic language of the Saura motifs but also became one of its most respected interpreters and teachers. Laxman underwent six months of training at the B.K. College of Art & Crafts, Bhubaneswar in the early 2000s. He is listed on the website of Kalinga Institute of Social Sciences (KISS) as a Professor of Practice (Saura Painting - Idital). Over the years, Sabar has received district and state-level awards for his contribution to tribal art. Yet his influence extends far beyond regional boundaries. The survival and visibility of Saura painting today owe much to his perseverance, his artistic discipline, and his devotion to his cultural roots. Painters, scholars, and cultural institutions believe that Laxman Sabar deserves national recognition, such as the Padma Shri, for his lifetime contribution to preserving one of India's oldest indigenous art forms. His 45 years of uninterrupted dedication exemplifies how one artist's commitment can keep a civilisation's artistic pulse alive.



Laxman Sabar

Rakul's obsession

Bollywood actress Rakul Preet Singh has revealed that she is currently obsessed with the new track *Raat Bhar* from her upcoming film *De De Pyaar De 2* and a sizzling red dress.

Rakul took to Instagram, where she shared a picture of herself looking every-inch-gorgeous in a fiery red outfit with a corset top and thigh high slit skirt. The picture had her newly dropped song *Raat Bhar* playing in the backdrop.

"Obsessing over this outfit and this song," she wrote as the caption.

It was October 22, when the makers of *De De Pyaar De 2* unveiled the film's first song, *Raat Bhar*, featuring Rakul and Meezaan Jafri. It captures their chemistry, blending romance and glamour.

Rakul took to her Instagram handle to share the song and wrote, "Turn down the lights, turn up the volume, play it on

loop #RaatBhar #RaatBhar Song Out Now! Link In Bio." Sung by Aditya Rikhari and Payal Dev, with soulful music by Payal Dev and Aditya Dev, lyrics have been penned by Kumaar. The song beautifully blends romance with a touch of playful charm, showcasing Rakul and Meezaan's effortless chemistry.

De De Pyaar De 2, directed by Anshul Sharma, is produced by T-Series' Bhushan Kumar & Krishan Kumar, and Luv Films' Luv Ranjan & Ankur Garg.

IAN S



Family first for Malavika

Actress Malavika Mohanan, who celebrated this year's Diwali with her family and loved ones, has now observed that the only thing that truly matters at the end of it all is family.

Taking to her Instagram page to post a heartfelt post on the significance of family in one's life, the actress wrote, "Celebrated this Diwali in the favourite corner of my heart. A warm, cozy evening with family and loved ones. As cliché as it may sound, the older I grow I realise that the only thing that truly matters at the end of it all is family. Almost everything else feels so temporary, shifting with time. There's a quiet strength and deep reassurance in having a home and people who love you unconditionally, no matter what. Hope you all had a happy happy one surrounded by the love and warmth of your family."

It may be recalled that just recently, the actress, who plays one of the leads along with actor Prabhas and Nidhi Agerwal in director Maruthi's eagerly awaited horror thriller *The Raja Saab*, was in Greece for the film's shooting.

In fact, when in Greece, she had posted a picture of herself, sporting an outfit bearing the poster of the film.

IAN S



Parija's *Papa Buka* makes it to Minsk Int'l Film Festival



Bhubaneswar: Odia filmmaker Akshay Parija's Oscar-nominated film *Papa Buka* has achieved yet another international milestone, securing a coveted spot among the final 17 films competing at the prestigious 31st Listapad Minsk International Film Festival in Belarus, Europe. The film will be screened at the festival November 2.

Selected from a record 3,655 entries across 120 countries, *Papa Buka* continues to make Odisha and India proud on the global cinematic stage. The film is a collaborative production between Akshay Parija (India), the Government of Papua New Guinea, P.A. Renjith, and Prakash Bere, and is directed by multiple National Award-winning filmmaker Biju Damodaran.

Celebrating the nomination, Parija expressed his joy saying, "It's a dream come true and the blessings of Lord Jagannath. Competing with thousands of films worldwide and making it to the final selection is in itself an award."

Shot entirely in PNG, the film unearths forgotten WWII histories that bind India and Papua New Guinea through shared memory and resilience.

PNN

Vishal: Don't want to be confined to labels

Actor Vishal Jethwa, whose film *Homebound* has been selected as the official entry for the Oscars under the Best International Feature Film category, has expressed his eagerness to explore regional cinema and said that he has never looked at movies through the lens of language.

