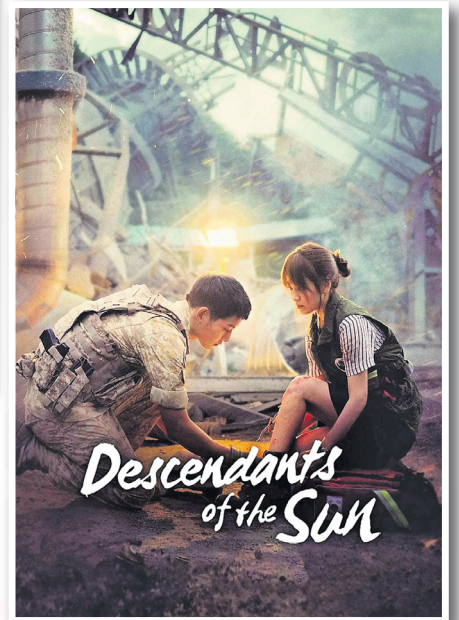
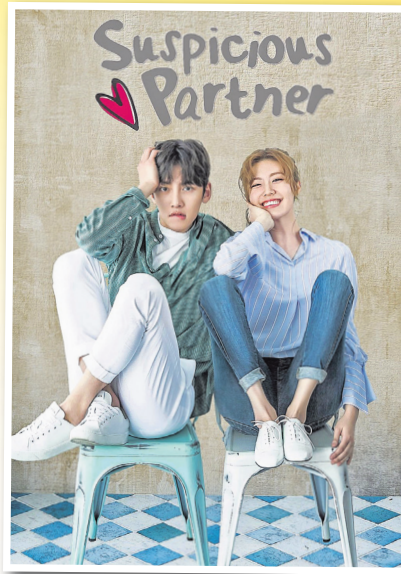


FEBRUARY 15-21 2026

# SUNDAY POST

HERE . NOW



# The **K**-Wave

COVER STORY

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MX VDESI  
Hospital  
Ship  
HINDI

MX VDESI  
MELTING  
HEART  
HINDI





Indie filmmaker Dibyaranjan Bhuyan began his journey in 2021, driven by passion and creative vision. Collaborating with his college peers, he built a dedicated team across departments, honing his craft through hands-on experience and continuous experimentation. He has written, directed, edited, and acted in short films such as 'Predator' and 'The Red Tie'. His other works include 'The Last Trial', 'Smoke', and 'Juli' reflecting his evolving storytelling style and technical growth. He will next serve as Assistant Director for the upcoming feature film 'Bindusagar,' set for a theatrical release April 10



With team

With Actor Chandan Biswal



### Colours & creativity

On Sundays I paint to express my creativity through the language of colours with each canvas becoming a space for reflection, imagination, and personal expression.

### Learning, listening, creating always

My ideal Sundays are spent exploring filmmaking techniques and immersing myself in insightful podcasts by experienced professionals. These moments of learning and reflection shape my artistic journey.

### Solitary walker

I enjoy spending my leisure time taking solitary walks while listening to music, finding peace, relaxation, and quiet inspiration in those reflective moments.

### Exploring flavours with passion

I am a passionate foodie who loves exploring a variety of dishes and experiencing new flavours, even though my own cooking skills are still a work in progress.

ANISHA KHATUN, OP

WhatsApp This Week

Only on SUNDAY POST!

Send in your most interesting WhatsApp messages and memes at: [features.orissapost@gmail.com](mailto:features.orissapost@gmail.com)  
And we will publish the best ones

THE BEST MEMES OF THIS ISSUE

Please, keep talking. I always yawn when I am interested.

I find it very offensive when people get easily offended.

My Sister was crying so I asked her if she was having a cry-sis.

If Mayans could predict the future, why didn't they predict their extinction?

Love thrives in small acts

Sir, Valentine's Day is often wrapped in the fragrance of roses and the sparkle of candlelight, but its meaning stretches far beyond bouquets and dinner dates. While red roses symbolize romance, the day itself celebrates connection in all its forms — love between friends, family members, partners, and even self-love. For some, February 14 is a moment to call parents and express gratitude. For others, it is about surprising a friend who has stood by them through difficult times. In classrooms, children exchange handmade cards, learning that kindness and appreciation matter more than expensive gifts. Many people also use the day to forgive, to mend broken relationships, or to simply say "thank you" to someone who makes life brighter. Valentine's Day can also be deeply personal. It may mean taking time to care for oneself — reading a favorite book, enjoying solitude, or reflecting on personal growth. Love is not limited to grand gestures; it thrives in small acts of compassion, patience, and understanding. Beyond roses and chocolates, Valentine's Day is a reminder that love, in its simplest and widest sense, is what truly sustains us.

