

JANUARY 25 - 31, 2026

SUNDAY POST

HERE . NOW

REPUBLIC DAY SPECIAL

Lighting the last mile

COVER STORY

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3,4





With Bollywood actor Govinda

Outing with family

If there are no work commitments, I love spending time with my family, either stepping out for a short outing or simply enjoying quality time together at home.

Love for stick magic

In my leisure time, I enjoy playing hockey. I also like cooking, and whenever I get the chance, I try out new recipes from YouTube.

A working Sunday

My Sundays are no different from other days, they usually begin with a workout, followed by classes and then shooting, as most of my shoots are scheduled on Sundays.



With an illustrious career spanning over 15 years, Kabir Prasad stands as one of the most prominent choreographers, dancers, and directors in Ollywood. Starting as a background dancer, Kabir's dedication and natural talent quickly propelled him into the spotlight. His breakthrough came after participation in various reality shows, where his exceptional skills and innovative choreography earned him several prestigious wins. He gained prominence as a mentor on popular dance reality platforms. Leading his creative group, Team KDS (Kabir Dance Studio), Kabir has delivered numerous hit Odia dance numbers and choreographed several films, with upcoming projects including 'Chakranta' and 'Utapaat'

Hanging out with buddies

When I'm with friends, we usually plan a get-together, as on regular days our schedules rarely align since they belong to different fields.



With Halka Pabana music video team

ANISHA KHATUN, OP



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

- My brain is not equipped with facial or name recognition technology.
- A clean house is a sign of a misspent life.
- I'm not trying to boss you around just do what I say.
- I am depressed in every way except emotionally.



Renting the runway

Sir, This refers to last week's cover story 'New face of luxury' on rental fashion. The trend is quietly reshaping the way people engage with style, offering a smarter and more sustainable alternative to fast fashion. One of its biggest advantages is accessibility. Renting allows individuals to wear high-end designer outfits or occasion-specific attire at a fraction of the cost, making luxury and variety available without long-term financial commitment. Sustainability is another major positive. By extending the life cycle of garments, rental fashion reduces textile waste, lowers demand for mass production, and helps conserve resources such as water and energy. Fewer clothes bought and discarded means a lighter environmental footprint—an important shift in an industry often criticised for excess. Rental fashion also encourages mindful consumption. Instead of buying impulsively for one-time events, consumers can choose pieces they truly need, promoting a more intentional relationship with clothing. It supports experimentation too, allowing people to explore new styles, trends, and silhouettes without cluttering their wardrobes. For urban, mobile lifestyles, convenience is key. With doorstep delivery, professional cleaning, and easy returns, rental platforms remove the hassles of ownership. In doing so, rental fashion reframes style not as possession, but as experience—flexible, responsible, and refreshingly modern.

KISHORE SAMAL, PARADIP

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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Where the city ends, their work begins. It's a battle much different from what was fought in the last century. Armed with smartphones, data and determination, these unsung workers close decades-old gaps in India's hinterland, carrying the promise of independence to its farthest corners

Lighting the last mile

ANISHA KHATUN, OP

Millions sacrificed to forge an independent, vibrant republic we shall celebrate a few hours from now—yet the battle is far from over.

In the quiet lanes and across villages where ambition often outpaces access, a silent revolution is unfolding. Far from the glare of metropolitan skylines, these unsung heroes are harnessing the power of technology to rewrite destinies and redefine progress.

These are innovators, educators, healthcare facilitators and change-makers who believe that development should not be confined to pin codes of privilege but should reach the last mile with dignity and purpose.

Armed with smartphones, data and determination, they are bridging centuries-old gaps by using technology as a powerful tool to drive inclusion, awareness and meaningful change at the grassroots level. Their work is not merely about technology; it is about hope translated into action, and access transformed into empowerment. Each initiative carries the pulse of a larger dream, of a nation where opportunity is not dictated by geography and where innovation blooms in the most unexpected soils.

As India marches toward the vision of developed nation, these everyday heroes stand as its quiet architects. Their stories are woven with resilience, ingenuity and compassion, proof that true progress does not always make headlines, but it always changes lives.

On the eve of the 77th Republic Day, Sunday POST spoke with these unsung heroes to celebrate their work, explore their journeys, and understand the challenges they have overcome.

Vision of an inclusive, equitable India

Rishikesh Amit Nayak, 22, is the young founder of DAIRA EdTech, India's first dedicated EdTech browser and R&D lab, driven by a mission to solve deep-rooted learning challenges through research-led, inclusive technology. His innovation journey began with an AI-powered crop protection platform that used satellite imagery and farmer-reported data to predict pest outbreaks, delivering timely crop health alerts directly to farmers' phones. The solution not only helped prevent losses but also shaped his belief that technology must be preventive, accessible, and rooted in grassroots realities.

