

JANUARY 11 - 17, 2026

SUNDAY POST

HERE . NOW

NATIONAL YOUTH DAY – JAN 12

Resilience in motion

COVER STORY

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Singer, writer and director Biraj Rath burst onto the Odia entertainment scene after winning acclaim in a 2011 reality show. The following year his debut album ‘Emotions Unplugged’ became an instant hit when its track ‘Kahuchhi Aji’ went viral. Music videos such as ‘Smruti Ra Marubhumi’ and his rendition of ‘He Phaguna Tume’ also became a rage among music aficionados. Later, Biraj switched to direction and made his mark with Odisha’s first web series, ‘Rabana Podi,’ in 2018. His diverse skill set has now carried him to the director’s chair for his first feature film, Kie Kahe Taaku Prema, premiering this year



With wife



With friends

Family man

I usually spend Sundays with my family, doing household chores, visiting a park, watching my 15-month-old son play, and enjoying some TV in the evening.

Meals, game and more

An ideal Sunday involves rice and mutton while watching a good cricket match—eating leisurely, soaking in the game, and taking a peaceful afternoon nap.

Teaming up with wife

I love decorating our home with my wife, catching up with friends in the backyard, and happily playing with my son whenever I can.

The explorer

In my free time I enjoy discovering new places, exploring their history and culture, taking road trips, going on long nature walks, listening to music, humming favourite tunes, and jotting spontaneous thoughts in my notes.

Food lover

I’m a big-time foodie who truly enjoys cooking, especially preparing mutton curry, dalma, and puri tarkari—my absolute favourite dishes.



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

- If mummies are from Egypt, then where are daddies from?
- What did the paper say to the pencil? You’ve got a good point!
- A woman has the last word in any argument. Anything a man says after that is the beginning of a new argument.
- Why can’t the bank keep a secret? It has too many tellers!



Save urban birds

Sir, This is with reference to last week’s cover story, “Cities, let them breathe.” Our ecosystem consists of biotic and abiotic components. Biotic organisms depend on one another for food, as larger animals and birds consume smaller ones, maintaining ecological balance through the food chain. However, rapid urbanisation, deforestation, and the clearing of forested areas have driven many bird species to extinction or rarity by destroying their natural habitats. Birds play a crucial role in the food chain by feeding on insects and rodents, thereby protecting crops from damage. They also contribute significantly to pollination. Scavenging species help keep the environment clean by consuming carcasses, reducing the risk of disease. Poor air quality, increased pollution, shrinking green spaces, and radiation from mobile towers have further harmed bird populations. While halting urbanization is impossible given rising population and demand, individuals can cultivate plants on balconies, rooftops, or in gardens to provide displaced birds with habitat, food, and water.

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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NATIONAL YOUTH DAY – JAN 12

RESILIENCE IN MOTION

Swami Vivekananda's birthday, observed as National Youth Day, is an annual call for young minds to dream audaciously, innovate relentlessly, serve selflessly and turn nation-building passion into daily, measurable action



ANISHA KHATUN, OP

Youth is all about boundless energy, courage, creativity, and potential to drive change and overcome challenges. Every skinned knee, failed exam, or heartbreak is followed by an almost gravitational pull back to hope. The young haven't yet learned the vocabulary of permanent defeat, so they translate setbacks into verbs—try again, pivot, start over. Their brains are still wiring themselves, their stories still unbound by the thick scar tissue of precedent; this neurological and narrative plasticity lets them bend without breaking, to turn whiplash change into raw propulsion. In a single semester they can lose a parent, change cities, and still laugh at a meme before the tear tracks are dry, proving that resilience isn't just the capacity to endure but the instinct to keep tasting the future before the past has fully formed.

Ahead of National Youth Day, some young achievers share with Sunday POST their journeys, challenges and how they managed to turn their dreams into reality.

'You do not need a perfect plan to begin'

Bodhisattwa Sanghapriya, Founder and CEO of IG Defence, formerly IG Drones, a TEDx speaker and Forbes Asia 30 Under 30 Asia 2025 honouree, has emerged as a key force in India's indigenous defence technology ecosystem.

