

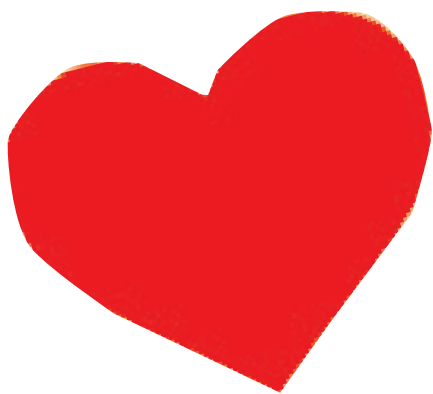
FEBRUARY 01-07 2026

SUNDAY POST

HERE . NOW

COVER STORY

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Grey zone of nuptials



Football coach Gitanjali Khuntia's journey is a powerful story of grit, passion, and quiet excellence. Born in Cuttack, she stepped onto the football field in 1999 at just 13, training alongside boys and fuelled by her father's unwavering belief in her dream of playing for India. The pinnacle of her playing career came with a gold medal at the 2010 South Asian Games. In 2014, Gitanjali took to coaching, where her impact only grew stronger. She played a key role in shaping championship-winning Odisha Under-14, Under-19, and senior teams, and later brought her experience to the national stage as assistant coach of the Indian senior team—continuing to inspire the next generation of footballers

ANISHA KHATUN, OP



Celebrating with the victorious beach soccer team at Khelo India-2026

Day to recharge emotionally

Sundays help me slow down, rest my body, reflect on the week, and reconnect with family and friends, allowing me to recharge emotionally and regain balance before the week ahead.

Starting day with self-reflection

I start my day with meditation and self-reflection, grounding myself in purpose and reminding myself why I coach and what I aim to build with my players in the week ahead.

Peace, play & perspective

I enjoy peaceful moments, listening to music, watching football, and studying the game. These habits recharge my creativity, sharpen my understanding, and keep me inspired and motivated daily.

Strength rooted in family bond

Family time matters deeply to me; staying connected keeps me emotionally strong and mentally balanced, and that stability positively reflects in my coaching and the way I guide my players.



With students

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

All I ask is a chance to prove money can't make me happy.

A female magician made her boyfriend vanish. How? By asking for a commitment.

Is Google male or female? Female, because it doesn't let you finish a sentence before making a suggestion.

If ignorance is bliss, you must be the happiest person on earth.

Future looks bright

Sir, This refers to the Bollywood roundup section of last week's Sunday POST. With updates on four upcoming movies, the future of Odia cinema looks bright as the industry is undergoing a steady and promising transformation. In recent years, Odia films have moved beyond routine formulas and are exploring fresh themes rooted in culture, realism, and contemporary social issues. Young filmmakers are experimenting with strong storytelling, meaningful scripts, and improved technical quality, which has helped Odia cinema gain wider recognition. Advancements in digital technology, better cinematography, and professional sound design have raised production standards. The rise of OTT platforms has also opened new avenues for Odia filmmakers to showcase their work to national and global audiences, reducing dependence on traditional theatrical releases. Films are now reaching viewers beyond Odisha, creating a stronger identity for the industry. Audience preferences are changing as well. Viewers are appreciating content-driven cinema over star-driven films, encouraging creators to focus on originality. With a rich cultural heritage, talented artists, and growing creative freedom, Odia cinema is poised for a bright and dynamic future, contributing meaningfully to Indian cinema as a whole.

SAMARPITA SAHOO, ROURKELA

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

Features.orissapost@gmail.com B-15, Industrial Estate, Rasulgarh, Bhubaneswar - 751010, Orissa. Phone (0674) 2549982, 2549948



Grey zone of nuptials

For some, parallel marriage offers stability without proximity and legal security without daily intimacy. For others, it becomes a negotiated response to career demands, emotional incompatibility, or social pressure to remain married despite a fractured partnership. The marriage exists, but the shared life does not

of compromise, circumstance, and survival. For some, it offers stability without proximity, legal security without daily intimacy. For others, it becomes a negotiated response to career demands, emotional incompatibility, or social pressure to remain married despite a fractured partnership. The marriage exists, but the shared life does not.

What makes parallel marriage unsettling is not its structure, but its implications. It exposes how marriage can persist as a legal contract even when companionship fades. It challenges the belief that togetherness is the core of commitment, replacing it with coexistence at a distance. Critics view it as a hollow arrangement that delays honest separation, while supporters argue it allows autonomy without the upheaval of divorce.