Building on this purpose-driven approach, Rishikesh went on to create Jiveesha, inspired by a critical gap in India's childhood development ecosystem, early detection and intervention. He highlights a stark reality: one in six Indian children has a neurodevelopmental condition such as autism, ADHD, or learning disabilities. While these conditions can be identified as early as 18 months, most children are diagnosed only between the ages of 8 and 10, missing crucial early intervention windows that can dramatically improve outcomes. "We saw an opportunity to bridge the accessibility gap in developmental screening and ensure families in non-metro regions get timely insights without long wait times or high costs," he explains.

At the grassroots level, Jiveesha has transformed decision-making by empowering parents, teachers and professionals alike. Its AI-powered, game-based screening, available in 22 Indian languages, delivers clear developmental insights within 15–20 minutes. "Parents



gain clarity and confidence to advocate for their children, while teachers receive tools to build truly inclusive classrooms," he notes. Schools benefit from simplified compliance with government systems and clinical professionals see a 60–70 percent reduction in assessment time through tele-assessment. Sustainability lies at the heart of the model. Jiveesha follows a cross-subsidy

approach, offering free screenings in government schools through CSR funding, while premium services support long-term growth. "Our goal is simple, to democratise specialised developmental care and ensure early intervention reaches every child, regardless of geography. Each child we screen early represents not just improved outcomes, but a life trajectory fundamentally changed, contributing to a more inclusive and equitable India where every child has the opportunity to reach their full potential," says Rishikesh, reaffirming his vision of a more inclusive and equitable India.





Digital access to underserved communities



Sambit Kumar Das, an educationist and information technologist, and the Founder and Managing Trustee of Ek Asha Trust, a non-profit working to provide holistic, child-centric education to children in rural and tribal regions. His inspiration to bring digital education to underserved communities stemmed from a stark inequality he witnessed early on. “While students in urban private schools get opportunities to learn STEAM, build robots and participate in innovation drives, children in rural and tribal villages are left out. This population makes up nearly 70–80 percent of our country. India cannot aspire to become a Vishwa-Guru while leaving its majority behind,” he says.

For Sambit, access means not just infrastructure, but also mentoring,



both of which are often absent in remote areas.

Since 2018, Ek Asha has worked extensively across villages in Deogarh, Keonjhar and Rayagada districts, impacting over 1,500 students through initiatives such as ThinkCenters, Ek Asha Vidya Vanam - School for Change-makers and TinkerLabs, supported by more than 100 volunteer mentors from 10 countries. Technology, Sambit explains, was adapted to local realities by first aligning students’ interests and then introducing tools gradually. “Technology adaptation is never the real challenge for children. Smart devices are intuitive. If you give them freedom to explore, encouragement, and thought-provoking problems, learning happens naturally,” he notes. Students are first given simple challenges, with complexity increasing as their confidence grows, allowing them to learn at their own pace.

The impact has been transformative. Students who had never touched a computer are now building STEAM projects, robots, websites and even writing Python code. More importantly, Sambit highlights a shift in mindset. “Their curiosity has grown, their confidence has multiplied and many now dream of becoming innovators, engi-



neers and problem-solvers,” he says. Students are also encouraged to apply technology to local challenges, installing solar panels, setting up electrical fencing, designing mechanical prototypes using AI and even using chemistry to debunk social taboos.

However, sustaining digital education in rural areas comes with challenges. These include a lack of skilled mentors willing to work in remote locations, limited internet connectivity, frequent power cuts, economic pressures on families and low awareness among parents. “The biggest support we need is consistent mentorship, reliable infrastructure and policy-level backing that understands rural realities,” Sambit asserts. Despite obstacles, he remains optimistic, driven by the belief that given the right opportunities, rural children can lead India’s innovation future.



A modest initiative turns movement Sudhansu Patra,

President and Founder of Swapno Foundation, a non-profit trust working for the welfare of people across Odisha, traces the origin of the organisation to a simple idea rooted in empathy and social responsibility. Recalling the early days and the inspiration behind starting the trust, he says, “Swapno Foundation started in 2017 when I was a college student. A small group of friends and I came together with the intention of giving back to society in whatever way we could.”

The foundation began its journey with a focus on education, believing it to be the most powerful tool for change. “At the beginning, we used to collect old books and distribute them to children who were in need,” Patra shares. The initiative soon gained momentum, encouraging the group to broaden its efforts beyond academics. They started visiting old age homes and orphanages, providing food, clothes and books to residents who often lacked consistent support. “Those visits made us realise how much care and attention many people in our society still need,” he adds.