SOUMYAJIT SAHOO, BHUBANESWAR

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





# The K-Wave

The impact of Korean dramas has moved beyond storytelling, influencing fashion choices, beauty standards, food preferences and even lifestyle habits. Quietly yet powerfully, Korean culture has found a place in Indians' everyday life, subtly reshaping modern identities

ANISHA KHATUN, OP

In this digitally connected world, entertainment no longer belongs to one country, language, or culture. With a single click, young viewers can travel across continents through their screens, exploring stories from distant lands without leaving their homes.

Among the many global influences shaping youth culture today, Korean dramas, popularly known as K-dramas, have emerged as a dominant force. As part of the global phenomenon known as the Hallyu Wave or Korean Wave, these dramas have carried Korean culture across borders. Their emotionally layered narratives, visually appealing settings and well-developed characters have won widespread admiration. Gradually, their impact has moved beyond storytelling, influencing fashion choices, beauty standards, food preferences and even lifestyle habits. Quietly yet powerfully, Korean culture has found a place in everyday life, subtly reshaping modern identities.

However, this growing popularity has also triggered important discussions. The recent tragic suicide of three minor sisters in Ghaziabad, reportedly linked to an intense obsession with Korean popular culture, has raised serious concerns about its psychological impact on chil-

dren. While some view K-dramas as tools of emotional expression and women's empowerment, others believe they promote unrealistic ideals. This contrast highlights the need to examine how global pop culture affects young minds in an increasingly connected world.

To understand what draws viewers to K-dramas and how this growing obsession can be balanced, Sunday POST spoke to experts to get their perspectives on the trend.

## 'K-drama content highly relatable'

Srijeet Satpathy, Programming Head – Fiction at Zee Sarthak, believes that the rising popularity of Korean dramas among Indian youth is closely linked to the post-Covid shift in viewing habits and increased exposure to global content through OTT platforms.

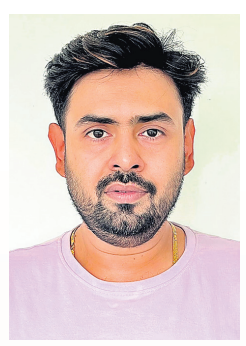
"After the pandemic, audiences got an opportunity to explore content from around the world. With easy ac-

cess to international shows, viewers began discovering Korean dramas in large numbers," he explains.

According to him, one of the main reasons for their success in India is their cultural similarity with Indian society. "When we observe Korean dramas, we notice that their family structures, values and emotional dynamics are very similar to ours. This makes the content highly relatable." Audiences generally connect with stories in two ways; either because they reflect real life or because they offer a larger-than-life escape, he says.

"In the case of K-dramas, relatability plays the strongest role. Viewers see their own parents, families and relationships reflected in the characters, which helps them emotionally invest in the story," he adds.

Satpathy further highlights that strong family bonds and emotional depth are central to both Indian and Korean storytelling traditions. "Relationships matter deeply in Indian society, and the same importance is given in Korean series. This shared value system naturally attracts Indian viewers," he says. He also points out that K-dramas adopt a realistic and casual style of communication that resonates with today's youth. "Earlier, television relied heavily on dramatic dialogue delivery.







Now, the younger generation prefers natural, conversational interactions and Korean dramas excel in presenting this,” observes Satpathy.

According to him, emotional storytelling remains the backbone of successful content in India. Drawing a comparison with classics like BR Chopra’s Mahabharata and Ramanand Sagar’s Ramayana, he notes that Indian audiences have always connected deeply with stories driven by strong emotions, and K-dramas continue this tradition in a modern format.

Another important factor, Satpathy explains, is the pacing and structure of Korean series. “Scenes are shorter, tightly edited and filled with constant twists. Every sequence offers a hook that keeps viewers engaged.” This fast-paced narrative style matches the attention span and expectations of today’s youth. He also emphasises that television as a medium is evolving rapidly. “Earlier, shows would run for a thousand episodes. Now, most stories are planned for a limited number of episodes with a clear beginning and end.” Storytelling techniques are continuously changing, he adds, and will keep adapting to audience preferences. These may be a few reasons why Korean fictions are gradually becoming popular among the Indian youths, concluded Satpathy.

## ‘Cultural similarities between both nations a connecting factor’

Filmmaker Pradeep Dash believes that the growing popularity of Korean content among young audiences can be attributed to multiple interconnected factors. He says, “One of the primary reasons is the rapid expansion of OTT platforms, which has given viewers easy access to global entertainment. With this digital exposure, Korean dramas found their way into Indian households and quickly resonated with audiences. Their realistic storytelling and emotionally engaging narratives struck a chord, as viewers felt that these shows reflected relatable experiences and offered what they were looking for in meaningful entertainment.”

