

MARCH 22-28 2026

SUNDAY POST

HERE . NOW



WORLD **WATER DAY** TODAY

Flowing with fairness

COVER STORY **P**
3,4

MY SUNDAY



With family



With actor Babushaan

Though he largely works behind the camera, Radhamadhab Das Mohapatra has emerged as one of the most sought-after names in the industry. A seasoned production manager and line producer, he has an impressive portfolio that includes over 1000 music videos, more than 20 advertising shoots, as well as documentaries, television serials, and nationally recognised short films. Over the past 15 years, the B.Com graduate has also contributed to several films such as 'Prema Hue Chori Chori,' 'Maal Mahu Jiban Mati,' 'Trushna,' 'Meriya,' 'Ghamaghot,' 'Jagan,' and 'Saitan'. His work further extends to web series like '72 Hours,' 'Sister,' and 'Nilachala Bhakta Nibas.' Radhamadhab finds solace in gardening, a passion he enjoys pursuing during his leisure time

Fresh start, clear mind

Sunday is my favourite day of the week. I begin with a healthy breakfast, enjoy a light walk or exercise, and then plan my schedule for the week ahead.

Moments that truly matter

On my days off, I prefer spending quality time with my family, often enjoying a special lunch together and relaxing while catching up on conversations.

Music meets green therapy

I enjoy gardening and listening to music, as both help me relax and refresh my mind.

Fun times with friends

Whenever I get time, I enjoy spending time with friends, often playing cricket and carrom for fun and relaxation.



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

- What did the light bulb say to the switch? "You turn me on."
- To steal ideas from one person is plagiarism. To steal from many is research.
- If the speed of light is 186,000 miles/sec., what's the speed of darkness?
- We are all part of the ultimate statistic - ten out of ten die.



Happiness reality

Sir, This refers to the last week's cover story on International Day of Happiness. Despite experts keep on suggesting a slew of ideas on how to remain happy, India has performed miserably in the World Happiness Report. While the country has made significant strides in development, factors such as income inequality, unemployment, and rising cost of living continue to affect everyday happiness, social support systems, a key parameter in the index, remain uneven, especially in rural and underprivileged communities. Mental health awareness, though improving, still faces stigma, limiting access to care and open conversations. Environmental stressors like pollution and overcrowding in cities also reduce quality of life. Additionally, trust in institutions and perceptions of corruption influence how people evaluate their lives. Another challenge lies in work-life balance, as long working hours and competitive pressures leave little room for leisure and personal well-being. While cultural resilience and strong family ties provide emotional support, they may not fully offset structural issues. India's ranking serves as a reminder that true progress goes beyond GDP growth, requiring focused efforts on health, equality, environment, and social trust to build a happier society.

SAHADEV MAHARANA, DAMANJODI

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

WORLD WATER DAY TODAY

Flowing with fairness

Water and Gender, the theme of World Water Day this year, brings renewed attention to a reality often overlooked-- the water crisis and gender inequality are deeply intertwined

ANISHA KHATUN, OP

Water has always been more than a resource; it is the pulse of life, the quiet thread that binds people, nature and civilisation together. Yet for millions across the world, access to this life-giving element remains a daily struggle. Observed annually on World Water Day, this global occasion reminds humanity that safeguarding water is not only an environmental duty but also a matter of justice and equality. This year's theme, Water and Gender, brings renewed attention to a reality often overlooked: the water crisis and gender inequality are deeply intertwined.

Centered on the campaign tagline "Where Water Flows, Equality Grows," the theme highlights the urgent need to ensure that women and girls have equal voice, leadership and decision-making power in water management. Across many regions, they bear a disproportionate burden of water scarcity. This year, World Water Day is not only a reminder to protect water, but also a call to awaken collective responsibility, because where water flows with fairness and wisdom, equality too begins to bloom.

A few experts share with Sunday POST their insights to explain how this inequality can be overcome.

'Women must be placed at the centre of water governance'

Ranjan Panda, a well-known water and climate expert popularly referred to as Odisha's Water Man, highlights the deep connection between water access, gender equality, and community well-being. He emphasises that improving water availability can transform the lives of women and girls while strengthening communities overall.