Initially, our activities were limited to Cuttack and Bhubaneswar. However, as more volunteers joined and community support grew, the organisation steadily expanded its reach. “At first, our service was confined to Cuttack and Bhubaneswar, but gradually we extended our work to other districts. Today, we are active across Odisha,” Patra explains.

The foundation now has volunteers in every district, who regularly carry out welfare initiatives at the grassroots level. One of its most sustained efforts has been the distribution of food at SCB Medical College and Hospital, a service it has been providing continuously for the last eight years. Highlighting their inclusive approach, Patra notes, “We also arrange scribes for visually impaired students during examinations so they get equal opportunities.”

The Foundation has further extended its support to financially constrained families by organising marriages and providing all essential necessities. “Our aim is to stand by people during crucial moments of their lives and help them move forward with dignity,” Patra says.

What began as a modest college initiative has today grown into a statewide movement, driven by compassion, consistency and the belief that small, sincere efforts can bring about lasting social change.



Studies on birds show they can display awareness, decision-making, and even self-recognition. Despite having different brain structures, birds process information in complex ways, suggesting consciousness evolved across species and may be more widespread than once believed

CONSCIOUSNESS

may not be just a human trait

It was long believed that consciousness belonged only to humans. However, recent research challenges this assumption, suggesting awareness may exist in animals, birds in particular. Some experts believe turning to other conscious beings may be key to understanding our own minds. In separate papers published in November 2025, two research teams from Germany's Ruhr University Bochum argue that studying other species—especially birds—may help redefine the elusive concept of consciousness and shed light on the evolutionary origins of human awareness. Both studies appeared in Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society B.

A three-stage model of consciousness evolution

In their first paper, Albert Newen and Carlos Montemayor propose that consciousness evolved across species in successive waves, each serving a specific function. They outline three interconnected levels—basic arousal, general alertness, and self-reflexivity—structured like a pyramid, with each stage building on the previous one. This model challenges traditional, cortex-centered theories by suggesting consciousness can arise from broader neural mechanisms.

In the second paper, Gianmarco Maldarelli and Onur Güntürkün complement this view by presenting evidence that multiple brain structures, not just those traditionally emphasized, may be capable of generating conscious experience. Together, the studies expand the biological foundations of consciousness beyond long-held assumptions.

Within Newen and Montemayor's framework, basic arousal emerged first, functioning like an internal alarm system that signals danger or need. Sensations such as hunger, pain, thirst, fear, and pleasure motivate behavior in ways that simple reflexes cannot, forming the most fundamental layer of consciousness.

From survival signals to everyday awareness

For example, when you touch a hot plate, your attention centers on the pain in your hand, yet you can still evaluate options—drop the plate or endure the burn. In the wild, a similar process might involve weighing the danger of exposure to predators while foraging against the risk of starvation. In essence, general alertness allows organisms to form complex

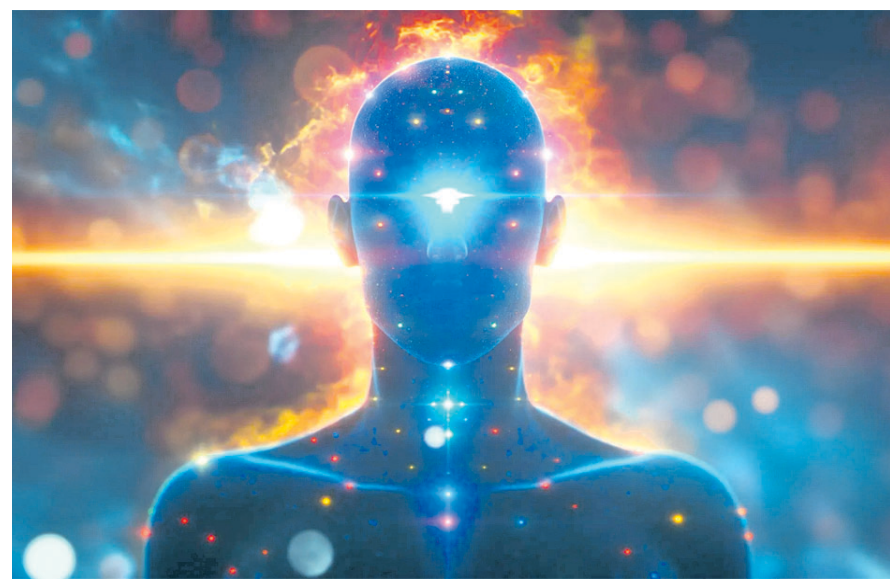
associations that help them navigate their surroundings more effectively. The final stage, reflexive self-consciousness, emerged in humans and some animals. Rather than focusing on the external environment, this level involves awareness of oneself and one's past experiences, Newen explains. At its core, this form of self-awareness enables deeper social integration, allowing individuals to coordinate, communicate, and function more effectively within groups.