Pradeep further explains, “Another major contributor, according to me, is the powerful influence of social media. Platforms like Instagram, YouTube and others have played a crucial role in promoting Korean dramas through campaigns, reels and fan-driven content.

These online trends caught the attention of teenagers and young adults, who are more active on social media and increasingly rely on it for news and entertainment updates. As a result, Korean content gained rapid visibility and popularity.” He also points out that many quality productions from around the world remain unnoticed simply because they lack similar digital promotion and visibility.

Pradeep highlights the cultural similarities between Korean and Indian societies as a strong connecting factor. Values such as respect for parents, attachment to tradition, a sense of responsibility, and emphasis on family relationships make Korean stories feel familiar to Indian viewers.

Addressing a common misconception, he states, “Indian content is in no way inferior. Indian storytelling is rich, realistic and often far more advanced than it is perceived to be. However, social media has created an illusion that foreign content is superior and many people now accept this perception without questioning it. Indian content stands equal to any global standard.”



## ‘Balanced portrayal of gender roles plays a key role’

Priti Chhanda Behera, an anchor by profession, shares her deep connection with Korean dramas and reflects on their growing influence. Speaking about what draws her to K-dramas, she says, “I strongly feel that Korean dramas are shaping our cultural taste. One of the strongest reasons is their balanced portrayal of gender roles. These stories do not always rely on male-dominated narratives. Female characters are portrayed as confident, independent and capable, while male leads are emotionally expressive, respectful and supportive. This challenges traditional stereotypes and promotes women’s empowerment in a natural and graceful manner, without being loud or forced.”

Priti further explains that Korean dramas also emphasise individual freedom after education. “The characters are encouraged to work, follow their passions and make their own choices. Families are often supportive and even conflicts are resolved through understanding and communication. This idea of personal freedom connects deeply with Indian women viewers like me,” she shares.

Highlighting the emotional depth of these shows, she adds, “Most importantly, Korean dramas address childhood trauma and emotional

struggles with great sensitivity. They help viewers reflect on their own unresolved emotions and experiences.” She believes this emotional honesty makes the stories more relatable and impactful.

Concluding her thoughts, she notes that the professionalism, minimal fashion sense, strong workplace ethics and rich cultural presentation in these dramas create a refined and inspiring viewing experience. “Together, these elements make K-dramas not just entertaining, but also meaningful and emotionally enriching,” she signs off.

## ‘Guidance important than restriction’

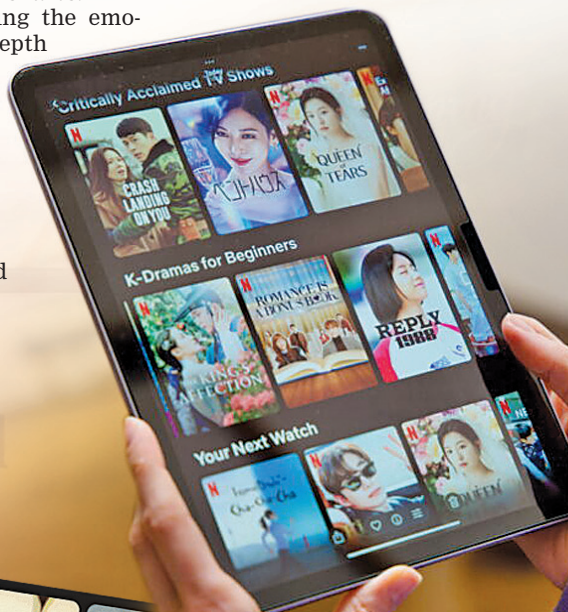
Dr Jyoti Prakash C K Acharya, Consultant Neuropsychiatrist at Hitech Medical College and Hospital, believes this cultural shift carries both positive and negative impacts. “Korean culture has become a powerful presence in the lives of today’s youth. I see both beauty and risk in this influence,” he says.

Dr Acharya explains that many teenagers find emotional comfort in Korean storytelling. “Themes of friendship, love, struggle and emotional expression help young viewers feel understood and connected. Fandoms also create a strong sense of belonging. For lonely or emotionally sensitive adolescents, this connection can feel truly healing,” he notes. These narratives often provide a safe space where teenagers can relate to characters and explore their own feelings.

However, he also warns about the challenges that come with excessive admiration. “Problems arise when appreciation turns into constant comparison. Unrealistic beauty standards, idealised romance and pressure to achieve perfection can slowly damage self-esteem. Teenagers may begin measuring their worth against edited images

and scripted lives,” he warns.