As societies grapple with changing expectations of partnership, parallel marriage occupies a grey zone, neither fully united nor formally ended. It forces a

witnessing a quiet but growing emotional phenomenon in his clinical practice. “A 42-year-old patient recently told me: ‘Doctor, we’re not fighting anymore. We’re just... not anything anymore.’ He and his wife share a home, coordinate schedules, attend family functions, but live emotionally separate lives. This is what I call a ‘parallel marriage,’ and I’m seeing it more often in my practice.”

According to Dr Mishra, fear is one of the strongest forces sustaining such marriages.



family settings common in Odisha, couples often perform the marriage publicly while living parallel inner lives.

Dr Mishra expresses deep concern about the long-term mental health impact. “Loneliness while married is uniquely painful.” He explains that emotional disconnection creates “attachment hunger,” leading to depression, sleep disturbances and loss of interest in life. Over time, identity erodes. “Patients tell me they know their roles, wife, mother, daughter-in-law, but have forgotten what genuinely makes them happy.” The stress often turns physical: unexplained headaches, digestive problems, hypertension. “Children sense the emotional vacuum, even when parents think they’re hiding it well.”

While Dr Mishra acknowledges rare cases where couples consciously redefine marriage with mutual respect and peace, he cautions that most parallel marriages are not deliberate choices. “They’re slow surrenders.” Avoidance, he warns, does not heal wounds. “Like ignoring a painful tooth, the decay continues underneath.” Many patients confront decades of suppressed grief later in life, sometimes as severe depression. “They mourn not just the marriage, but years spent living half-lives.”

His message is clear: “Marriage should enhance life, not be endured.” Silent suffering, he says, is not strength. “We get one life. Living it authentically, even through difficult changes, isn’t selfish. It’s necessary. And you don’t have to decide alone. Professional support can help navigate these territories with clarity and compassion,” Dr Mishra signs off.



difficult question into the open: if marriage can survive without shared lives, what, then, truly defines being married?

To better understand these questions, **Sunday POST** engaged with voices from diverse walks of life, inviting them to share their perspectives.

‘Most parallel marriages are not deliberate choices’

Professor Dr Suvendu Mishra, from the PG Department of Psychiatry at IMS & SUM Hospital, Bhubaneswar, says he is

“Fear of social stigma, divorce still carries judgment in our community. Fear of financial instability, especially for women who’ve left careers. Fear of hurting children or aging parents,” he says.

“One patient confided, ‘My mother’s health is fragile. How can I add this stress?’ Emotional exhaustion is another factor. After years of conflict, many couples simply run out of emotional energy. Staying put, even unhappily, feels easier than the upheaval of separation,” shares the psychiatrist.

In many cases, hope becomes postponement, decisions delayed with timelines like “just until the children finish their boards” or “just until retirement.” In joint

‘It’s a lifeboat, not the voyage’

The idea of parallel marriage sits at a tense crossroads between tradition and modernity. **Rupesvar Damodar Das**, Member of the ISKCON India Scholar Board, explains, “In the modern cultural term, the word ‘marriage’ has become an abstraction...treated as a contract of emotional convenience.”

In contrast, traditional Vedic culture does not view marriage as a negotiable arrangement but as a lifelong spiritual duty.



ANISHA KHATUN, OP

By law, they are husband and wife. In life, they move on separate tracks. Two homes, two routines, two independent identities, yet one legal bond holds them together. This is the reality of parallel marriage, a marital arrangement in which a man and a woman remain legally married while choosing to live separate, self-governed lives.

Parallel marriage does not emerge from romance or rebellion alone; it grows out

From this lens, parallel marriage neither celebrates separation nor endorses emotional withdrawal; instead, it resists what Das calls the deeper moral rupture caused by divorce. While it conflicts with the ideal of togetherness, it aligns with the traditional insistence on permanence and responsibility.

In societies where marriage is inseparable from family, community, and ritual life, legally married but separately living couples create visible cultural tension. On the surface, such arrangements resemble broken homes. Yet Das argues that this perception ignores cultural realism. Citing Manu (9.46), he notes, “na nisk-raya-visargabhyam bhartur bharya vimucyate: Neither by financial settlement nor by abandonment is a wife separated from her husband.” Within this framework, separation without dissolution preserves ritual identity, social order, and moral accountability. The husband continues to perform his duty of maintenance and dignity, while the wife retains her social and spiritual position. As Das puts it, abandoning responsibility would mean “taking the benefits of status without paying the price of responsibility.” The cultural consequence, therefore, is not chaos but an uneasy compromise, one that prioritises dharma over emotional idealism.