"When the daily, exhausting burden of collecting water is lifted, it acts as a profound catalyst for community transformation. Millions of hours currently lost to this chore can be immediately

redirected; for girls, this often means returning to school and completing their education, while for adult women, it opens avenues for economic independence and skill development. Furthermore, localised, safe water access significantly reduces the severe physical toll of transporting heavy loads and sharply cuts the incidence of waterborne illnesses, fundamentally improving both physical resilience and overall public health."

Panda also points out that water scarcity and gender inequality are closely linked, particularly in vulnerable rural and coastal regions where climate change has intensified water challenges. Drawing from his extensive work in coastal areas, he notes that environmental disruptions often worsen the daily struggles of women.

"Water scarcity and gender inequality are deeply intertwined. Take for example coastal places, where I can quote from my extensive work. In these places, climate shocks like cyclones lead to saline water ingress and ecosystem degradation. In vulnerable coastal and rural areas, it is almost exclusively women who bear the im-

mediate, daily brunt of these failing water systems, walking further distances as local sources dry up or become contaminated. This relentless pressure creates profound Non-Economic Loss and Damage (NELD),

manifesting as severe mental stress, anxiety and an erosion of well-being, demonstrating that a lack of water is not just an environmental issue, but a core driver of systemic gender disparity."

He further stresses that women must be placed at the centre of water governance and climate-resilient initiatives to ensure sustainable solutions.

"Ensuring women have a stronger voice requires intentional, localized capacity building that empowers them to lead climate-resilient initiatives from the ground up. Communities must actively integrate women into the core of gender-mainstreamed development planning, moving past token participation to actual, recognised decision-making power regarding water conservation strategies and local resource management. By equipping local women with the tools, knowledge, and platforms to design and govern these systems, communities build

far more robust, equitable, and sustainable defenses against climate stress," signs off Panda.

'Lack of safe water affects the safety of women, girls'

Ankita Sahoo, a social activist popularly known as the Pad Woman of Odisha, has been working tirelessly for more than a decade to improve women's sanitation and menstrual hygiene. Through her grassroots initiatives, she has distributed free sanitary napkins and organised awareness programmes to educate women and girls about menstrual health and hygiene.

Ankita believes that the lack of safe water, hygiene, and sanitation facilities deeply affects the health, dignity, and safety of women and girls. According to

her, the absence of proper sanitation infrastructure forces women

to compromise their well-being and personal safety on a daily basis. She says, "When women don't have safe water or toilets, their health suffers, they face infections and diseases.

Their dignity is hurt because they must hide or wait till dark. It also puts them at risk of harassment and violence. This is not just a basic need; it is about safety, respect, and survival." For Ankita, sanitation is far more than a matter of convenience; it is directly connected to human dignity and the right to live safely and with self-respect.

According to her, improving the situation requires both social and structural changes. While governments must strengthen investments in water systems and sanitation infrastructure, communities must also move beyond the silence and stigma that still surrounds hygiene and menstruation. She stresses that open conversations and awareness are essential to bring lasting change.





“We need safe toilets in every home and public place, especially for girls. Communities must stop treating sanitation as a taboo. Governments must invest more in water systems, and women must be involved in planning and decisions. Change must happen both in mindset and infrastructure,” she emphasises.

For Ankita, empowering women is key to building sustainable water and sanitation systems. She believes that when women are given a voice in planning and decision-making, solutions become more practical and community-driven. “When women are empowered, they protect water, manage resources better, and ensure facilities are used properly. They understand the real needs of families. Giving women a voice leads to smarter, long-lasting solutions for water and sanitation,” she signs off.

‘Women often show greater caution in the conservation of water resources’

Prasanna Bisoi, spokesperson of the Mahanadi Banchao Andolan, believes water is not merely a natural resource but the very essence of life and something that must be respected and protected. Reflecting on traditional beliefs, he says that in earlier times people worshipped nature as divine, and water has always been central to that reverence. According to him, water can be compared to a mother because it nurtures and sustains all living beings. “Water is life. In my view, water is another form of God. We can say water is like a mother, and it should be treated with the same respect and care,” he says. Drawing from his ex-

perience working in rural areas, Bisoi also highlighted the close connection between water scarcity and gender inequality. Women are generally more directly involved in household work such as cooking, cleaning and maintaining hygiene, which makes them deeply aware of the importance of water and the consequences of its misuse. Because of this close association, he believes women often show greater caution and responsibility in the use and conservation of water resources.