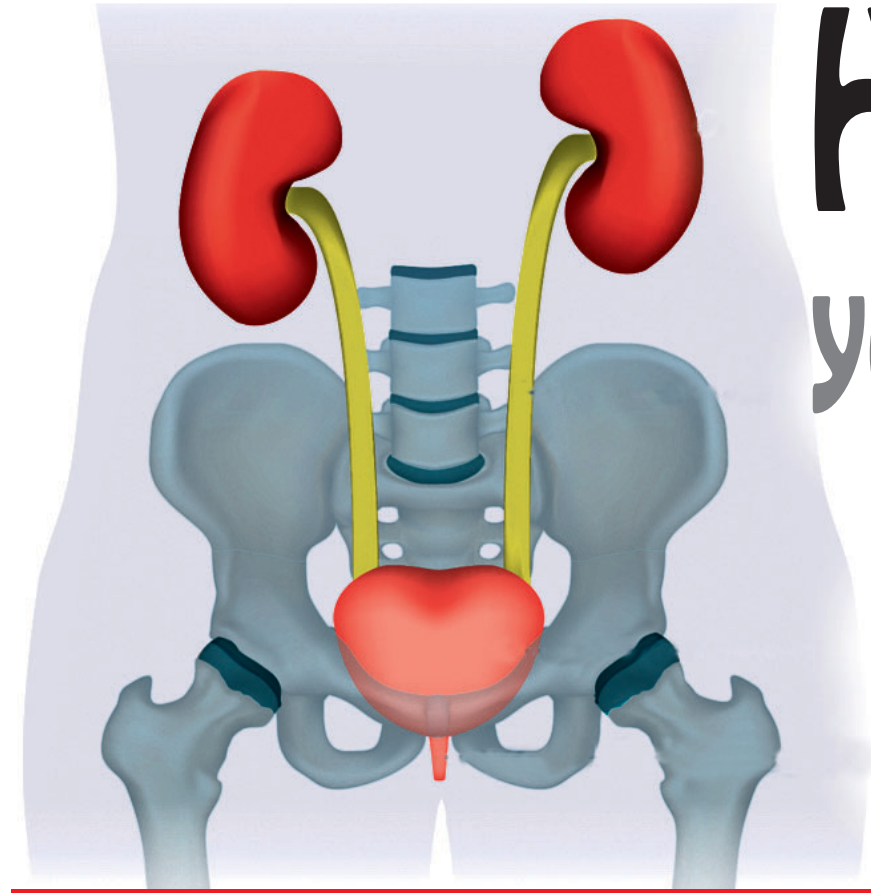
Speaking about his vision as an artist, Vishal, who wants to try his hands in South Indian films and projects Gujarati, told this news agency: "I've never looked at cinema through the lens of language. A good story can travel anywhere, and I want to be part of that movement. Every regional industry in India has something special — a unique way of expressing emotion, culture, and rhythm. I'd love to explore that, whether it's Tamil, Telugu, Malayalam, or Gujarati cinema."

He added: "It's all one big creative universe, and I want to experience it fully. 'I don't want to be confined to labels like 'Hindi actor' or 'Bollywood actor.'"

The actor said his dream is to be "recognised as an Indian actor".

"Someone who belongs everywhere and to everyone who loves cinema. The beauty of the times we live in is that audiences no longer care where a story comes from; they only care about how it makes them feel."

IAN S



Habits that put your bladder at risk

Bladder health is shaped by everyday choices. Staying well-hydrated, avoiding irritants, practising good hygiene and listening to your body can all help prevent long-term problems



The bladder is easy to overlook – until it starts causing trouble. This small, balloon-like organ in the lower urinary tract quietly stores and releases urine, helping the body eliminate waste and maintain fluid balance.

But just like your heart or lungs, your bladder needs care. Neglect it and you risk discomfort, urinary tract infections and, in some cases, serious conditions such as incontinence (involuntary leakage of urine) or even cancer.

However, many bladder problems are preventable and linked to everyday habits.

Here are six common habits that can sabotage bladder health.

Holding in urine too long

Delaying a bathroom visit allows urine to build up and stretches the bladder muscles. Over time this can weaken their ability to contract and empty the bladder completely, leading to urinary retention.

Research shows that holding urine gives bacteria more time to multiply, raising the risk of urinary tract infections (UTIs).