Whether parallel marriage is a modern adaptation or a sign of erosion depends on perspective. While critics see hypocrisy and emotional emptiness, Das rejects this outright: “Hypocrisy is the pretense of a virtue one does not possess. Parallel marriage is the honest and rational admission of an incompatibility, paired with the refusal to break a promise made before God.” Drawing from Srila Prabhupada’s realism, “If they disagree, they may live separately, but there cannot be divorce”, parallel marriage emerges as a reluctant adaptation, not a celebration of distance. It signals less the death of cultural values and more a struggle to preserve responsibility, spiritual sanity and vows in an age where permanence itself is under threat.

“Let us be honest: parallel marriage is a lifeboat, not the voyage. The Vedic ideal of total unity remains the only standard worthy of us. If we truly lived it, no such ‘strategies’ would be needed. But if we cannot climb together, let us walk sep-



arately, without cutting the rope. Separation is a retreat for sanity; divorce is a surrender of honor,” Das concludes.

‘I don’t see emotional detachment as freedom’

Sushovita Tripathy, a website designer and a bride-to-be, believes marriage is fundamentally about shared living rather than parallel existence.

“To me, marriage means a shared life. I imagine growing together, sharing routines, responsibilities, joys, and even disagreements,” she says.

While she values individuality, she feels it should never replace emotional closeness. “Independence and personal space are important, but they should exist within togetherness, not replace it. I believe marriage works best when two individuals choose to walk side by side, not on parallel tracks. Personal growth matters, but emotional presence matters more.”

On the idea of a legally committed but emotionally independent marriage, Su-



shovita is candid. “I would find it emotionally distant rather than empowering,” she admits. At the same time, she acknowledges the realities that push couples toward such arrangements. “I understand why some couples choose this path, especially to avoid conflict or social disruption, or due to financial constraints.” However, she draws a clear emotional boundary. “I don’t see emotional disengagement as freedom. A marriage without emotional connection feels more like coexistence than partnership.” Still, she refrains from moral judgment. “I don’t judge couples who choose it consciously; for some, it may offer peace instead of constant turmoil.”

For Sushovita, companionship lies at the heart of marriage. “I expect companionship that includes honest communication, shared decision-making, and emotional availability,” she says. Togetherness, in her view, is rooted in emotional safety. “It means being able to talk openly, rely on each other, and feel emotionally safe.” Independence, she stresses, should strengthen the bond, not weaken it. “I draw the line when independence turns into emotional absence, when conversations disappear, support fades, and life is lived separately despite being married.” At that point, she feels, “the bond risks becoming a formality rather than a living relationship.”

‘Marriage is not a contract, it carries legal sanctity’

Ipsita Das, a Research Scholar at the KIIT School of Law, views parallel marriage through the lens of constitutional liberty, while remaining personally critical of the practice. “According to me, parallel marriage comes under the ambit of personal liberty guaranteed under Article 21 of the Indian Constitution,” she says. “So basically, parallel marriage as a choice is constitutionally protected.” However, she draws a sharp distinction



between individual choice and social expectation. “Parallel marriage as a norm enforced by society is still a critical point for evaluation.”

Despite recognising its constitutional protection, Ipsita does not support parallel marriage as a marital model. “I don’t support this because I feel marriage is not just a contract; it carries legal sanctity,” she states. For her, living separately after marriage undermines the emotional foundation of the institution. “Living separately after marriage creates an emotional detachment from the spouse,” she adds, pointing to the psychological and relational cost of sustained distance.