He further emphasises that women’s leadership is essential in addressing water challenges. According to him, communities must ensure that women are actively involved in water management, conservation initiatives and decision-making processes. “If women are given leadership and greater participation in water management and conservation, we can find better and more sustainable solutions to water scarcity. It will also help strengthen the focus on gender equality,” he says, stressing that empowering women in this area can lead to more responsible and long-term water management.

‘Women’s participation leads to long-lasting solutions for water security’

Padmalochan Bagh, Founder & Director of the Save Water and Safe Water Foundation, believes that improving water access can significantly transform the lives of women and girls, particularly in rural and vulnerable communities. According to him, “In many regions women and girls spend several hours each day walking long distances to collect water, a task that consumes time, energy, and opportunities. When safe and reliable water sources are brought closer to homes through borewells and community water systems, that burden is greatly reduced. As a result, girls are able to attend school more regularly, while women gain time to engage in livelihood activities, community participation and household management. Improved water access also reduces exposure to unsafe sources, leading to better health and hygiene for families.”



Drawing from the foundation’s work across several states and communities, Bagh says, “Water scarcity and gender inequality are deeply interconnected. In most rural settings, the responsibility of fetching water falls almost entirely on women and girls. This daily responsibility not only affects their physical well-being but also limits their opportunities for economic independence. Carrying heavy containers over long distances can lead to long-term

health problems, while time spent collecting water keeps girls away from classrooms and restricts women from income-generating activities. Over time, this cycle reinforces gender inequality, leaving women with fewer opportunities and a limited role in decision-making within their communities.”

Bagh emphasises that empowering women in water management is essential for sustainable solutions. When women are included in planning, managing and maintaining water systems, communities benefit from their practical knowledge and strong sense of responsibility toward resource use. Through the initiatives of the foundation, women are actively involved in managing borewells, ensuring fair distribution of water and promoting conservation practices. He believes that communities must consciously create spaces where women’s voices are heard in water governance and conservation efforts. “When women are given leadership roles in water management, they become powerful agents of change. Their participation not only strengthens conservation efforts but also leads to more inclusive, long-lasting solutions for water security,” he concludes.





From colonial office to people's museum Simdega's living archive

DIPANKAR CHOUDHARY, IAS

People who went to France say it is a very prosperous land. But there is no happiness there, there is only sorrow. Streams of blood have flowed from all sides. There is no happiness there, there is only sorrow.

On 28 May 1917, EH Johnston I.C.S., Under Secretary to the Government of Bihar and Orissa and later a distinguished Indologist and Sanskrit scholar, wrote to the Accountant General requesting that a sum of Rs 15,000 be placed at the disposal of J. McPherson, I.C.S., the then Deputy Commissioner of Ranchi, for recruitment to the 2nd Unit of the Labour Corps in France. The Indian Labour Corps did not serve as combat troops. Their role was logistical and engineering support such as digging trenches, constructing roads and railways, unloading ships and ammunition, forestry work, and battlefield clearance, among others.

This routine government communication quietly dispatched men from Simdega, then a small mofussil town in South of Bihar, to the battlefields of France. Though many returned after the war, those who did not were immortalized in a haunting Mundari folk song. While the official records got filed away and forgotten with time, their story endured. Carried forward in oral tradition, this memory had nearly slipped from public consciousness until the correspondence resurfaced again and was put to display in the district heritage center-cum-museum.

At the center of Simdega town stands the old Sub-Divisional headquarters, built in 1915 in Anglo-Indian utilitarian style, and expanded repeatedly to meet the district's growing needs. In the heyday of the British Raj, the building functioned as the district's administrative nerve center. Orderlies, clerks, constables and magistrates moved through its airy corridors and broad verandahs carrying files, escorting prisoners and issuing orders. On the eve of Independence, the Tricolour

was hoisted here for the first time thus sealing its place in Simdega's public memory.

For the residents this building has been etched in their memories as a symbol of nationalism and of the sovereign whose writ ran over the territory, the place where winning candidate of elections were announced from, the place where Independence day and the Republic day celebrations unfolded, and where citizens came hoping to be heard and to receive justice. It also witnessed generations of struggles for rights, development and eventually for a separate Jharkhand state.