Reflecting on his journey, he says, "I grew up in Odisha, a land that has endured cyclones, floods and long periods of neglect, yet has never lost its courage. As a child, I saw how the absence of timely systems and technology could turn natural disasters into human tragedies, and that experience stayed with me. Years later, during a national expo, while I was exhibiting one of my innovations, someone casually remarked that people from Odisha are not

natural builders or creators. That sentence struck deeply."

In fact, that incident proved to be the defining moment in Bodhisattwa's career.

Carrying in on same breath, he continues: "Odisha has always been a land of makers. From the Sadhaba Pua (ancient mariners) who once sailed across oceans carrying trade and courage, to visionaries like Madhu Babu, who established the Utkal Tannery to promote indigenous enterprise and self reliance, our history speaks of creation and confidence. That moment made me realise the problem was never capability. It was belief and opportunity. I decided to respond not with arguments, but with action, by building systems, institutions and outcomes that demonstrate what Odisha's youth can contribute to the nation."

However, building India's first private defence manufacturing facility from Odisha wasn't an easy task.

"Infrastructure was limited, talent was scarce, capital was difficult to access and scepticism was constant. But we didn't give in. We stayed focused on execution, invested deeply in core engineering and held ourselves to global standards even when resources were limited. Instead of chasing recognition, we chose difficult problems. Over time, performance began to speak louder than assumptions."

The pressure, he admits, was often overwhelming. "Financial stress, institutional resistance and personal setbacks tested resolve. The big motivation came from within as the borders were tense and the country needed capability. From Odisha's soil, we developed indigenous kamikaze strike drones that were operationally deployed under Operation Sindoor."

He concludes with a message rooted in responsibility and courage. "You do not need a perfect plan to begin. You only need the courage to take responsibility. If you are prepared to take responsibility when conditions are difficult, leadership will eventually find you."

'I never mind who is doing better than me'

Tanvi Patri, a rising star in Indian badminton, has been making waves with her remarkable achievements at a very young age. From winning double titles in the U15 and U17 categories at the 2025 National Badminton Championships to becoming the Asian U-15 Badminton Champion in 2024, her journey has been nothing short of inspiring. Adding to her list of milestones, she also became the first player from Odisha to clinch U-13 National gold medals in 2022 and 2023, placing her firmly among the most promising talents in Indian sports.

Looking back at what sparked her early interest and shaped her sporting journey, Tanvi fondly recalls her childhood experience abroad. "I was lucky to be in Taicang, China, for 2.5 years when I was six years old," she says. Being exposed to an environment where sports infrastructure was world-class and seamlessly integrated into everyday life left a deep impact on her.

Bodhisattwa Sanghapriya



Tanvi Patri

“The infrastructure was excellent and easily accessible to everyone,” she adds, noting how seeing people engage in sports so naturally inspired her to dream bigger and commit seriously to badminton from a young age.

Tanvi believes that her approach to competition plays a key role in her growth. Rather than measuring success by comparing herself to others, she focuses on self-improvement. “I never mind who is doing better than me. I always focus on my own progress rather than getting discouraged by others,” she says. This philosophy, she feels, keeps her grounded and motivated, while also helping her avoid unnecessary pressure.

When asked about challenges, Tanvi offers a refreshingly positive perspective. She shares that consistent support has shielded her from feeling overwhelmed. “My parents and coaches supported me at every step. I never felt any obstacles,” she says, acknowledging the crucial role her support system has played in her development.

Setbacks such as injuries, according to Tanvi, have only strengthened her resolve. She views them as learning phases rather than failures. “Injuries are an opportunity to build my mental and physical strength and understand better what I can do to avoid them in the future,” she explains. This resilient mindset continues to guide her journey, making her not just a champion on court, but also a role model for young athletes across the country.