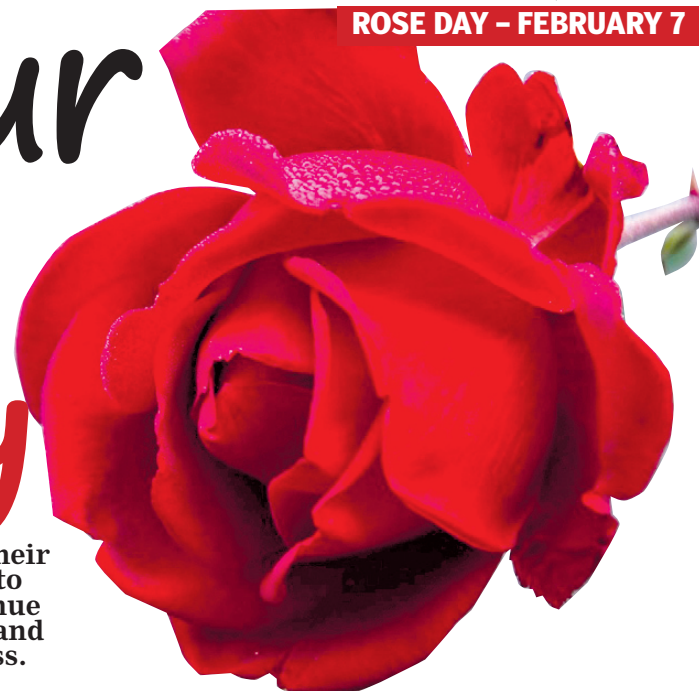
Ipsita’s understanding of marriage is rooted not in formality, but in human connection. “Marriage is companionship rooted in equality, dignity, and consent, everything else is secondary,” she says. In her view, the essence of marriage lies in shared emotional presence and mutual respect, rather than mere legal status. While she acknowledges that the Constitution protects an individual’s right to choose how they live their married life, she cautions against redefining marriage in ways that normalise emotional withdrawal.

For Ipsita, the concern is not legality but meaning. Recognising parallel marriage as a personal choice does not automatically make it a healthy or desirable model for relationships. She believes that when separation becomes routine within marriage, it risks hollowing out the very values. She believes that emotional connection, not legal continuity alone, defines the sanctity of marriage.



Valentine Week, or love week, officially kicks off with Rose Day, marking the start of a seven-day celebration leading up to Valentine's Day February 14. This day sets the tone for the week, where individuals exchange roses to express feelings of love, admiration, or friendship

What your roses truly say



ROSE DAY - FEBRUARY 7

Roses are not just visually stunning; they carry a language of their own. Each colour tells a unique story, from love and passion to friendship and admiration. This Rose Day, selecting the right hue allows you to communicate emotions, celebrate relationships, and convey heartfelt messages that words alone may fail to express.

Peach rose

Peach roses represent modesty, sincerity, and genuine commitment. They are exchanged as gestures of gratitude, respect, and understated affection. Often given between lovers or close friends, peach roses convey heartfelt appreciation and honesty, making them an elegant and subtle expression of emotion without overwhelming intensity.



White rose

White roses signify purity, innocence, and new beginnings. They are associated with respect, honour, and remembrance, often used in weddings or spiritual ceremonies. A white rose expresses love that is sincere, untainted, and enduring, making it ideal for celebrating meaningful bonds or marking sacred moments in life.



Red rose

Red roses are the ultimate symbol of love, passion, and romantic devotion. They represent deep affection, desire, and heartfelt commitment. Often given during proposals, anniversaries, or special romantic occasions, red roses convey emotions that words sometimes cannot, making them timeless and universally recognised as a symbol of romance.



Pink rose

Pink roses symbolise elegance, femininity, grace, and admiration. Lighter shades convey sweetness and gratitude, while deeper pinks reflect appreciation and recognition. They are perfect for expressing admiration toward someone's charm, beauty, or accomplishments, and are ideal for family, friends, or colleagues.



Yellow rose

Yellow roses convey friendship, happiness, warmth, and positivity. They are perfect for expressing appreciation and joy in platonic relationships. Modern interpretations celebrate yellow roses as a cheerful and optimistic gesture, removing older associations with jealousy, and making them ideal for friends and loved ones who bring light into your life.