Experts recommend emptying your bladder every three to four hours. In severe cases, chronic retention can even damage the kidneys. When you do go, relax – women in particular should sit fully on the toilet seat rather than hovering, so the pelvic muscles can release. Take your time and consider double voiding: after you finish, wait 10–20 seconds and try again to ensure the bladder is fully emptied.

Not drinking enough water

Dehydration makes urine more concentrated, which irritates the bladder lining and increases infection risk. Aim to drink six-to-eight glasses of water (about 1.5 to 2 litres) a day, more if you're very active or in hot weather. If you have kidney or liver disease, check with your doctor first. Too little fluid can also lead to constipation. Hard stools press on the bladder and pelvic floor, making bladder control harder.

Too much caffeine & alcohol

Caffeine and alcohol can irritate the bladder and act as mild diuretics, increasing urine production. A study found that people consuming over 450mg of caffeine per day – roughly four cups of coffee – were more likely to experience incontinence than those drinking less than 150mg.

Smoking

Smoking is a major cause of bladder cancer, responsible for about half of all cases. Smokers are up to four times more likely to develop the disease than non-smokers, especially if they started young or smoked heavily for years – cigars and pipes included.

Tobacco chemicals enter the bloodstream, are filtered by the kidneys and stored in urine. When urine sits in the bladder, these carcinogens, including arylamines, can damage the bladder lining.

Poor washroom hygiene

Improper hygiene can introduce bacteria into the urinary tract. Wiping from back to front, using harsh soaps or neglecting hand-washing can all upset the body's natural microbiome and increase UTI risk. Sexual activity can also transfer bacteria from the bowel or vaginal area to the urinary tract. Both men and women can reduce their infection risk by urinating soon after sex.

Poor diet and lack of exercise

What you eat and how active you are affects your bladder more than you might expect. Excess weight puts pressure on the bladder and increases the likelihood of leakage. Regular exercise helps maintain a healthy weight and prevents constipation, which otherwise presses on the bladder.

Certain foods and drinks – including fizzy drinks, spicy meals, citrus fruits and artificial sweeteners – can irritate the bladder and worsen symptoms for those already prone to problems. Aim for a fibre-rich diet with plenty of whole grains, fruit and vegetables to protect both digestive and bladder health.

Bladder health is shaped by ev-

Signs of bladder cancer

- Blood in urine
- Pain, burning, stinging or itching when you pee
- Frequent UTIs
- Needing to pee more often
- Loss of appetite & weight
- Pain in back & lower tummy
- Pain or tenderness in bones
- Exhaustion without any specific reason



everyday choices. Staying well-hydrated, avoiding irritants, practising good hygiene and listening to your body can all help prevent long-term problems.

OP DESK

It wasn't the news of Hattie Carroll's death that inspired one of Bob Dylan's greatest protest songs, *The Lonesome Death of Hattie Carroll*, it was the injustice that followed

Tale behind Dylan's *The Lonesome Death of Hattie Carroll*

In the spring of 1963, a 21-year-old Bob Dylan was on the train reading a copy of *Broadside*, the left-wing mimeographed publication known for nurturing a number of important folk musicians. Often included in the magazine were photocopied articles from other newspapers, so alongside coverage of an early Dylan song, *Train-a-Travelin'*, was a report in the *Baltimore Afro-American* by Roy H Wood, with the headline: "Rich Brute Slays N**** Mother of 10."

On a Friday night in February, William Zantzinger, the 24-year-old owner of a 630-acre tobacco farm, arrived drunk at a charity ball attended by members of high society in Baltimore, Maryland. Hattie Carroll, a 53-year-old single mother to nine children, was among the Black staff members serving the guests. According to reports, Zantzinger – who hit two other Black employees that night – yelled at Carroll using racist slurs, accusing her of not serving him fast enough, and struck her on the head and shoulders with a toy cane. While the blows did not leave a mark, Carroll died the next day at Baltimore's Mercy Hospital from a stroke brought on by the stress of the attack.

There was outrage among the Black community. As reported in the Smithsonian's *Folklife Magazine*, Carroll was a deacon of the Gillis Memorial Church in west Baltimore, as well as a member of the choir and its flower committee. She was well-regarded as a peaceful woman who loved and cared for her children.

But it wasn't the news of her death that inspired one of Dylan's greatest protest songs, *The Lonesome Death of Hattie Carroll* – it was the injustice that followed. After initially being arrested and charged with first-degree murder, Zantzinger was fined \$625 and handed a six-month sentence for manslaughter and assault – the day after Martin Luther King Jr delivered his "I Have a Dream" speech at the March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom. His sentence was delayed by another two

months so he could continue to oversee the operations of his tobacco farms. He apparently told a reporter: "I'll just miss a lot of snow, and I'll be back in time for the spring harvest." Between its coverage of the March, *The New York Times* ran a much smaller headline on page 15: "Farmer Sentenced in Barmaid's Death."