‘Start small, learn by doing’

Apurwa Masook, Founder and CEO of SpaceFields, specialises in next-generation space fuel systems and stands out as one of India’s leading young deep-tech entrepreneurs. Recognised in the Forbes 30 Under 30 Asia 2025 list, he has earned widespread acclaim for his contributions to aerospace and defence, including leading the successful test of India’s first aerospike rocket engine.

Apurwa traces his motivation to his early experiences.

“I grew up seeing talent and ambition everywhere, but opportunity very unevenly distributed,” he says.

His years at VSSUT, Burla became a defining phase, where he helped build India’s first student rocketry team.

“Building rockets as students wasn’t about passion for space alone; it was about proving to ourselves that meaningful change often begins not with resources, but with conviction and persistence.”

Working with minimal resources stood him in good stead. “What struck me most was how much could be achieved with very little, with relentlessness and sheer willpower,” Apurwa recalls.

Leading student teams, launching sounding

rockets and navigating repeated failures instilled in him a strong bias for engineering rigour, rapid iteration and mission-driven problem solving. These experiences also exposed a deeper concern. “Technological sovereignty in defence and aerospace requires resilience in energetics and propulsion systems. That’s why we founded SpaceFields,” he explains.

Talking about challenges, he said that the biggest ones were not technical, they were emotional and structural. “Long periods of uncertainty, limited resources, repeated rejections and the pressure of early credibility were constant. Entrepreneurship, especially in deep-tech, can be deeply lonely,” he adds, describing progress that often felt invisible despite sustained effort.

What kept him going was “a certain irrational self-confidence” and a stubborn belief in staying honest to the work. Over time, resilience evolved into discipline. “It became less about motivation and more about the ability to show up, day after day, regardless of how uncertain the path looked.”

For young changemakers, his message is clear. “You don’t need to have everything figured out to take the first step. Start small, learn by doing, value delayed gratification and don’t wait for perfect conditions. Small efforts, repeated over time, compound in ways impossible to predict.”



Apurwa Masook with Cmde GS Sindhu (Directorate of Ship Production DSP) and Cdr Srinivas (INS Ekshila)

‘Start where you are, with what you have’

Abhaya Mohanta, Founder of WE4YOU, a charitable trust dedicated to empowering persons with disabilities and uplifting marginalised communities, has built his journey on empathy, firsthand experience, and unwavering commitment. Through inclusive education, skill development, assistive technologies, and sustainable livelihood initiatives, his work has focused especially on enabling visually impaired students to access education with dignity.

Abhaya traces the origin of the initiative to his early interactions with blind students. “The inspiration to start this initiative came from my personal experiences with blind students during my early years,” he says. Along with three close friends, he took the first step in 2010 after witnessing the everyday struggles these students faced. Despite their strong determination to learn, the absence of accessible resources often became a major hurdle. “These experiences deeply moved us and motivated us to take action,” he adds, noting that the idea was born from a shared resolve to bridge these gaps and create an inclusive support system that empowers blind students to pursue education with dignity and confidence.

The path forward was challenging. He recalls that limited resources were a constant concern in the early days. “One of the biggest challenges we faced in the beginning was a lack of resources, financial support, infrastructure and

access to assistive technology,” he says.

As young founders, building trust was another struggle. “Creating credibility while working with institutions and stakeholders was difficult,” he admits. Developing accessible study material and arranging examination support also required technical knowledge, committed volunteers and sustained effort. These hurdles were addressed through “perseverance, teamwork and partnerships,” by starting small, focusing on real impact,



Blind students listening to We4You audiobooks



Abhaya Mohanta

and allowing consistent work to speak for itself.

“There were moments when the challenges felt overwhelming,” Abhaya shares, particularly when resources were scarce and progress seemed slow. What kept him moving forward was the visible change he witnessed. “Seeing a student confidently appear for an exam or access study material independently reminded us why we started.”

Sharing a message for young changemakers, he says, “Start where you are, with what you have.” He emphasises that meaningful change does not require a perfect plan or large funding. “Empathy, observation and the courage to act are enough,” he believes, adding that small, honest efforts can grow into lasting impact when driven by purpose and consistency.