The building now houses a district heritage centre and museum, with the Sub-Divisional office shifted to a newer, more spacious complex. Outside, a lawn and café are run by women of a Self-Help Group supported by the Jharkhand State Livelihood Promotion Society (JSLPS). They serve local Jharkhandi snacks and double as museum guides, caretakers and managers. Inside, the preserved Sub-Divisional courtroom offers the first glimpse of the past. In the adjoining gallery are everyday objects once used by the district's tribal communities, many of which are now rare. These include the Kumni, a traditional bamboo fishing trap; the Sunum Patta, a wooden oil-pressing device; and the Hunur Lang or Del Kosa, a traditional bird-hunting implement, alongside many musical instruments and ritual artefacts.

There's another section which houses all the old reports, various communications and books with respect to the district's past. There are official records of the 1931 census conducted in the district, various reports of the committee constituted to study the production of lac, the state of education, the production of art and crafts, the state agriculture, irrigation and forestry to name a few. The Sub-Divisional storeroom also yielded several British-manufactured items such as muzzle-loading guns by I. Hollis & Sons (a well-known Birmingham gunmaker active in the

19th-early 20th century), padlocks and chests by Chubb & Sons Lock & Safe Co. Ltd., and nearly half a dozen manually operated ceiling fans or "punkahs". One letter even advised encouraging Indian made goods instead of imports from London, after which procurement records show a noticeable shift toward Calcutta based manufacturers.

Some visitors pause to study the artefacts, others simply click pictures and make reels for this is a new spot and the old ones in the district have been exhausted enough to generate more likes and shares; while some others request to go through the old books and reports about the history of the district. Occasionally, grandparents can be seen explaining agricultural tools like the Sunum Patta or Kumni to younger family members, recalling how these formed part of their daily routine half a century ago.

Next there's a reading room with and a small library along with a souvenir shop which sells local handicrafts; all being operated by JSLPS Didis. The Bar Association's office is across the road and for lawyers, this has become a place they frequent many of whom have opted for a lifetime membership of the museum. Lastly for some, this is their favorite Third Place i.e. A place outside home and workplace where they gather, interact, and build community, come and go freely and which is a great leveler against social hierarchy.

Today, the old Sub-Divisional building no longer issues orders; it tells stories. Between its preserved courtrooms and carefully arranged artefacts, Simdega has found a way to turn memory into public life. In doing so, the town has quietly achieved something many places struggle with which is keeping history alive and not in silence behind files, record rooms and treasuries, but in conversation across generations.

Ananya's proud moment

Actress Ananya Panday has expressed pride in her father, actor Chunky Panday, for effortlessly participating in a popular social media trend that revisits how "your dad looked in the 90s."

The dotting daughter seemed elated upon seeing a social media reel of her father, Chunky Panday which showed him participating in the viral trend and sharing several throwback pictures of himself from the 1990s.

Ananya took to the comment's section of Chunky's post on his social media account and wrote, "You have done this on your own. Proud."

The pictures in the video are of a time when Chunky was among the popular faces of Hindi cinema and was in his prime era.

The posts feature the actor in his younger days, showcasing his style and charm during his peak years in Bollywood.