Emphasising balance, Dr. Acharya says, “The concern is not Korean culture itself. The real issue is imbalance.” He suggests that adolescents, who are still forming their identity, need guidance rather than restriction. “Parents should engage in open conversations, understand what their children are watching, and gently set healthy boundaries. Global culture can inspire growth when teens remain grounded in reality, self-worth and meaningful relationships.”





*According to a study, obese people may be at risk due to health-related issues but their mentality is surprisingly often ideal and welcome. They are not irritable. It is against their nature to get angry over small things*

NIKHILANAND PANIGRAHY

Obesity remains an unresolved issue. Attempts have been made to understand obesity through the influence of hereditary (genetic) factors, lifestyle, and environment. However, the comparative proportion among these factors is still not clear. Various specialists have given less importance to genetics, emphasizing the other two. Indirectly, this suggests that obesity is largely independent of pre-determined hereditary causes and is more dependent on an individual's lifestyle and society.

Experts argue that obesity in the US has been increasing significantly over the past fifty years. However, genes cannot be blamed for this, as a significant change in genes is not possible in a short period like fifty years. Instead, the root causes are modern industrialization, a luxurious lifestyle, lack of physical exercise, and reckless fatty diets. The statement by Tao O'Pingli, Director of the Human Nutrition Center at the University of California, Los Angeles, that "genetics is the gun and the environment (which includes lifestyle and social behaviour) is the trigger" clearly shows the truth.

We see examples of how societal attitude manages this issue in a strange way. A trend currently prevalent in our society is that thinness is welcome. Everyone (especially the youth) is eager and constantly trying to acquire such a physique.

The dissatisfaction of a person (especially a young woman) who fails to achieve this "ideal" body is sky-high. Even after following a dietitian's advice, eating plenty of green vegetables, and sweating it out at the gym, if they cannot achieve the desired body shape, they fall victim to destructive thoughts, considering their life and youth worthless. For these frustrated

# HEAVY BUT HAPPY

individuals, scientists like Eric Stice (Oregon Research Institute) and Professor Carolyn Becker (Trinity University, Texas) have launched a programme called "The Body Project." (Note: "It is time to shed bad perceptions about your body," Time Trends, December 1999).

Despite being neglected in society, some research-backed facts in favour

In the UK Biobank, genetic data of 500,400 men and women aged 37 to 73 respectively is stored. Lucy Millard and George Davey from the University of Bristol analyzed the data in this biobank using a technique called "Faesant." The aim of their research was the relationship between different individuals' BMI (which can be used to assess a person's obesity) and their health.

Their conclusion is that people whose BMI is higher than the approved number, that is, obese people, become victims of unwanted disorders such as high blood pressure, diabetes, and early sexual maturity. But the surprising thing is that they remain indifferent to their physical illness and are very little worried. This does not stress them, nor are they depressed. They are far away from impulsiveness or anxiety. It seems astonishing and unexpected for psychologists how they manage to control their emotions and remain happy.

(Note: "Overweight People More Likely to Lead Happier Lives," Sabrina Barr, "The Independent," reprinted - Times of India, 26 December 1990).

In our opinion, the smiling, cheerful face of a potentially sick or morbidly obese person is more preferable than a thin person who is worried, depressed, and supposedly 'beautiful'.

This good news will surely delight obese people. Their quality charms us. Hence, they are charming.



of obese people have now come to light. It may be true that their life is at risk due to health-related issues like heart disease, including sudden cardiac arrest and failure, diabetes, etc. But the mentality of obese people is surprisingly often ideal and welcome. They are not irritable. It is against their nature to get angry over small things.





# Priyanka, the next Bond girl!

Priyanka Chopra Jonas has once again sparked speculation, this time over a possible association with the upcoming James Bond film. In a recent interview, the actor shared her thoughts on the future of the 007 franchise following Amazon MGM's acquisition of creative control. While avoiding direct answers, she hinted that the series "could be truly global now," a remark that quickly set social media abuzz with fans wondering if she could be considered for a role.

Speaking to *Variety*, Priyanka said she was curious to see the direction the franchise would take under new leadership. Her comments prompted enthusiastic reactions online, with several users expressing hope that she might appear as a Bond girl in the next instalment, possibly under director Denis Villeneuve. The buzz was further fuelled by her recent interview with *Screen Rant*, where she remained tight-lipped about returning to the Don and Krrish franchises, saying she could not discuss them at the moment.

Although no official casting announcements have been made, reports suggest her long-standing collaboration with Amazon has added to the speculation. Priyanka previously starred in *Citadel* and *Heads of State* under the banner. She will next be seen in *The Bluff*, releasing digitally February 25.