What birds reveal about self-awareness

Passing the mirror self-recognition test is often linked to reflexive self-consciousness. In this behavioral experiment, an animal is marked with paint or a sticker in a spot it cannot normally see. If, when facing a mirror, the animal investigates or touches the mark, it is taken as evidence of self-recognition. Human children typically pass this test at around 18 months, and species such as chimpanzees, dolphins, and magpies have also succeeded, indicating that language is not required for this form of self-awareness.

In their paper, Maldarelli and Güntürkün argue that consciousness should not be viewed as the pinnacle of human evolution. Instead, they propose it is a more fundamental cognitive process, potentially shared across multiple animal groups, suggesting consciousness may be far older and more widespread than previously assumed.

The researchers highlight increasing evidence that several bird species exhibit self-awareness—and would describe flexive self-consciousness. They cite “ecologically relevant” mirror tests tailored to different bird families. For example, roosters failed to issue alarm calls to their reflections when shown a predator, implying they recognized the image as themselves rather than another bird. Beyond behavior, Maldarelli



and Güntürkün present biological evidence supporting avian consciousness. They note that the avian forebrain shares key similarities with the mammalian brain and possesses neural structures capable of supporting conscious processes. Structurally, Güntürkün explains, birds meet many of the criteria proposed by established theories of consciousness.

Why animal consciousness raises bigger questions

Even where avian brains differ from mammalian ones, they are not inherently inferior. Maldarelli and Güntürkün point to the nidopallium caudolaterale—the avian counterpart to the prefrontal cortex—which is densely interconnected and capable of highly complex information processing. In this light, the phrase “bird brain” falls short of capturing birds' true cognitive sophistication. If their hypothesis is confirmed, it could significantly com-

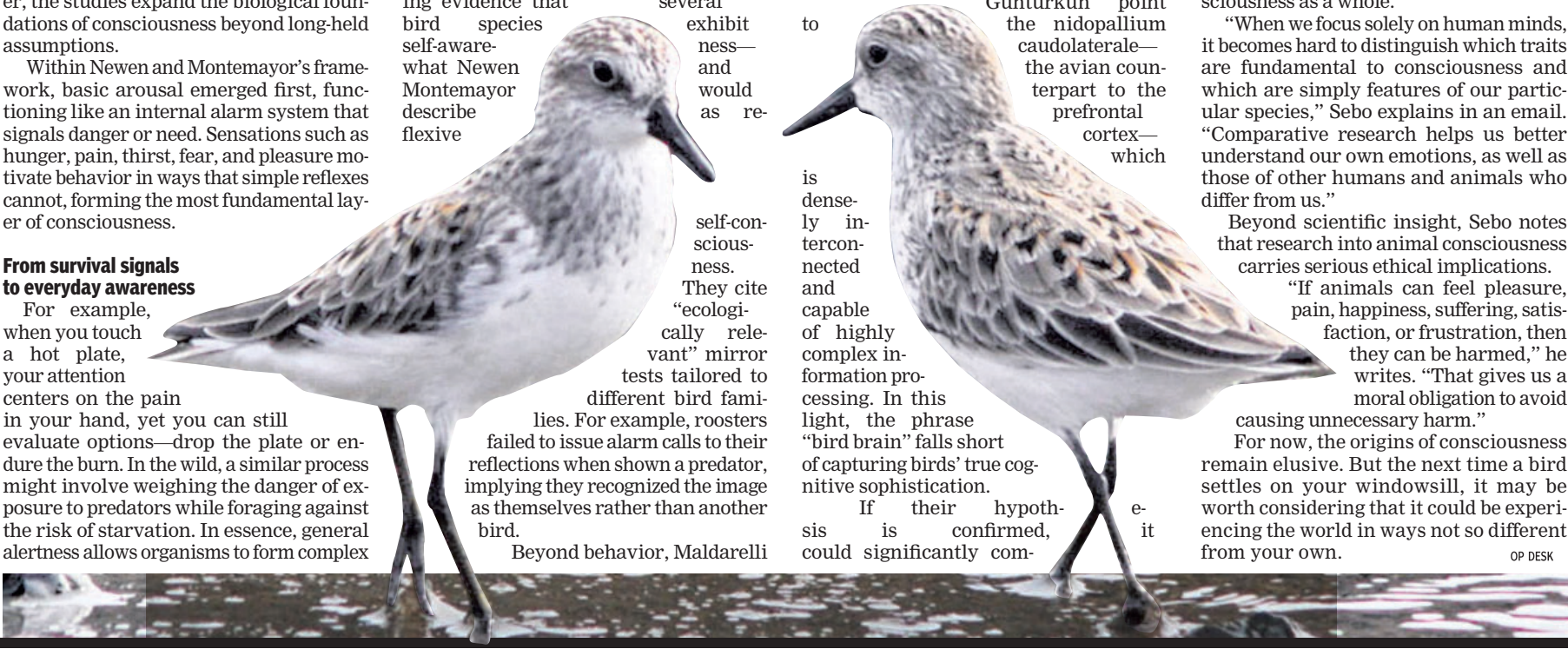
plicate current views of human consciousness. The researchers suggest that conscious experience may arise without a mammalian prefrontal cortex, long thought to be central to advanced awareness. This raises the possibility that other neural structures can generate similar forms of consciousness, or that its origins lie elsewhere in the brain. For now, the authors caution that these ideas remain speculative.