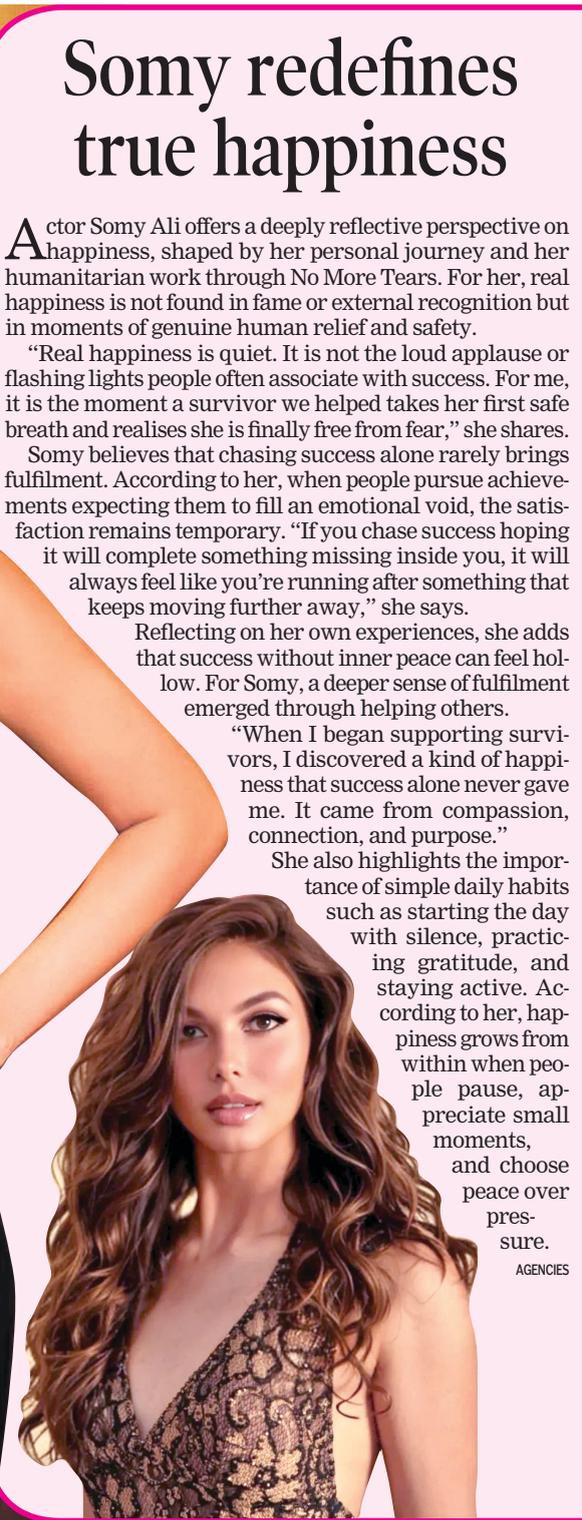
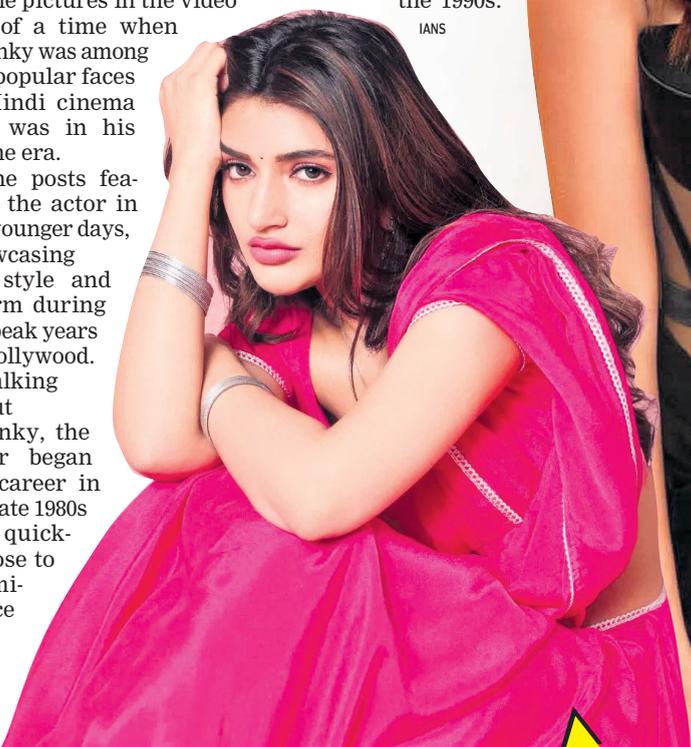
Talking about Chunky, the actor began his career in the late 1980s and quickly rose to prominence

in the 1990s with films such as *Tezaab*, *Aankhen*, *Paap Ki Duniya* and *Vishwatma*.

During the decade, he was known for his charismatic yet boy next door aura and personality and enjoyed a strong fan following.

Interestingly, filmmaker Farah Khan, during her appearance on the talk show *Too Much With Kajol and Twinkle*, had once revealed that she had a huge crush on Chunky during the 1990s.

IAN S



Somy redefines true happiness

Actor Somy Ali offers a deeply reflective perspective on happiness, shaped by her personal journey and her humanitarian work through No More Tears. For her, real happiness is not found in fame or external recognition but in moments of genuine human relief and safety.