Tales of dogs detecting cancer, Parkinson's disease, or aiding wildlife conservation highlight their value far beyond companionship. Yet in India, they have been in the news for all the wrong reasons. But before judging the species, we must first understand the factors that shape its behaviour



Why dogs chase: 5 instincts, 5 fixes

Dogs dash after people for reasons far deeper than playful exuberance. Embedded in every chase are ancient instincts—territorial guards, predatory reflexes, herding DNA, or even anxiety—that once kept their ancestors alive. By decoding these impulses we can teach our companions when to follow their nature and when to pause, keeping both canine and human hearts calm and safe.

Let's examine the primary causes of your dog's people-chasing behavior.

- The oldest engine: instinct**
Many dogs have a strong desire to chase, which is a holdover from their ancestors' survival instincts. Whether it's a ball thrown across the yard, a squirrel running up a tree, or a person passing by, there is an inbuilt urge to pursue after moving objects.
- Territorial defence**
A dog's chase often starts with territory: any space it considers "home" is worth guarding. When strangers step too close, barking, growling, or bared teeth escalate into a rapid pursuit meant to drive the intruder away. Early intervention—training, management, and, if needed, veterinary guidance—keeps everyone safe and prevents the behavior from hardening into habit.
- Herding heritage**
Your dog may exhibit chasing behavior as a result of their innate herding tendencies if they are of a breed that was developed specifically for herding cattle, such as Australian Shepherds or Border Collies. Despite the fact that this behavior is typically not meant to cause harm, it can be severe and upsetting, particularly if the dog is attempting to

- herd little children or elderly persons.
- Play goes awry**
Since dogs are inherently playful, chasing is frequently a part of their play repertoire. For pure enjoyment, they may chase their own tails, you, or other pets. Even while being playful is usually a good thing, it's important to teach your dog to respect boundaries and play properly, especially when he or she is around people who might not enjoy being chased.
- Fear-based pursuit**
Dogs are susceptible to anxiety and terror, just like people. They may turn to chasing as a coping mechanism if they are uneasy or feel threatened. Dogs who are afraid or anxious may shake, hide, or bark excessively, among other behaviors.



TIPS TO CHECK

Whether it's a jogger on the street or a squirrel in the park, dogs are naturally inclined to chase. Here're a few suggestions, supported by research, will help you stop your dog from chasing.

- Understand the cause**
Understanding the reasons behind your dog's chasing habit is crucial before you can properly put an end to it. Are they playing, defending their territory, or acting out of fear? Your training strategy might be guided by your understanding of the underlying reason.
- Obedience training**
The secret to training your dog is consistency. Consistently give your dog orders like "sit," "stay," or "leave it," and give them praise when they comply. It works better to reward excellent behavior than to punish poor behavior.
- Exercise regularly**
Your dog's energy levels can be controlled and their drive to chase can be decreased with regular exercise. To keep your dog cognitively engaged and physically exhausted, try adding games like fetch or tug-of-war into their regular routine.
- Socialisation**
You can lessen your dog's desire to chase by introducing them to other animals and humans. They might become more at ease and less reactive with regular exposure to various settings and circumstances.
- Teach them to disengage**
Learning the engage-disengage game helps many reactive dogs pause before reacting. This can help with a variety of behavioral issues in dogs and functions similarly to mindfulness training, which teaches canines to stop reflexively responding to stimuli.

FINAL THOUGHTS

Gaining knowledge about the reasons behind dogs' pursuit of humans might help one better understand their behavior. Identifying these patterns can help us avoid issues and build a more harmonious relationship with our canine friends, regardless of whether the behavior is the result of instinct, fear, an overabundance of energy, or even a previously reinforced behavior. Finding the best strategy for stopping or controlling undesirable behaviors in our dogs begins with identifying the triggers, just like with many other behavioral problems.

Fatima's daring leap

Actress Fatima Sana Shaikh tried her hand at cliff jumping for the first time.

Sharing her experience, the *Dangal* actress revealed that it took her around 20 minutes to gather the courage to take the leap.