Meanwhile, Denis Villeneuve has been confirmed as the director for Bond 26, while discussions around the next 007 continue. Priyanka's

remarks, however, have kept fans eagerly guessing about her possible involvement.

AGENCIES

# Taapsee calls for audience responsibility

Taapsee Pannu is gearing up for the release of her upcoming film *Assi* and has begun its promotions with special screenings ahead of its theatrical debut. As part of the campaign, the actor shared a heartfelt note urging audiences to take responsibility for supporting meaningful cinema instead of blaming Hindi films for lacking rooted and impactful stories. She highlighted how "laziness" and "silence" often prevent quality films from finding their audience, stressing that good cinema can survive only when viewers actively choose to watch it in theatres.

Taking to Instagram, Taapsee encouraged people to step out of indifference and recognise their role in shaping the future of Indian cinema. She wrote that audiences should not hide behind ignorance when filmmakers make sincere efforts to bring honest stories to the screen. Emphasising the need to value homegrown narratives, she urged viewers to support "real" stories if Indian cinema is to compete globally. She also noted that filmmakers today must work harder than ever to earn trust and love, announcing special screenings of *Assi* in different cities ahead of its release.

Fans responded positively, praising her honesty and expressing strong support for the film. Directed by Anubhav Sinha and written by Gaurav Solanki, *Assi* is a courtroom drama featuring an ensemble cast including Naseeruddin Shah, Revathy, Manoj Pahwa, and Kumud Mishra. The film, produced by T-Series, releases in theatres February 20.

AGENCIES



# Of roots, reels & resolve



*For debutant Odia film director Beeswaranjana, the journey from Mumbai's ad world to Odisha's hinterland is more than a career move. It is a statement that sometimes, the boldest step forward begins by going back to where you belong*

BIJAY MANDAL, OP

In Mumbai's glittering advertising world, Beeswaranjana Pradhan built a career many filmmakers aspire to. Over 300 ad films. Collaborations with top stars. A settled life in the country's entertainment capital. For most, the natural next step would have been a mainstream Hindi feature.

But when the Athamalik-born director finally chose to tell his first full-length story, he turned away from Bollywood — and came home to Odisha. His debut feature, *Bara Badhu*, is not just a film. It is, in many ways, a return to roots.

"My script was among the four or five projects selected annually from across the country by National Film Development Corporation (NFDC). I could have easily made it in Hindi," Beeswaranjana says, adding, "But this story demanded authenticity."

Inspired by a real incident from Angul, the film is set in his native soil. Some characters are drawn from his own village; a few are inspired by people he grew up knowing — even relatives. For him, the language of the story was never up for debate.

"If I made it in any other language, something essential would be lost. The texture, the emotion, the rhythm of the place — they belong to Odisha."

There was also a deeper, more personal calling. "Years from now, if someone asks what I have done as a filmmaker, this film will be my answer. I wanted my first film to be in my mother tongue."

## Betting on content, not stars

At a time when Odia cinema conversations often revolve around bankable stars, Beeswaranjana is unfazed by the perception that only big names can guarantee box-office success.

"Yes, established stars can give a film an initial push," he acknowledges. "But content is the real star. If your story, screenplay, and dialogues are strong, audiences will connect."

Instead of chasing marquee names, he chose actors who could dissolve into their roles. "In *Bara Badhu*, you won't see stars. You will see people — characters who feel like they belong to that land."

His cinematic sensibilities reflect the films he admires — Iranian, European, and certain strands of Hollywood cinema where storytelling is intimate, grounded, and deeply human. "I am drawn to narratives about ordinary lives," he says. "That is the cinema I believe in."

## The power of authenticity

Ask him what makes *Bara Badhu* special, and the answer comes without hesitation: authenticity.

"Everything about this film — the look, the performances, the dialogue delivery — is organic," he says. "This could be one of the most authentic Odia films made in recent times."

Yet authenticity does not mean austerity. The film blends realism with moments of warmth and humor, creating what Pradhan calls "a smooth roller-coaster of drama and life." Confident but measured, he adds, "When people discuss Odia cinema decades later, I believe this film will stand out."

## A mirror to rural aspirations

At its heart, *Bara Badhu* tells the story of rural Odia youth — their unemployment, dreams, struggles, and resilience. There is no overt moral lesson, no heavy-handed message.