"Real happiness is quiet. It is not the loud applause or flashing lights people often associate with success. For me, it is the moment a survivor we helped takes her first safe breath and realises she is finally free from fear," she shares.

Somy believes that chasing success alone rarely brings fulfilment. According to her, when people pursue achievements expecting them to fill an emotional void, the satisfaction remains temporary. "If you chase success hoping it will complete something missing inside you, it will always feel like you're running after something that keeps moving further away," she says.

Reflecting on her own experiences, she adds that success without inner peace can feel hollow. For Somy, a deeper sense of fulfilment emerged through helping others.

"When I began supporting survivors, I discovered a kind of happiness that success alone never gave me. It came from compassion, connection, and purpose."

She also highlights the importance of simple daily habits such as starting the day with silence, practicing gratitude, and staying active. According to her, happiness grows from within when people pause, appreciate small moments, and choose peace over pressure.

AGENCIES

PRE-RELEASE EVENT CONTROVERSY

Sreeleela clears air

The release of the Telugu film *Ustaad Bhagat Singh*, starring Pawan Kalyan and Sreeleela, has sparked mixed reactions from audiences. However, even before the film hit theatres, a moment from its pre-release event in Hyderabad grabbed attention online and quickly went viral on social media.

In the viral video clip, Sreeleela is seen turning towards actor Mahesh Babu, who was standing behind her. While Mahesh smiled at her, Sreeleela appeared to look away, which led many internet users to speculate that something awkward had happened between the two actors.

As the clip spread rapidly, several social media users began creating different interpretations and stories around the moment. Addressing the rumours, Sreeleela recently clarified the situation during another promotional event for the film. She explained that the viral video was being misunder-

stood and that there was no uncomfortable or unusual moment during the event. According to her, it was simply a normal situation that appeared different when captured in a short clip.

Mahesh also responded to the speculation on social media. He revealed that before stepping onto the stage, Sreeleela had handed him her mobile phone to hold. When she turned back during the event after hearing a sound, he assumed she was checking whether he still had her phone, and he simply smiled in response.

AGENCIES



SHARAD ON WHY HE HOLDS ON TO ROOTS

Actor Sharad Kelkar, who plays the role of Arya in the television show *Tumm Se Tumm Tak*, has shared that he likes to hold on to his roots and traditions as they remind him of his beginnings, and how far he has come.

The actor is fond of celebrating the festivals. Despite his demanding schedule, the actor tries to squeeze time for celebrations.

He told this news agency, "Even today, amidst hectic schedules, I try to hold on to those traditions because they remind me where I come from. Festivals like these bring a sense of grounding and togetherness, and I believe it's important to pass these values on to the next generation as well".

Earlier, Sharad spoke on his legacy of 20 years and being called the "TRP King" in the television industry. The actor recently attended the Zee Kutumb Nomination Party when host Jay Soni invited him on stage and hailed him as the "TRP King". Acknowledging his incredible journey and consistent success over the years. Reflecting on Sharad's remarkable journey, host Jay Soni said, "There are very few artists who rule the TRP charts. You were a TRP king 20 years back, and you are still ruling the TRP chart today. In every sense, you are a TRP king".

IAN S

Technology continues to evolve at a breathtaking pace, transforming even the most ordinary aspects of our daily routines. From personal care and health monitoring to home automation and entertainment, innovators are constantly creating devices designed to make life easier, smarter, and more efficient. Some of the latest tech concepts push the boundaries of what we once thought impossible. Here are five fascinating technological innovations that showcase the future of smart living

Five next-gen tech breakthroughs



DIGITAL COLOUR-CHANGING NAILS

Fashion and technology are merging in exciting ways, and digital color-changing nails are a striking example of this trend. The iPolish press-on acrylic nails allow users to change nail colours instantly through a mobile app. These futuristic nails use a tiny electrical charge that alters the pigments embedded in the nail surface. With a simple tap on a smartphone, users can switch between hundreds of colors and patterns within seconds. This means you can match your nails with your outfit, mood, or occasion without visiting a salon or removing old nail polish. The technology is particularly appealing to people who enjoy experimenting with different looks but want the convenience of instant customization. While still in the experimental stage, innovations like this demonstrate how wearable tech is expanding beyond smartwatches and fitness bands into the world of beauty and personal style.