Posting a video of the adrenaline-filled moment on her Instagram handle, Fatima wrote, "It took me 20 minutes standing on that ledge, trying to find the strength to take the leap. And then i went for it..(sic)."

She reflected on how the moment just before jumping feels stretched, with a sinking feeling in your stomach.

"That moment when you're in the air, just before hitting the water.. feels horribly long. That sinking feeling in your stomach is haunting... and confusing. Because in those split seconds, I could feel fear turning into

adrenaline. It was fascinating to watch myself go through that shift.", added Fatima.

Once she was over her initial fear, Fatima ended up jumping 4 times, making her realise that the jump itself was never scary; it was the stories she had made up in her head that were holding her back.

"Uske baad toh fear ka switch off ho gaya. And i jumped 4 time after that.

It was never the jump that was scary. It was the stories i built in my head before the leap.. You just have to take the leap.", she concluded.

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BHUMIKA TO START AFRESH

Actress Bhumika Chawla, known for films such as *Tere Naam*, *Run* and *MS Dhoni: The Untold Story*, is stepping into 2026 with renewed motivation and clarity. The actor, who will soon be seen in *Kesar*, says she is excited to embrace new opportunities and continue evolving with time. Sharing her outlook for the year ahead, Bhumika calls 2026 a fresh beginning, adding that she wants to move forward with positivity, growth and a strong desire to keep working, learning and improving.

While fame role acknowledging that success, and money play an important in the entertainment industry, Bhumika believes balance is essential. According to her, name, fame, financial stability, mental well-being and physical health are all equally important, but inner peace and happiness matter the most during the journey.

Reflecting on her long career, she shares the advice she would give her younger self. She says she would have learned more languages earlier and been more mindful about the people she allowed into her life. Emphasising the value of good company, she stresses the importance of staying away from negativity, learning to say no and moving on from difficult phases. She adds that success has no shortcuts and growth requires patience.

AGENCIES



Jasmin opts for freedom, happiness

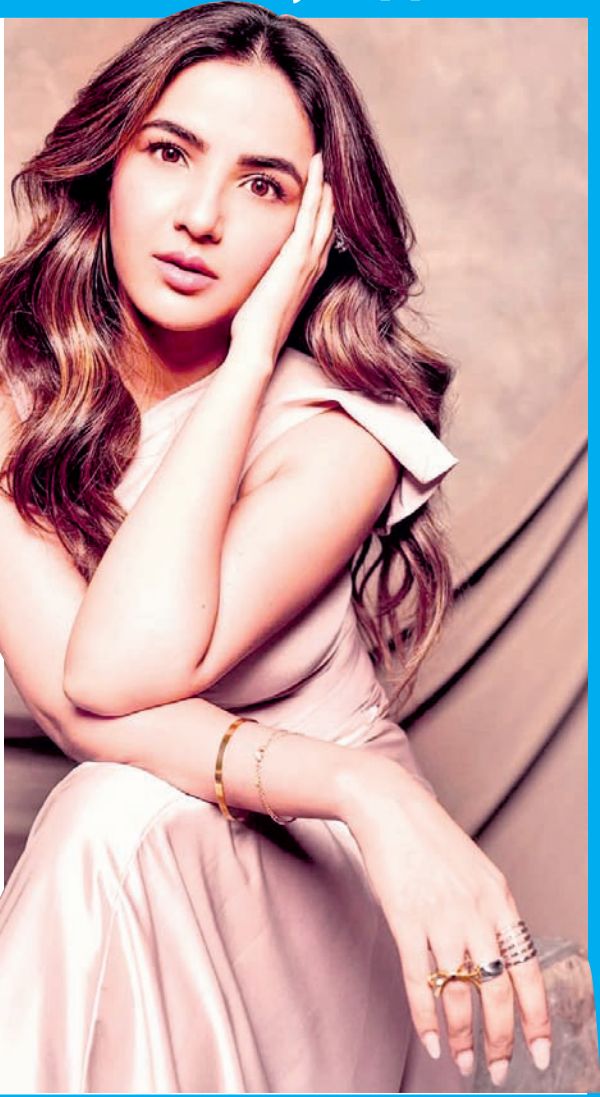
Actress Jasmin Bhasin, who is dating actor Aly Goni, has welcomed the New Year with a heartfelt note saying that she is choosing freedom, happiness and a deeper connection with her soulful self.