Jeff Sebo, PhD, an independent scholar who studies animal consciousness, emphasizes that examining awareness across species is essential for understanding consciousness as a whole.

“When we focus solely on human minds it becomes hard to distinguish which traits are fundamental to consciousness and which are simply features of our particular species,” Sebo explains in an email. “Comparative research helps us better understand our own emotions, as well as those of other humans and animals who differ from us.”

Beyond scientific insight, Sebo notes that research into animal consciousness carries serious ethical implications. “If animals can feel pleasure, pain, happiness, suffering, satisfaction, or frustration, then they can be harmed,” he writes. “That gives us a moral obligation to avoid causing unnecessary harm.”

For now, the origins of consciousness remain elusive. But the next time a bird settles on your windowsill, it may be worth considering that it could be experiencing the world in ways not so different from your own.



Nidhhi on negative PR



Actress Nidhhi Agerwal recently spoke out against the culture of negative PR and paid online campaigns, calling it damaging and deeply unfair to artists. During a YouTube podcast, the *The Raja Saab* actress criticised how some individuals choose to spend money pulling others down instead of promoting their own work, adding that such practices also impact ratings on ticketing and movie review platforms.

Nidhhi revealed that she, too, has faced targeted negative campaigns. Pointing out that a section of online reviews is paid for, she said people often invest more money in harming others than uplifting themselves. She shared that a couple of negative campaigns were recently launched against her but were stopped immediately, adding that while she prefers to push herself positively, she won't hesitate to respond if attacked unfairly.

The *Hari Hara Veera Mallu* actress also highlighted how Bollywood actors like Varun Dhawan and Kartik Aaryan have faced similar issues. Stressing that actors are emotionally sensitive, she said such attacks can seriously affect mental health. Nidhhi emphasised that public figures are not public property and are answerable to their families, making online targeting especially hurtful.

Nidhhi was last seen in *The Raja Saab*, starring Prabhas, Sanjay Dutt, Malavika Mohanan, Boman Irani and Riddhi Kumar.

IAN5

Genelia's 'new beginnings'

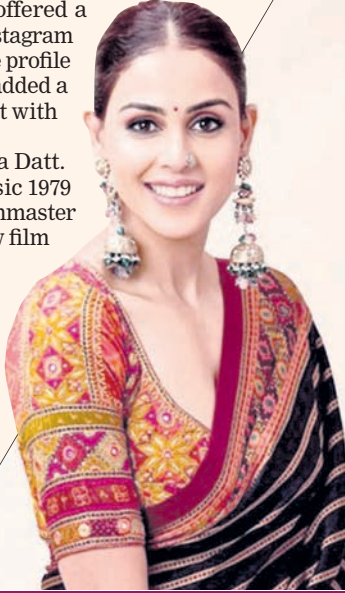
quiet glimpse into a fresh chapter as she took to her Instagram Stories, sharing a picture that captured only a soft side profile of her face. Keeping it minimal yet meaningful, she added a "New Beginning" sticker on the image and captioned it with "#GunmaasterG9."

Gunmaster G9 is an action film directed by Aditya Datt. It also stars Aparshakti Khurana. The film is a classic 1979 Indian spy film, *Surakksha*, featuring the original Gunmaster G9 character played by Mithun Chakraborty. The new film will have music by Himesh Reshammiya.