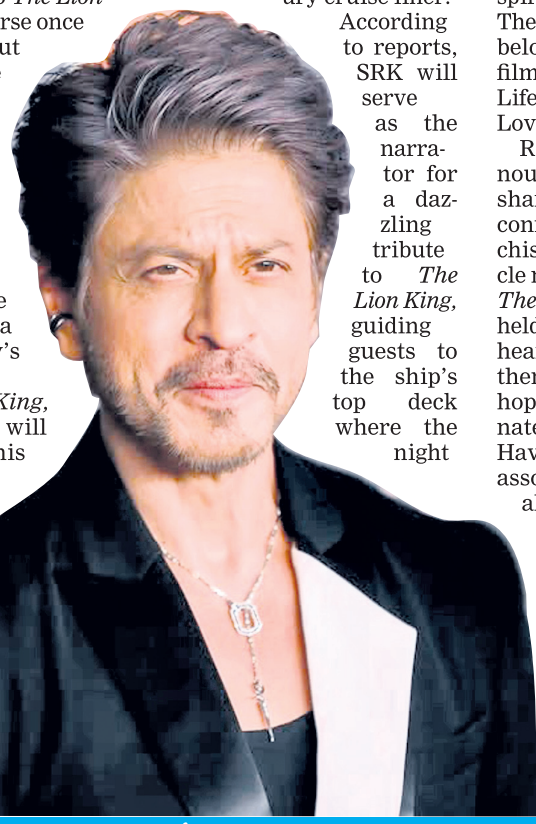
Purple rose

Purple and lavender roses represent enchantment, fascination, and mystery. They are historically linked to royalty and convey admiration, awe, and even love at first sight. Pale lavender roses, in particular, signify magical attraction, making them a thoughtful choice for someone who inspires wonder or admiration in your life.



SRK's full-circle moment

Bollywood superstar Shah Rukh Khan is set to return to *The Lion King* universe once again, but this time not on the big screen. Years after winning hearts as the Hindi voice of Mufasa in Disney's live-action *The Lion King*, the actor will now lend his iconic voice to



narrate a spectacular fireworks show aboard a luxury cruise liner. According to reports, SRK will serve as the narrator for a dazzling tribute to *The Lion King*, guiding guests to the ship's top deck where the night sky will come alive with an extravagant display inspired by the Pride Lands. The show will also feature beloved songs from the film, including Circle of Life and Can You Feel the Love Tonight. Reacting to the announcement, Shah Rukh shared his emotional connection with the franchise, calling it a "full-circle moment." He said that *The Lion King* has always held a special place in his heart, with its timeless themes of bravery and hope continuing to resonate across generations. Having previously been associated with the story along with his family, he described this new narration as a true passion project. The announcement comes weeks after the actor was spotted at a dubbing studio in Mumbai, sparking curiosity at the time.

AGENCIES

Papon debuts in Odia music

Playback singer Papon, who is known for *Bulleya*, *Jiyein Kyun*, *Moh Moh Ke Dhaage* and others, has made his debut in Odia music with his new track *Kuni Kuni*. The romantic melody beautifully captures love, longing, and tender emotions.

Kuni Kuni from the upcoming Odia film *Bara Badhu*, directed by Beeswaranjan, is a heartfelt composition where soft melodies meet poetic lyrics, creating a soothing musical experience. Opening up about singing in Odia for the first time, Papon shared that the experience was both new and enriching for him. Coming from Assam, where music is deeply rooted in emotion and storytelling, adapting to the Odia dialect required a thoughtful understanding of its pronunciation, rhythm and cultural nuances. He described Odia as a language with a gentle flow and emotional softness, which allowed him to connect organically with the song and its sen-

timent. The lyrics for the song have been furnished by Sunil Parida with music composed by Bharat-Hitarth.

He said, "Singing in Odia was a completely new experience for me. Being from Assam, I was excited to explore a different linguistic and musical space. Odia has a beautiful emotional depth, and once I understood the dialect and its nuances, the song began to flow very naturally. It helped me express romance in a very pure and honest way".

IAN S



Shikar goes on floors

Bhubaneswar: The much-awaited Odia film *Shikar* officially began its journey with a grand muhurat ceremony held recently at the Balunkeshwar Temple premises here in Nayapalli. The film is produced by Sachikanta Jena in collaboration with Prakash Films and Moon TV Movies, with music

support from Siddharth Music.

The film is directed by Mrutyunjaya Sahoo and stars Amlan Das, Elina Samantaray, Ankit, and Supriya Nayak in key roles.

Shikar is a suspense thriller centered on a shocking murder that raises gripping questions about identity, motive,

and deception. As the narrative unfolds, several characters become entangled in a web of mystery, keeping viewers guessing until the climax. Emotional family elements add depth to the thrilling storyline.

While Baidyanath Dash scores the music, choreography is taken care of by Amit Nayak. Pratap Raut is the DoP of the movie.