The actress took to Instagram, where she reflected on prayers answered and hands held along the way and shared how she has learned to protect her peace, even if it means letting go.

As she steps into 2026, the actress says she is choosing freedom, happiness and a deeper connection with her soulful self, vowing to nurture what brings her joy and release what no longer serves her spirit.

The actress shared a string of stunning images of herself from her vacation in Portugal with Aly and penned in the caption section: "For every hand held, for every prayer answered, I am grateful. I've learned that protecting my peace means sometimes letting go. Here's to a New Year where I live more freely, love myself harder, and keep only what lifts my spirit."

She added: "And from now this year onwards I choose to reclaim my freedom, happiness, and soulful self. I'll nurture what brings me joy and gently sever what drains my spirit. May the new year bring peace, clarity, and unshakeable happiness." IAN S



Launching of suspense thriller Kundali



Bhubaneswar: The much-anticipated Odia film *Kundali* was officially launched with a traditional Mahurat ceremony held at Maa Dhakulei Peetha recently. The film marks the debut of producer Bi-jayalakshmi Nayak and director Rohanjeet Dash.

Produced under the joint banner of Thunder-pixel Films and Amara Music, the film stars newcomers Mrinmay and Ananya Dash in leads, with popular actors Jyoti Nayak and Jasmine in key roles.

Kundali is a suspense and horror film, a genre that has gained immense popularity among Odia audiences in recent years. The film's concept is based on the belief that every individual is born with a 'Kundali' (horoscope), and how destiny shapes the course of one's life.

Director Dash revealed that the movie is being made on a high-budget with significant use of VFX.

The makers are aiming to release it during Raja festival.

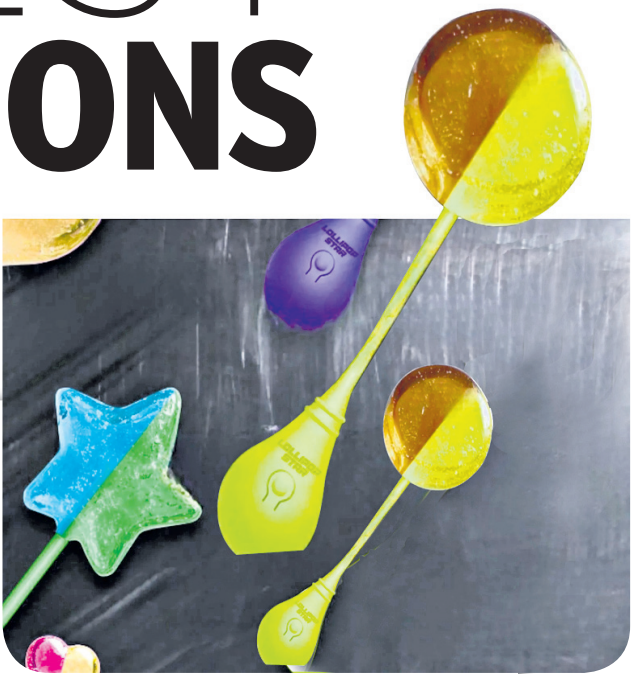
PNN

In 2026, technology took a turn that few could have predicted. Instead of focusing only on speed, efficiency and productivity, innovators began experimenting with emotion, sensory experiences and human connection. The result was a wave of inventions that felt strange, playful and sometimes unsettling, yet undeniably futuristic. From edible gadgets that play music to AI companions capable of emotional bonding, the year redefined what technology could be and how deeply it could integrate into everyday life. Here is a list of the weirdest and wildest technologies that made 2026 truly unforgettable