Talking about the actress, she will soon be seen in Ram Gopal Varma's upcoming horror comedy *Police Station Mein Bhoot* starring Manoj Bajpayee. This will be the first time Genelia and Manoj will be seen sharing screen space together. Sharing her excitement about collaborating with Manoj, Genelia in September 2025, wrote on her official Instagram handle: "First time stepping into a world where fear meets fun. Had a scarily good time sharing the screen with @bajpayee.manoj in POLICE STATION MEIN BHOOT, directed by the maverick @RGVzoomin."

Actress Genelia Deshmukh has started working on her next film *Gunmaaster G9* starring Emraan Hashmi and tagged it as "new beginnings."

Genelia offered a



IAN5

Actor Harshvardhan Rane believes that discipline is about making the right choices, even when temptations are right in front of you.

Sharing a candid fitness moment on his Instagram stories, the actor said, "Moral of the story hai aapke life main, plate main bahut kuch aayega... jaisai ki yeh," as he panned the camera towards a plate of French fries.

He then added that one must learn to avoid distractions and choose what truly works for them.

Harshvardhan was heard saying: "But aapko avoid karna hai aur kaam ki cheezein khaani hai." The actor also shared a glimpse of himself sweating it out in five-degree weather during the shoot of his upcoming film *Silaa* in Vietnam.

He captioned the clip: "Post pickup workout, post workout cardio, post cardio dinner, 5 degree post #vietnam



Fitness mantra by Harshvardhan

#silaa the film."

Talking about *Silaa*, the actor will be seen sharing screen space with Sadia Khatteeb and Bigg Boss 18 winner Karanveer Mehra, who will play the antagonist in the project. Touted to be an intense action romance with layered characters and high-stakes drama, *Silaa* has been presented by Zee Studios.

Produced by Omung Kumar, Umesh KR Bansal, Pragati Deshmukh, Himanshu Tiwari, Ajay Singh, Dhananjay Singh, Abhishek Ankur, and Captain Rahul Bali, under the banners of Blue Lotus Pictures, Stark Entertainment, and Innovations India, the movie has been co-produced by Rahhat Shah Kazmi.

IAN5

OLLYWOOD ROUNDUP

Bara Badhu teaser sets tone for an engaging storytelling

Bhubaneswar: The teaser of the upcoming Odia film *Bara Badhu* was released last week on the Amara Muzic YouTube channel, giving audiences a glimpse into a story that explores marriage and employment through a fresh and engaging narrative.

Directed by Beeswaranjan, the multi-starrer film presents a unique take on how personal relationships, social expectations, and career aspirations intersect in contemporary society. The teaser hints at emotional conflicts, romance, humour, and realism, setting the tone for a socially rooted yet entertaining cinematic experience.

The movie features an ensemble cast including Sivani Sangita, Sailendra Samantaray, Suryamayee Moha-



patra, Hara Rath, Subhasis Sharma, Jayshree Sarangi and Bhaswati Basu. The film is produced under the banner of The Useful Garbage Creations, in association with Country Boyz Studios and Sharpline Film Pvt. Ltd., and is presented by Chandra Mani. Beeswaranjan and Sushil Kumar Mishra serve as co-producer of the movie to be released February 13.

Apekha to hit screens Feb 6



Bhubaneswar: New Odia Horror film *Apekha*, produced under the banner of Studio 3sixty5, unveiled its audio album and official trailer recently.

Produced by K. Tamanna, written,

scripted, and directed by Anand Kumar, the movie stars young actors Sarthak-Shubhangi and Soumya-Bandana in lead roles. Bikash Das, Pradeep Debata, Shakti Baral, Pushpa Panda, Aliva Das, Aishwarya, and Guddu play other key roles.

Baidyanath Dash has scored the music while Human Sagar, Aseema Panda, Ipsita Sahu, and Umakanta Barik lent voice to the songs. Dialogues are penned by Ashutosh Barik while Ajit Dash is the DoP.

Pari set for Jan 30 release

Bhubaneswar: The much-anticipated *Pari*'s music and trailer unveiled recently ahead of its release January 30.

Produced and written by Sanjay Mohnaty, the movie is directed by Tripati Kumar Sahu. Pari delves into a deeply disturbing yet relevant issue—the rising cases of sexual abuse against children. The film portrays the heartbreaking journey of a young, innocent girl whose dreams are brutally shattered by inhuman acts. Through its narrative, *Pari* questions a society where power, money, and politics often silence the voices of victims and their families.

Rajani Ranjan has written the dialogues while film's music is composed by Japani Bhai. Pramod Parida has penned the lyrics

Jyoti Ranjan Nayak and Anuradha Panigrahi are playing lead roles in the movie.