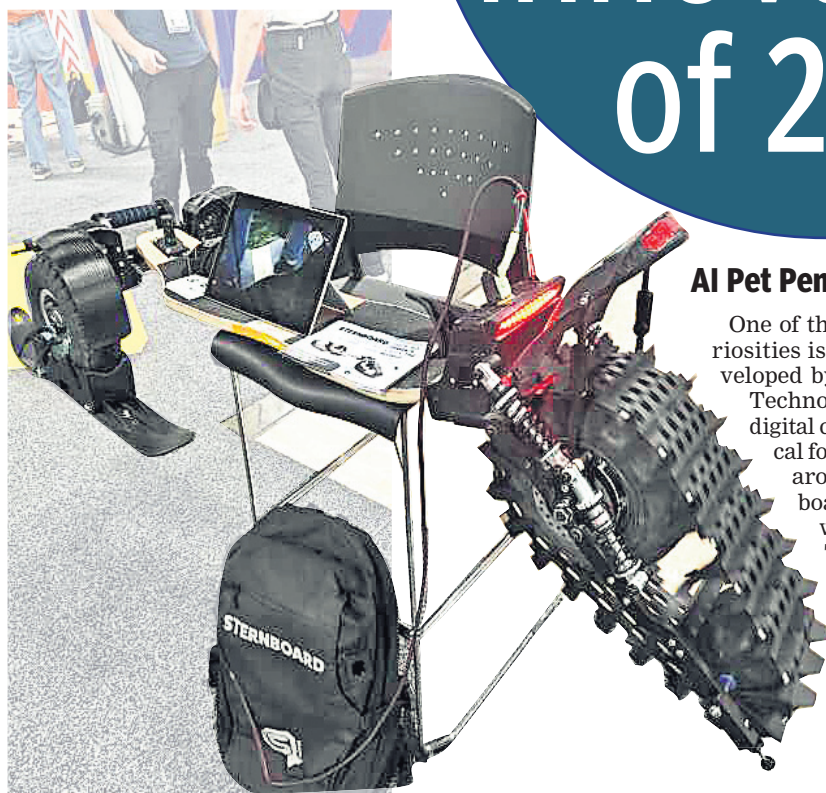
"It's simply a reflection of reality," Pradhan says. "I want audiences to see themselves in it."

As appreciation for the film grows across the state, his appeal to viewers remains simple and heartfelt: "Come and watch it. You will feel proud that an Odia film has been made at par with national-level cinema."



Every year, technology pushes boundaries, but 2026 has taken experimentation to a whole new level. From robotic furniture to AI-powered pets and flying spheres, innovators are no longer satisfied with making devices just smarter, they want them to be surprising, playful and even a little bizarre. While some of these products are still in the concept stage, they offer a fascinating glimpse into how technology may shape everyday life in the future. Here's a look at some of the strangest and most intriguing tech innovations of 2026.

# Weird & wonderful innovations of 2026



## AI Pet Penguin

One of the most talked-about curiosities is the AI Pet Penguin developed by Beijing Walkarrive Technology. Designed as a digital companion with physical form, the penguin rides around on a tiny skateboard, charming onlookers with its playful movements. The company envisions a future where the penguin can recognise faces, identify objects and respond intelligently to its owner. For now, however, it remains a slow-moving prototype, more entertaining than functional. Still, its adorable design and ambitious goals make it a standout in the growing world of AI companions.



## Sternboard

Another unusual invention making waves is the Sternboard, a futuristic board that blends snowboarding with all-terrain mobility. Featuring three wheels and optional caterpillar-style treads, the Sternboard allows riders to glide over snow, pavement and uneven surfaces. Capable of reaching speeds up to 45 mph, the company has placed safety limits on user speed. Already available in parts of Europe, the Sternboard is set to arrive in the US soon, promising thrill-seekers a new way to experience outdoor adventure.

**HAGAMOSphere 2.0**  
From Japan comes the HAGAMOSphere 2.0, a drone that defies traditional design. Instead of exposed propellers, it is enclosed in a spherical cage that allows it to roll on the ground as easily as it flies in the air. Developed by DIC Corp., this hybrid drone could be useful in disaster zones, industrial inspections, and hard-to-reach areas. Equipped with cameras, it also holds potential for entertainment and filming. Its dual-mode movement makes it one of the most innovative drones seen in recent years.

## Glyde

Meanwhile, personal grooming also received a technological upgrade with Glyde's smart clippers. Designed to deliver a "mistake-proof" fade haircut, the device automatically adjusts its cutting pattern based on scalp contours. Users wear a special band to indicate where the fade should begin, ensuring precision. While the company recommends having someone assist with harder-to-reach areas, the clippers aim to make professional-looking haircuts more accessible at home.