WILDEST INNOVATIONS OF 2026

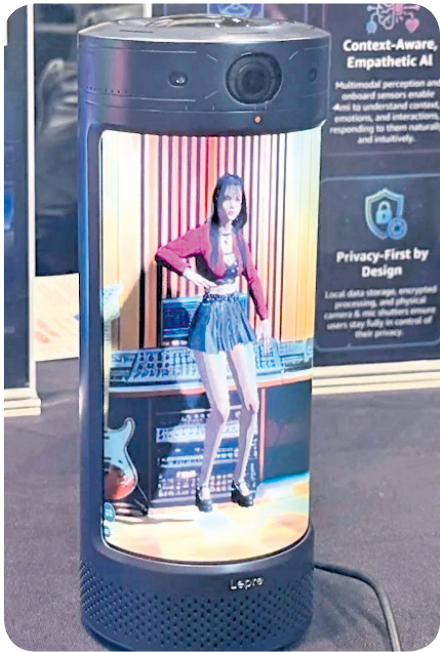
MUSICAL LOLLIPOP

One of the most unusual inventions of 2026 was the musical lollipop, a candy embedded with bone-conduction technology. Instead of using speakers or earphones, the lollipop transmits sound vibrations directly through the jawbone while being consumed. Each flavour is paired with a specific music track, turning a simple sweet into a multi-sensory entertainment device. While many questioned its practicality, the musical lollipop became a symbol of how far companies are willing to go to blend food, fun, and futuristic tech.



ULTRASONIC CHEF'S KNIFE

The kitchen witnessed a sci-fi upgrade with the ultrasonic chef's knife. This high-tech blade vibrates at extremely high frequencies, allowing it to slice through food with remarkable ease and precision. Designed to reduce physical effort and improve accuracy, the knife is especially useful for professional chefs. Though it looks like a regular knife, its advanced vibration technology makes it one of the strangest yet most impressive culinary tools launched in 2026.



AI SOULMATE

Among the most talked-about technologies of 2026 was the AI Soulmate. Designed to form deep emotional connections, this AI companion learns from conversations, remembers personal experiences and adapts its personality over time. AI soulmates offer emotional support, companionship and meaningful dialogue, particularly for people dealing with isolation. While praised for addressing loneliness, the technology also sparked ethical debates about emotional dependency and the future of human relationships in an AI-driven world.

Together, these innovations reflect a bold new direction for technology, one that prioritises emotional connection, creativity and experience as much as performance. These technologies may seem unconventional today, but they offer a fascinating glimpse into a future where technology becomes an extension of human emotion and imagination.

AI PANDA ROBOT

Emotional technology took center stage with An'An, an AI-powered panda robot designed to provide companionship and emotional support. Covered in soft materials and equipped with touch sensors, voice recognition and memory capabilities, An'An responds to human interaction with gestures and expressions. Primarily aimed at elderly individuals and people facing loneliness, the panda robot raised conversations about emotional bonding with machines and the evolving role of AI in mental well-being.



HOLOGRAPHIC DESK AVATAR

The holographic desk avatar brought virtual assistants into the physical world. This compact device projects animated AI characters onto a desk, allowing users to interact with a life-like hologram for reminders, productivity tasks, gaming assistance, or casual conversation. Unlike traditional screen-based assistants, the holographic avatar creates a sense of presence, making digital interaction feel more immersive and personal. For many, it felt like a glimpse into a future once only imagined in science fiction.



Abramovic standing motionless during the abuse

Art can indeed channel empathy through shared stories, letting viewers recognize themselves in others' joy and pain. When vulnerability appears on canvas or stage, compassion awakens, reminding us of the kindness, hope, and connection we carry within. Yet this is not always so: at least once, art held a mirror to our darkest impulses.

In 1974, Serbian performing artiste Marina Abramovic staged an experiment called 'Rhythm Zero' that would forever change our understanding of human nature. For six haunting hours in a Naples gallery, she stood motionless beside a table containing 72 objects—from innocent items like roses and honey to dangerous implements including scissors, knives, and a loaded gun. A simple sign invited visitors: "There are 72 objects on the table that one can use on me as desired. I am the object. During this period I take full responsibility."