Murabi trailer out

Bhubaneswar: Mentis Films has officially released the trailer of its upcoming venture *Murabi*, a deeply emotional and family-centric drama that explores generational values, leadership, and the strength of familial bonds.

Murabi revolves around the concept of the "Murabi"—the head of a family who binds everyone together, instills discipline, and commands respect. The film presents a powerful contrast between two family patriarchs: one who believes in strict discipline and rigid rules, and another who leads with love, compassion, and freedom.

Produced by National Film Award winners Vishal Mourya and Debi Prasad Lenka, the film has Sumanta Bairagi and



Agnimitra Behera as co-producers.

Peenakee Singh and Sisir Kumar Sahu have directed the movie while its screenplay, dialogues, and lyrics are written by P. Santosh. Agnimitra Behera has scored the music.

Kuna Tripathy, Jayaprakash Das, Bijayini Mishra, Ankita Mohanty, BM Baishali, Udit Guru, and Prasenjeet are playing

important roles in the movie.

The official trailer is currently streaming on the Mentis Films YouTube channel and has been receiving positive responses from viewers.

Murabi is scheduled for a theatrical release on April 14, 2026.

PNN

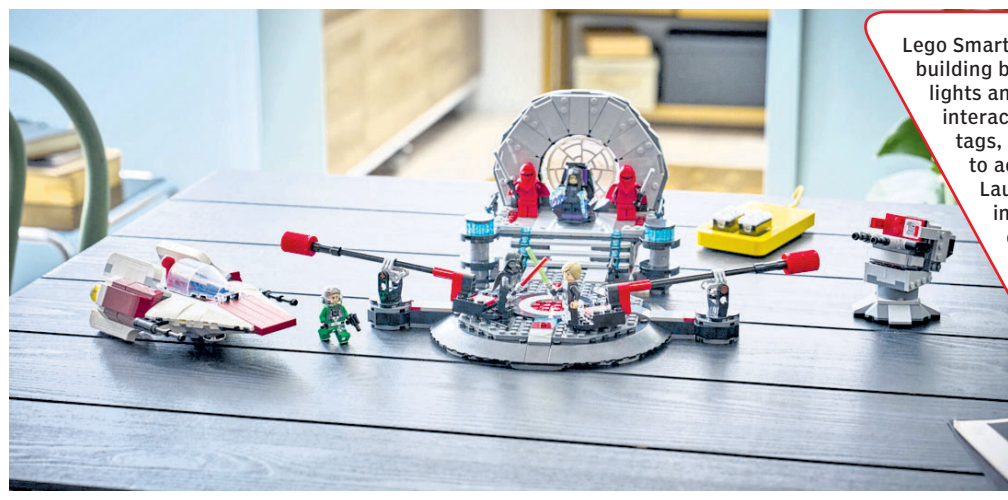
The coolest gadgets of 2026

2026 has already emerged as a landmark year for consumer technology, marked by bold experimentation and imaginative design. From futuristic robots and playful AI companions to practical tools built for creators and everyday users, this year's gadgets blur the line between fun and function. Technology is no longer just about performance; it's about personality, sustainability, and emotional connection. Below are the top five gadgets launched in 2026 that truly stand out for being weird, cute, useful, and undeniably powerful.



SWEEKAR

Sweekar feels like a nostalgic throwback with a futuristic twist. Inspired by classic virtual pets like Tamagotchi, this AI-powered device starts life as a small egg and gradually evolves into a pocket-sized companion as you interact with it. Users can feed Sweekar, talk to it, dress it up, and watch its personality develop through a companion app. What makes it unique is its physical evolution; Sweekar actually grows and changes form over time. Its emotional responsiveness and learning ability make it more than just a gadget; it feels like a tiny robot friend that adapts to your habits and moods. Cute, engaging and surprisingly comforting, Sweekar represents a new era of emotionally aware consumer tech.



LEGO SMART BRICK

Lego Smart Brick brings digital magic into the physical world of building blocks. These smart bricks are embedded with sensors, lights and sound capabilities that respond to movement and interaction. When paired with Smart Minifigures and tags, the bricks light up, produce sounds and react to actions like clapping or blowing out candles. Launching as part of Lego's smart playsets in March 2026, this innovation blends creativity, storytelling and technology, making playtime more immersive for children while still appealing to nostalgic adults.

SOLAR MARS BOT

Sustainability meets robotics with the Solar Mars Bot, an autonomous solar-powered rover designed by Jackery. This quirky robot moves around on its own, tracking the sun throughout the day to maximize energy collection. Equipped with a massive 5 kWh battery and multiple output ports, it can charge phones, laptops, appliances and even emergency equipment. Whether used in backyards, campsites, or disaster zones, Solar Mars Bot turns renewable energy into a mobile, intelligent power station. Its unusual design may look futuristic, but its real value lies in its practicality and eco-friendly purpose.