Buzz around Kiara's latest post

Actress Kiara Advani, recently shared a video on social media flaunting her Thursday mood, where she was seen looking gorgeous in a close-up video.

The actress flaunted her bright bold matte red lip shade that stood out prominently. But fans were very quick to take to her comments section and call it a 'lip filler'.

While one fan wrote, "Lip Filler," another wrote, "obviously it's a filler." Another fan wrote, "lips ruined." The actress dressed in a white outfit with her hair styled in loose waves, captioned the video as, '#ThursdayMood.'

A lot many other fans flooded the comments section with compliments too.

Talking about Kiara, the year 2025 seemed to be extremely fine for her on both her personal and professional fronts. On the personal front, the actress welcomed her first baby, a girl who she has christened as Saraaha, and on the professional aspect, the actress received great reviews for her bikini look in her movie *War 2*.

December 31, Kiara had shared a picture of a beautiful letter penned by her mother just before the actress resumed with her professional commitments after her sabbatical post motherhood.

The note read, "My darling Kiara, Tomorrow you walk back onto set for the 1st time after bringing our little angel into this world and returning with a bang."

IAN S



Fighting antibiotic resistance with robotic chemistry



Robotic chemistry is changing how quickly scientists can hunt for new antibiotics—just in time for a world where old drugs are steadily losing their bite. By automating the creation and testing of metal-based compounds, researchers have uncovered a fresh class of antibiotic candidates that kill dangerous bacteria while sparing human cells, all at a speed that would have been impossible a few years ago.

That speed matters. Across hospitals, infections once cleared with routine prescriptions now linger as bacteria evolve resistance faster than new medicines reach the clinic. The bottleneck has not been a lack of ideas, but the time it takes to explore them.

Breakthrough findings

A team led by Angelo Frei at the University of York tackled that problem by letting robots do the chemistry. Instead of synthesizing one molecule at a time, the lab automated dozens of reactions to run in parallel. In a single week, the researchers produced more than 700 previously unexplored metal-containing compounds—an output that would normally take months of manual work.

Role of metals

Metals are an unconventional choice in antibiotic discovery. Most existing antibiotics are carbon-based and often share similar shapes, making it easier for bacteria to evolve ways to block them. Metal complexes, by contrast, have rigid three-dimensional structures built around

a central metal atom. These shapes present bacteria with unfamiliar contact points, potentially allowing the compounds to slip past common resistance mechanisms.

The downside is safety. Metals have a reputation for toxicity, so any promising compound must show that it harms microbes far more than human cells. To keep pace without cutting corners, the York team used a “direct-to-biology” strategy. They tested crude reaction mixtures—without time-consuming purification—directly against bacteria and human cells, looking for strong antibacterial activity paired with minimal human cell damage.

“By combining smart ‘click’ chemistry with automation, we have demonstrated that we can explore vast, untapped areas of chemical space at unprecedented speed,” said Dr. Frei.

From hundreds of fast screens, six lead

candidates stood out.

When the researchers rebuilt and purified those compounds, the effects held up.

Across hospitals, infections once cleared with routine prescriptions now linger as bacteria evolve resistance faster than new medicines reach the clinic. A team led by Angelo Frei at the University of York tackled that problem by letting robots do the chemistry

A standout metal compound

One iridium-based complex emerged as the star performer, shutting down the growth of *Staphylococcus aureus* in lab tests, including strains related to methicillin-resistant *S. aureus* (MRSA). Human cells, meanwhile, remained largely unharmed, giving the compound a high therapeutic index—the crucial gap between effective and toxic doses.

Not all bacteria were equally vulnerable. Gram-negative species like *Escherichia coli*, which have an extra outer membrane that blocks many drugs, barely slowed down. When researchers added a

membrane-loosening helper molecule, activity improved, pointing to the next design challenge: engineering metal complexes that can cross that barrier on their own.

Benefits of metal-based antibiotics

One advantage of metal-based antibiotics is flexibility. The metal center can change charge and bind essential bacterial proteins, disrupting growth in multiple ways. The surrounding molecules control how the compound enters cells and where it accumulates, shaping both effectiveness and safety. Hitting bacteria on several fronts may also slow the rise of resistance—though researchers caution that evolution never stops, and long-term monitoring will be essential.