What unfolded was not art in any conventional sense, but a terrifying revelation about humanity's capacity for cruelty when consequences vanish.

Seduction of power without accountability

The performance began innocently enough. Gallery visitors approached tentatively, offering Abramovic a rose or gently touching her arm. But as minutes stretched into hours, something primal emerged from the crowd's collective psyche. The transformation was gradual yet relentless—like watching civilization itself unravel in real-time.

By the third hour, her clothes lay in tatters, cut away with razor-sharp blades. By the fourth, those same blades explored her skin, drawing blood that eager spectators drank. The audience carried her half-naked body around the space, stuck knives between her legs into wooden tables, and pressed loaded weapons against her temple. Each escalation seemed to grant permission for the next, as if morality itself required constant reinforcement rather than being an inherent human quality.

Mob psychology

What makes Rhythm Zero so profoundly disturbing is not merely the violence itself, but how quickly ordinary people—art enthusiasts, presumably educated and cultured—abandoned their humanity. Abramovic had transformed herself into an object, and the audience responded by treating her as one. Her voluntary submission became their invitation to dominate.

The performance revealed how easily human empathy can switch off when social constraints disappear. Like the infamous Stanford Prison Experiment conducted the same year, Rhythm Zero demonstrated that given the right circumstances, anyone might participate in cruelty. The audience wasn't composed of monsters, but of people who discovered monstrous capabilities within themselves when accountability vanished.

What makes Rhythm Zero so profoundly disturbing is not merely the violence itself, but how quickly ordinary people—art enthusiasts, presumably educated and cultured—abandoned their humanity. Abramovic had transformed herself into an object, and the audience responded by treating her as one. Her voluntary submission became their invitation to dominate

RHYTHM 0: The dark truth of human nature

About half a decade ago, Serbian performing artiste Marina Abramovic had discovered what philosophers and psychologists have long suspected: that the line between civilization and savagery is frighteningly thin. Strip away consequence and recognition, and ordinary people can swiftly surrender to brutality—reminding us that humanity is a choice we must keep making

Protective impulse arrived too late

Perhaps most telling was the audience's reaction when Abramovic finally moved. After six hours of standing motionless through escalating violence, she began walking toward the crowd—naked, bleeding, with tears in her eyes. The spell broke instantly. Those who had participated in her degradation fled in terror, unable to confront the human being they had objectified and violated.



Objects applied on Abramovic



Abramovic in tears after the experiment

This mass retreat revealed another uncomfortable truth: many participants understood, on some level, that their actions were wrong. They had simply suspended that knowledge while she remained passive. Her movement restored her humanity, and with it, their crushing sense of guilt and shame.

Mirror we cannot escape

Nearly fifty years later, Rhythm Zero remains one of the most significant artistic statements about human nature ever created. In an age of online anonymity, cancel culture, and digital mobs, its lessons feel more relevant than ever. When we cannot see the humanity in those we interact with—whether through computer screens or artistic objectification—we risk reenacting the Naples gallery horror on global scales.

Abramovic emerged with gray hair where none existed before, a physical manifestation of trauma that speaks to the performance's authenticity. She had

discovered what philosophers and psychologists have long suspected: that the line between civilization and savagery is frighteningly thin, maintained only by our collective willingness to recognize ourselves in others.

The unsettling truth revealed that night in Naples isn't that some humans are cruel—it's that cruelty lives within all of us, waiting for the moment when consequences disappear and victims become objects. Rhythm Zero stands as an eternal warning about what we might become when we forget that every person we encounter is fully human, fully real, and fully capable of suffering from our choices.

Legacy

Abramovic's Rhythm 0 caused a splash in the art world and catapulted her into a position of international fame. But that was far from the end of her career as an artist. Since Rhythm 0, Marina Abramovic has continued to explore the possibilities of performance art and elevate it within the canon of artistic mediums.

In 1976, she teamed up with the German-born Frank Uwe Laysiepen, known by his artistic name, Ulay. The pair went on to create numerous ground-breaking pieces together over the next several decades.

OP DESK