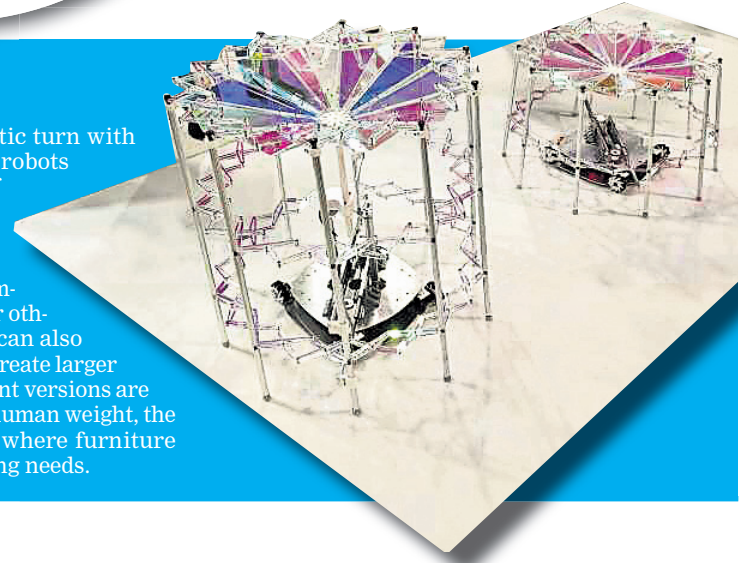


*Together, these strange yet fascinating inventions show that 2026 is not just about efficiency and convenience, it's about creativity and imagination. Whether practical or playful, these technologies reflect a future where innovation embraces the unexpected, proving that sometimes, the weirdest ideas can be the most exciting.*



## Furniture robots

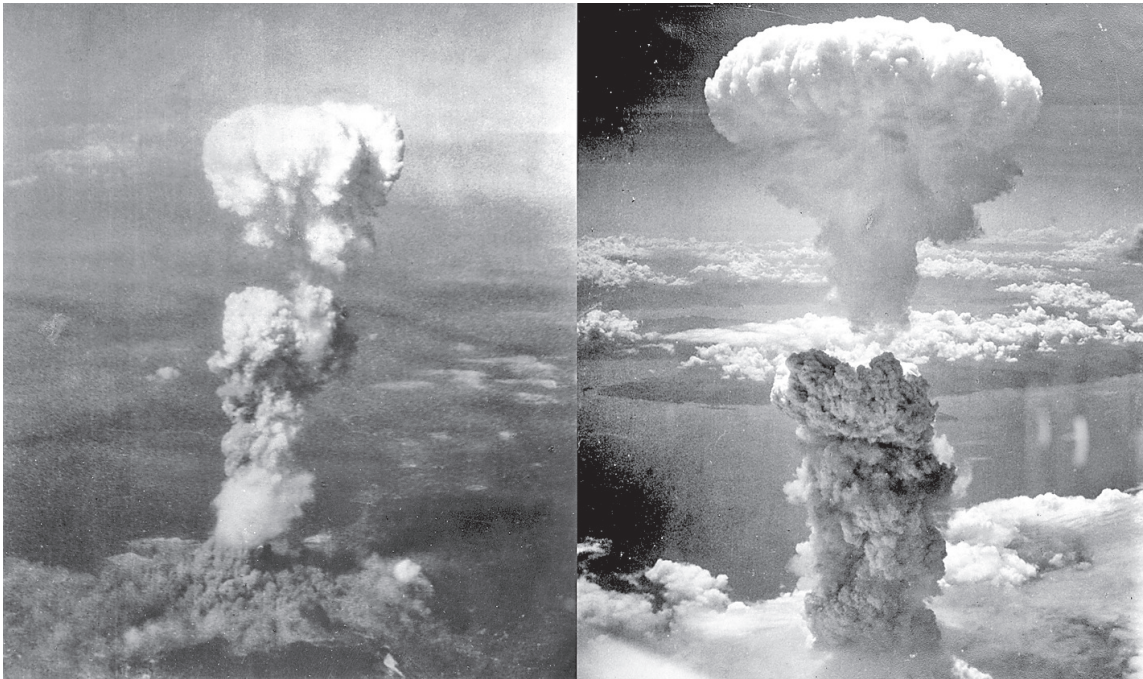
Robotics took an artistic turn with transforming furniture robots from the Korea Institute of Science and Technology. These modular machines can expand and contract like flowers, reshaping themselves into chairs, tables, or other furniture forms. Users can also combine multiple units to create larger structures. Although current versions are too lightweight to support human weight, the concept hints at a future where furniture adapts instantly to changing needs.