SMART MENSTRUAL HEALTH PAD

Women's health technology is also advancing rapidly with the development of smart menstrual products. The Vivoo FlowPad is a smart menstrual pad designed to track fertility and hormone markers. The device uses microfluidic technology to analyze menstrual flow and detect key hormone indicators. These insights are then sent to a smartphone app, providing users with information about fertility cycles and reproductive health. Such technology can help individuals better understand their bodies and make more informed decisions about health and family planning. It also represents a broader shift toward personalised healthcare, where real-time data allows people to monitor and manage their well-being more effectively.

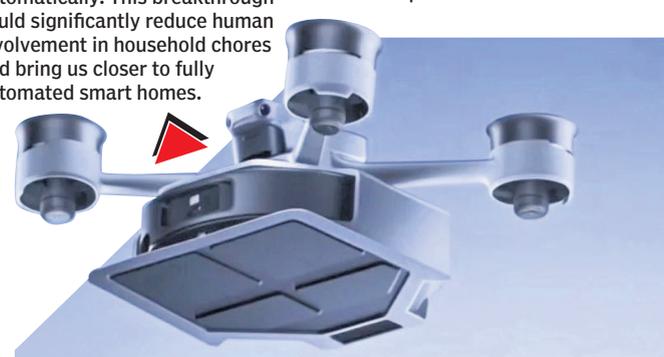


HEADPHONES THAT TRANSFORM INTO SPEAKERS

Audio technology has also taken a creative leap forward with hybrid devices that combine multiple functions in one gadget. The TDM Neo Hybrid headphones are designed with a flexible headband that allows them to transform into a speaker. When worn normally, they function like regular headphones, delivering high-quality personal audio. However, the headband can fold inward, converting the device into a portable speaker that can play music for a group. This innovative design eliminates the need to carry separate headphones and speakers. The hybrid approach is especially useful for travelers, outdoor enthusiasts, or anyone who enjoys sharing music with friends. By combining portability with versatility, this technology highlights how modern gadgets are evolving to serve multiple purposes in compact forms.

FLOATING VACUUM DRONE

Home cleaning may soon become far more efficient thanks to the MOVA Pilot 70, an innovative drone-powered platform designed to carry a robot vacuum between floors. Traditional robot vacuums can clean only a single floor, often requiring manual assistance to move them upstairs or downstairs. The MOVA Pilot 70 solves this problem by using drone technology to transport the vacuum from one floor to another, completely skipping the stairs. Once the vacuum finishes cleaning one level, the drone lifts it and places it on the next floor, allowing the cleaning process to continue automatically. This breakthrough could significantly reduce human involvement in household chores and bring us closer to fully automated smart homes.



These five innovations illustrate how technology is moving beyond traditional gadgets into nearly every aspect of daily life, from beauty and entertainment to healthcare and home maintenance. While some of these devices are still in early development stages, they offer a glimpse into a future where everyday objects become smarter, more connected, and more responsive to our needs.

TOILET-MOUNTED HEALTH MONITOR

Health technology is moving into unexpected areas, including the bathroom. One such innovation is Throne, a toilet-mounted health monitoring system designed to analyze bowel movements and track digestive health. The system uses cameras and microphones mounted inside the toilet bowl to observe patterns related to gut health. By analyzing data such as frequency, consistency, and other indicators, the device can provide insights into digestive health and possible medical conditions. The collected information is then processed and sent to a companion app, where users can monitor trends over time. Early detection of digestive issues could help people seek medical attention sooner and maintain better overall health. Although the idea may seem unusual at first, experts believe that continuous health monitoring could become a key part of preventive medicine in the future.





BOSTON'S STICKY TRAGEDY

Though molasses is typically associated with sweetness and cooking, few would imagine it as a deadly force capable of destroying buildings and claiming lives. Yet, the Great Molasses Flood, one of the strangest industrial disasters ever recorded, proved otherwise—killing 21 people and injuring at least 150 in Boston January 15, 1919

On a cold winter afternoon in Boston, Massachusetts, an industrial accident created one of the most bizarre and tragic disasters in history. What seemed like an ordinary storage tank filled with molasses suddenly burst, releasing a massive tidal wave of thick, sticky syrup that tore through the city streets.