Dylan, who had just performed at the March on Washington, then travelled to Carmel, California to hang out with Joan Baez, her sister, the singer-songwriter and activist Mimi Baez, and her sister's new husband, the musician and composer Richard Fariña. "His romantic life is, shall we say, complicated at this moment," says award-winning American historian and Dylan expert Sean Wilentz, alluding to

the singer-songwriter's complex, intense relationship with Joan Baez. "But there he is at this beautiful spot, hanging out, and [Baez] is feeding him salad and red wine." Baez later observed that the songs were coming out of Dylan "like ticker tape". Among them was *The Lonesome Death of Hattie Carroll*, which would feature on his third album, *The Times They Are a-Changin'*.

Two versions of this masterpiece appear on *Through the Open Window: The Bootleg Series Vol 18*, which captures Dylan's work between the years 1956 to 1963. One previously uncirculated recording was made by the singer, musician and activist Barbara Dane at a Los Angeles apartment party, which would have taken place just weeks after Dylan wrote the song. *It was somebody's home so it's very informal*, Wilentz points out. "That's the other thing about this [bootleg series] is that a lot of the recordings are very informal, so the quality varies, but we did our best to make them sound as good as they can." These recordings have a historical value too, he observes, but more importantly, an emotional one. "You can hear him inventing the songs for the first time, [and sense] his connection to the events that were behind [*The Lonesome Death of Hattie Carroll*] in particular."

Wilentz wrote the liner notes for the new bootleg series, but also co-produced the project with Steve Berkowitz, the former A&R executive who signed Jeff Buckley to Columbia Records, and who has supervised a number of historical reissues by artists such as Johnny Cash, Miles Davis and Paul Simon. "I've always been interested in figuring out where Dylan fits into the larger scheme of ultra-American life," he says. "I mean, I'm a historian, right? So that's what I do most of the time." At the same time, Wilentz has done "a fair amount" of arguing against the allegations of plagiarism that have been made against Dylan over the years. "It's what [musicologist and father of folk singer Pete Seeger] Charles Seeger called the folk process... You take something and make it your own. You do something different with it."

Case in point, the lyrics to *Hattie Carroll*, which biographers have pointed out contain a number of inaccuracies about the case, some of which came from the original news report. Dylan sings of Carroll having 10 children, rather than nine, and that he twirled his cane around a "diamond ring finger". He also describes Carroll as "a maid in the kitchen" and that Zantzinger (whom he calls "Zanzinger" in the song) was bailed "in a matter of minutes" of being arrested (it was, in fact, a matter of hours). Zantzinger, who died in 2009 after being convicted again in 1991, this time over a scam in which he charged Black workers rent for properties he did not own, told Dylan biographer Howard Sounes that the musician's story in the song was "a total lie": "I should have sued him and put him in jail." To Wilentz, though, the song is a reaction not just to the injustice of that one event but to "that whole summer's worth of trauma".

"It's so subtle, and in some ways it's an anti-protest protest song, because it's not simply saying, 'This is a terrible thing,' it's telling the story," he says. "That's why it's so brilliant." Even more so, as Wilentz explains in his liner notes, is how Dylan draws attention to "some of the most salient facts" by not mentioning them at all: the fact that Carroll was Black and Zantzinger was white. "By compelling listeners to fill in what's missing, the song redoubles the shame and disgust of what happened," he writes. "At the same time, when Dylan wanted to intensify the song's anger, he exploited what might be called colloquial redundancy, using more words than formally necessary (as when he mentions Zantzinger's 'rich wealthy parents who provide and protect him')." In both the album version and the two recordings that appear on the bootleg series – the other being from his landmark Carnegie Hall concert in New York, in October 1963 – Dylan's delivery is strongest at the end of the third verse. His voice is waspish, full of contempt, as he sings: "And she never done nothing to William Zantzinger." Then, in the concluding verse, he points the finger not just at Zantzinger and the courts, but at the "apologists and intellectuals, who, in offering lofty social explanations for evil-doing, obscure the evil itself," Wilentz says. Those themes are still "very much with us," he adds. "In some ways, it's always relevant."



HATTIE CARROLL

OP DESK