Skepticism around metal medicines remains, but evidence is softening it. Previous analyses have shown that many metal complexes kill bacteria without being more toxic than traditional organic drugs. The York team added additional safeguards, testing promising compounds against human cells and red blood cells early on. Still, they emphasize that lab screens are only the beginning. Animal studies and careful dosing will be needed to understand how these metals behave inside real bodies.

Beyond any single compound, the bigger breakthrough may be methodological. Global health agencies warn that antimicrobial resistance already undermines routine medical care, contributing to more than a million deaths worldwide each year.

What Frei has to say

Frei’s team argues that robotics and smart chemistry can turn antibiotic discovery from a slow, serial process into a rapid search through vast chemical space.

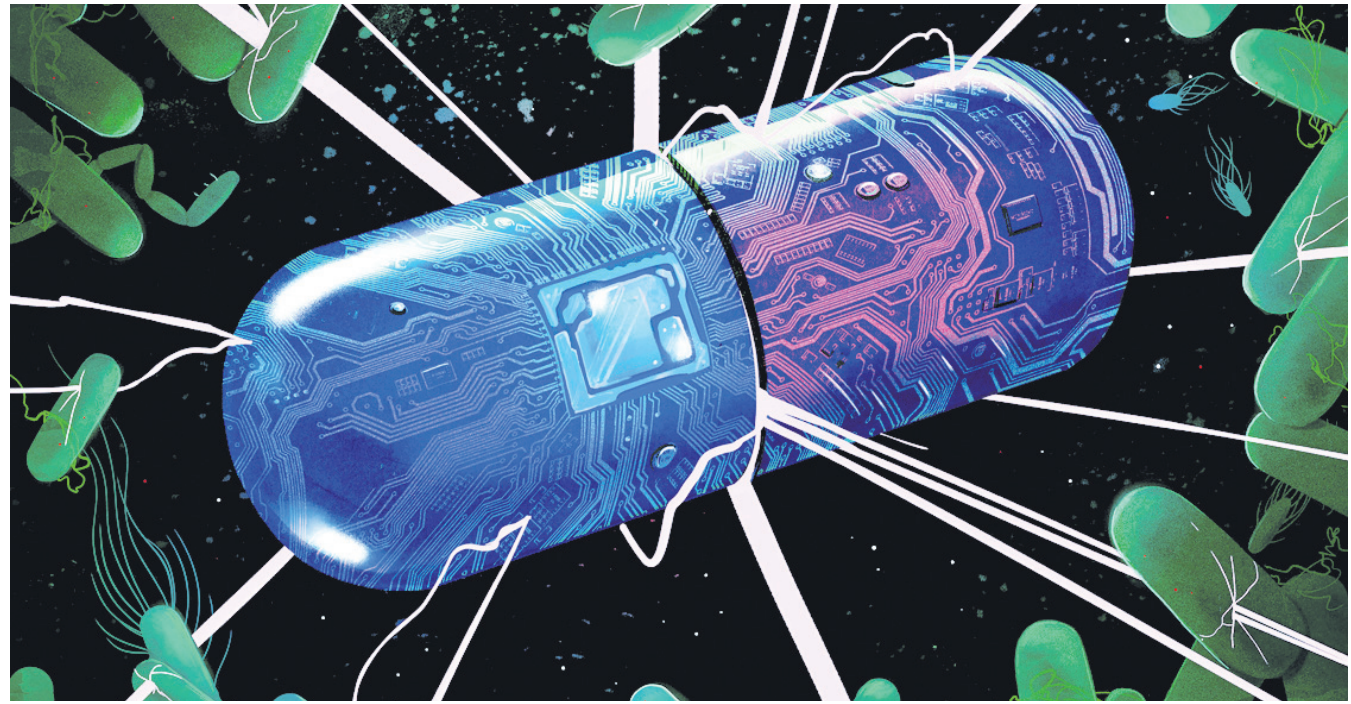
“We aren’t just looking for one drug,” Frei said, adding “We’re showing that we can find the needle in the haystack much faster.”

If robotic chemistry can keep producing safe candidates, it may also help industry revisit antibiotics that once seemed too slow.

A new pace

Together, robotics and metal chemistry gave scientists a faster way to find bacterial killers while watching for harm.

The work now needs deeper testing, including animal studies and careful design for hard-to-enter bacteria, before any patient benefit appears.