The incident, known as the Great Molasses Flood, occurred January 15, 1919, and killed 21 people while injuring about 150 others. Though molasses is usually associated with sweetness and cooking, on that day it became a deadly force capable of destroying buildings and claiming lives.

A giant tank full of molasses

The disaster began with a huge storage tank located in Boston's North End neighborhood on Commercial Street. The tank belonged to the Purity Distilling Company, a subsidiary of the United States Industrial Alcohol Company. It had been constructed in 1915 to store molasses shipped from the Caribbean.

Molasses was extremely valuable at the time. It was used to produce industrial alcohol, which was in high demand during World War I for making explosives and other materials. Because of this demand, companies built large tanks to store the sticky liquid before processing it.

The Boston tank was enormous. It measured about 50 feet high and 90 feet wide and could hold up to 2.3-2.5 million gallons of molasses.

However, the tank had problems from the beginning. Residents living nearby often reported hearing strange rumbling noises coming from it. Even worse, molasses frequently leaked through the seams. Local children sometimes collected the dripping molasses in buckets. Instead of repairing the tank properly, the company reportedly painted it brown to hide the leaks. These warning signs would soon prove disastrous.

The day the tank exploded

At around 12:30 p.m. January 15, 1919, a loud rumbling sound echoed across the neighborhood. Moments later, the enormous steel tank suddenly ruptured.

More than 2.3 million gallons of mo-

lasses burst out in a matter of seconds. Witnesses described a massive wave of thick, brown syrup racing through the streets.

The molasses formed a wave estimated to be 15 to 25 feet high, moving at speeds of up to 35 miles per hour, fast enough to knock people off their feet and sweep away buildings.

Despite the common saying "slow as molasses," the sheer weight and pressure of millions of gallons made the flood move like a powerful tsunami.

Destruction across the north end

The sticky wave quickly spread through Boston's crowded North End neighborhood, destroying everything in its path.

Buildings collapsed as the heavy molasses slammed into them. An elevated railway structure was severely damaged and a nearby fire station was pushed off its foundation. Cars, wagons and debris were tossed aside by the thick flood.

People had almost no time to escape. Workers eating lunch nearby were suddenly engulfed by the sticky mass. Horses pulling carts were also trapped and drowned in the syrup.

Many victims died after being trapped

or suffocated in the molasses, while others were crushed by debris from collapsing buildings. By the end of the disaster, 21 people had died and about 150 others were injured.

Rescue efforts in a sea of molasses

Rescue operations began almost immediately. Police officers, firefighters, Red Cross workers and even sailors from a nearby naval training ship rushed to help the victims.

But the thick molasses made rescue extremely difficult. People attempting to move through the sticky syrup found themselves stuck. The cold January weather made the molasses even thicker, slowing rescue efforts further. Victims had to be pulled out slowly and rescuers struggled to walk through the waist-deep syrup. Some people were trapped for hours before they could be freed.

Weeks of cleanup and lingering smell

Cleaning up the disaster was an enormous challenge. Workers used

saltwater from the nearby harbour to wash away the molasses from streets, buildings and sidewalks.

The cleanup took weeks, and the sticky residue spread throughout the area. Even after the streets were cleared, residents claimed that Boston's North End smelled faintly of molasses for years afterward, especially on hot summer days.

The court case and new safety rules

After the disaster, more than 100 lawsuits were filed against the United States Industrial Alcohol Company. Victims and their families argued that the tank had been poorly built and unsafe.

The company initially claimed that the explosion was caused by sabotage. However, after a lengthy investigation involving thousands of witnesses and thousands of pages of testimony, investigators concluded that the tank had been improperly designed and constructed.

In the end, the company was found responsible and ordered to pay damages to the victims. The case also led to stricter regulations and safety standards for industrial construction across the United States.

A disaster that became history

The Great Molasses Flood remains one of the strangest industrial disasters ever recorded. A substance normally associated with sweetness caused massive destruction and loss of life in a matter of seconds.

More than a century later, the story of Boston's molasses disaster still fascinates historians and the public alike. It serves as a reminder of how industrial negligence and poor construction can turn even the most harmless-seeming materials into deadly forces.

The sticky wave that swept through Boston in 1919 may have faded into history, but its lessons about safety, accountability, and engineering continue to influence modern industry today.



A file photo of the mishap scene

OP DESK