OP DESK



**In 2009, the Japanese government officially recognised naval engineer Tsutomu Yamaguchi as a *niju hibakusha*, a double survivor of both Hiroshima and Nagasaki. He described himself as someone who had simply been unlucky—and lucky—twice**



# Twice bombed, twice **alive**

On the morning of August 6, 1945, Tsutomu Yamaguchi stood on a dock in Hiroshima, preparing to leave the city after a three-month business trip. A naval engineer for Mitsubishi Heavy Industries, 29-year-old Yamaguchi had spent the summer helping design oil tankers. He was tired, eager to return to his wife and infant son in Nagasaki. The war had drained Japan, and like many citizens, he was simply trying to endure.

Then, at 8:15 a.m., the sky split open. Yamaguchi later described seeing a flash in the sky—an intense burst of light unlike anything he had ever witnessed. An American B-29 bomber had dropped the world's first atomic bomb used in warfare. The explosion unleashed a blinding white glare, followed by a shockwave that hurled him into a potato field. The heat scorched his skin. His eardrums ruptured. The mushroom cloud climbed into the heavens, swallowing the city in smoke and fire.

Hiroshima was transformed into a wasteland within seconds. Buildings crumbled. Fires raged. Tens of thousands were killed instantly. Yamaguchi, burned and temporarily blinded, crawled through the devastation. Somehow, he found two colleagues who had also survived. Together, they spent a night in an air-raided shelter, surrounded by the injured and dying.

Against unimaginable odds, he lived.

### A return to Nagasaki

The next morning, bandaged and weak, Yamaguchi boarded a train to Nagasaki. The railway lines, astonishingly, were still operating in parts. His face and arms were severely burned, and he could barely move, but his determination to see his family overpowered his pain. When he arrived home on August 8, his wife was

horrified by his condition. His hair was singed; his body wrapped in bandages. He told her about a single bomb that had destroyed an entire city. It seemed impossible. Even Japanese military officials struggled to grasp the scale of the weapon.

On the morning of August 9, despite his injuries, Yamaguchi reported to work. He felt duty-bound to explain what he had witnessed. As he described the blinding flash and mushroom cloud to his supervisor, a familiar light filled the sky.

At 11:02 a.m., a second atomic bomb detonated over Nagasaki. Yamaguchi instinctively threw himself to the ground. The explosion ravaged the city, killing tens of thousands more. His workplace was damaged, but he survived again. At home, his wife and son had taken shelter in a reinforced tunnel, sparing their lives.

In three days, Tsutomu Yamaguchi had stood within a few kilometers of two nuclear detonations—and lived through both.

### Living with the invisible wounds

Survival did not mean escape. In the years that followed, Yamaguchi endured the long-term effects of radiation exposure. He suffered from recurring illness, temporary baldness, and lingering weakness. Like many *hibakusha*—the Japanese term for atomic bomb survivors—he faced not only health challenges but social stigma. Radiation sickness was poorly understood, and

survivors were often discriminated against in employment and marriage due to fears of genetic damage.

For decades, Yamaguchi rarely spoke publicly about his experiences. Japan was rebuilding. The world had moved into the tense standoff of the Cold War. Nuclear weapons had become symbols of geopolitical power. His survival story, remarkable as it was, remained largely personal.

It was not until later in life that he began to share his testimony more openly. As nuclear arsenals expanded worldwide, Yamaguchi felt a growing responsibility to speak. He did not see himself as extraordinary. Instead, he described himself as someone who had simply been unlucky—and lucky—twice.

In 2009, the Japanese government officially recognized him as a *niju hibakusha*, a double survivor of both Hiroshima and Nagasaki. Although around 160 people are believed to have experienced both bombings, Yamaguchi was the only one formally acknowledged by name during his lifetime.

### A voice for peace

In his later years, Yamaguchi transformed from reluctant survivor to vocal advocate for nuclear disarmament. He addressed audiences in Japan and abroad, including speaking at the United Nations. Frail but resolute, he warned of the unimaginable human cost behind abstract military strategies.

Yamaguchi continued his advocacy even as he battled stomach cancer, widely believed to be linked to radiation exposure. In January 2010, at the age of 93, he died in Nagasaki—the city that had both nearly killed him and sustained him for most of his life.

His story endures not simply because he survived two atomic bombs. Survival alone, though astonishing, is only part of the legacy. What makes Tsutomu Yamaguchi's life extraordinary is that he transformed personal catastrophe into a call for global conscience.

In the span of three days in August 1945, he witnessed the dawn of the nuclear age in its most terrifying form. The flash that knocked him to the ground in Hiroshima and the second sun that rose over Nagasaki marked the beginning of a new and perilous chapter in human history.

Yamaguchi carried those flashes within him for the rest of his life.

He stood as living proof that even amid devastation beyond comprehension, the human spirit can endure. Twice bombed. Twice alive. And determined that no one else should ever have to survive what he did.

OP DESK