For Indigenous peoples, America was never discovered—it was home. For the Vikings, it was a distant shore briefly explored. For Columbus and the Europeans who followed, it was the beginning of an age of expansion that reshaped the modern world, for better and for worse

The question “Who discovered America?” sounds simple, almost textbook-easy. Many of us were taught one confident answer: Christopher Columbus, 1492. Yet history, when examined closely, rarely fits into neat boxes. The discovery of America is not a single moment or a single man’s achievement—it is a layered story of ancient migrations, bold voyages, cultural encounters, and historical storytelling shaped by power and perspective.

America before it was “discovered”

Long before European ships crossed the Atlantic, America was already home to thriving civilizations. Archaeological and genetic evidence shows that the first humans arrived in the Americas at least 15,000–20,000 years ago, migrating from Asia via the Bering land bridge during the Ice Age.

Over millennia, these early settlers spread across North and South America, building complex societies. The Maya developed advanced astronomy and mathematics; the Aztecs built vast urban centers like Tenochtitlán; the Inca constructed an empire linked by sophisticated road systems across the Andes. In North America, diverse Indigenous nations lived in harmony with their environments, each with distinct languages, cultures, and governance systems.

From this perspective, the very idea of “discovering” America is misleading. A land already inhabited, named, and known by millions cannot truly be discovered—it can only be encountered by outsiders.

The Vikings: First known visitors from Europe

Centuries before Columbus, Norse explorers from Scandinavia reached North America. Around the year 1000 CE, Leif Erikson, son of Erik the Red, sailed west from Greenland and landed in a place he called Vinland—believed to be in present-day Newfoundland, Canada.

Archaeological evidence at L’Anse aux Meadows confirms the presence of a Viking settlement, making the Norse the first known Europeans to set foot on the American continent. However, their stay was brief. Conflicts with Indigenous peoples and the logistical challenges of long-distance travel prevented permanent settlement.

While the Vikings technically “discovered” America from a European standpoint, their voyages did not lead to sustained contact or lasting historical impact. As a result, their achievement faded into sagas rather than reshaping world history.

Columbus and the turning point of 1492

Christopher Columbus did not set out to discover a new continent. Sponsored by the Spanish crown, his goal was to find a westward sea route to Asia. When he reached the Caribbean in 1492, he believed he had arrived in the Indies, a belief he maintained until his death. Columbus never set foot on the mainland of North



Christopher Columbus

Representative image of a Viking warrior

Who discovered America?

A tale of forgotten footprints

America, yet his voyages marked a historic turning point. They initiated sustained contact between Europe and the Americas, triggering what historians call the Columbian Exchange—the transfer of crops, animals, people, diseases, and ideas across continents.

This encounter reshaped the world. European powers soon followed, leading to colonization, the spread of Christianity, global trade networks, and profound consequences for Indigenous populations, including displacement, disease, and cultural destruction. Columbus’s “discovery” matters not because he was first, but because his arrival changed the course of global history.

Why Columbus got credit

If others came before, why is Columbus so often credited with discovering America? The answer lies in documentation, timing, and power. Columbus’s voyages occurred during the rise of European empires, printing technology, and centralized nation-states capable of recording, promoting, and acting on discoveries.

Spain aggressively claimed new territories, and Columbus became a symbol of exploration, ambition, and empire. Over time, textbooks, national narratives, and holidays reinforced his status, often overlooking Indigenous peoples and earlier explorers.

In the United States especially, Columbus was celebrated as a heroic figure, partly because his story fit a narrative of bold beginnings. Only in recent decades have his

torians and educators begun to challenge this simplified version of history and present a more inclusive account.

Rethinking discovery in the Modern Age

Today, many scholars argue that asking “Who discovered America?” is the wrong question. A better question might be: When did different peoples come to know America, and what followed from those encounters?

Discovery is not just about arrival; it is about recognition, interaction, and consequence. For Indigenous peoples, America was never discovered—it was home. For the Vikings, it was a distant shore briefly explored. For Columbus and the Europeans who followed, it was the beginning of an age of expansion that reshaped the modern world, for better and for worse.

Understanding this layered history allows us to move beyond myths and toward a more honest view of the past—one that acknowledges exploration, innovation, and courage, while also recognizing loss, resilience, and voices long ignored.

America was not discovered in a single year by a single man

It was peopled, explored, encountered, and re-encountered across thousands of years. The real story lies not in claiming first place, but in understanding how history is remembered—and whose stories we choose to tell.

OP DESK



A reconstruction of the Viking settlement in Newfoundland