XREAL 1S AR GLASSES

Augmented reality goes mainstream with the XREAL 1S AR Glasses. Lightweight and stylish, these glasses project a virtual screen that can appear as large as 500 inches right in front of your eyes. Connected via USB-C to smartphones, laptops, or gaming consoles, they create immersive workspaces, personal cinemas, or gaming environments without the bulk of traditional headsets. XREAL 1S strikes a balance between affordability and high-end performance, making AR technology accessible to everyday users.

DJI OSMO ACTION 6

Rounding out the list is the DJI Osmo Action 6, a compact yet powerful action camera built for creators and adventurers. With enhanced low-light performance, support for 8K and advanced 4K video, and wireless microphone compatibility, it delivers professional-quality footage in a rugged, portable body. Its improved battery life and durability make it ideal for travel, sports, and filmmaking on the go.



Marching Time

From a modest constitutional ceremony in 1950 to a global spectacle of power and culture, the Republic Day parade has evolved alongside the Indian Republic itself

Every January morning, as winter fog lifts slowly from Delhi's ceremonial boulevard, the Republic assembles itself in motion. Boots strike the ground in rhythm, colours rise and fall, machines rumble past, and culture rolls forward on wheeled stages. What appears today as a meticulously choreographed spectacle began, seven decades ago, as something far quieter—almost restrained.

Early years

On January 26, 1950, there was no grandeur to overwhelm the moment. At Irwin Stadium, India marked its birth as a republic with dignity rather than display. Dr Rajendra Prasad took the salute, and the new nation, still finding its balance after the trauma of Partition, chose symbolism over spectacle. The parade was not about power; it was about promise. In its early years, the Republic Day parade wandered before it settled. Kingsway Camp, Red Fort, and other venues hosted the ceremony before Rajpath—now Kartavya Path—became its permanent stage in 1955. The choice was poetic. A road once designed to glorify empire was reclaimed by the Republic, its geometry now echoing with Indian footsteps and commands barked in Indian accents.

Military might central

As the years passed, confidence crept into the parade's stride. The 1960s hardened the ceremony's tone. Wars with China and Pakistan altered how the Republic saw itself—and how it wished to be seen. Tanks, artillery and disciplined columns of soldiers were no longer ceremonial symbols; they became declarations. The parade began to speak the language of deterrence and resolve.



Colour, culture and the camera

By the 1970s and 1980s, colour entered the conversation. State tableaux grew larger, brighter, more ambitious. Folk dancers spun stories of regional pride; mythological figures shared space with development narratives. The parade transformed into a moving map of India, offering citizens a compressed, curated vision of a vast country. Unity was no longer just declared—it was performed.



KEY MILESTONES

- 1950: First parade at Irwin Stadium
- 1955: Rajpath becomes permanent venue
- 1965-66: Military emphasis increases
- 1980s: Tableaux expand
- 2022: Rajpath renamed Kartavya Path

Television changed everything. With Doordarshan's broadcasts, the parade crossed barricades and boundaries, entering drawing rooms across the nation. Camera angles mattered. Commentary shaped interpretation. The Republic Day parade became not just a public event but a shared ritual, watched by millions who might never visit the capital.

Face of changing india

In the decades that followed, the parade subtly adapted to a changing India. Liberalisation, global engagement and technological growth softened its edges. Military might remained central, but it shared space with culture, innovation and diplomacy. The chief guest—often a world leader—turned the parade into a message addressed outward as much as inward.

Ritual of reassurance

Today's parade reflects a Republic in transition. Kartavya Path signals a shift from colonial memory to civic responsibility. Tableaux are fewer, themes tighter, messaging more aligned with national priorities. Women march more visibly in uniform; tribal art forms claim the spotlight; technology hums quietly beneath tradition. And yet, beneath the changing choreography, the essence remains unchanged. The Republic Day parade is not merely a show. It is a ritual of reassurance—an annual reminder that the Constitution endures, the state stands, and the idea of India continues its measured march through time.

OP DESK



A file photo of India's first Republic Day parade held at Irwin Stadium, New Delhi in 1950

THE TURNING POINT

The 1960s marked a turning point. After the wars with China (1962) and Pakistan (1965), the parade took on a sharper military edge. Tanks, artillery and flypasts were no longer ceremonial additions but statements of readiness. The armed forces emerged as a central pillar of the Republic, and the parade became a visual reassurance to citizens and adversaries alike