

APRIL 16-22, 2023

SUNDAY POST

HERE . NOW



Odisha's craft entrepreneurs

Catalysts of change

P 3,4
COVER
STORY



Family time

On most Sundays I rest up and stay home with my wife. We spend time together preparing lunch and doing the dishes together. For evenings, there's most often a show scheduled.



With wife

Absolute cricket buff

My father is a binge watcher of movies. On most weekends we discuss cinemas or cricket as I'm an ardent follower of the game. Besides, if there's no show scheduled on Sundays, I find myself playing cricket with the kids around.



With friends

Riten Pattnaik, a 30-year-old from Sambalpur, is blessed with multiple talents. He is a graphic designer by profession while doing standup comedy in Odia is his passion. Needless to say Riten commands a sizeable fan following for tickling people's funny bones. The founder of Komedy Countdown Odisha (KCO) and winner of Canvas Laugh Club, Mumbai loves to cook for his family when he gets a break

Lone explorer

I believe that creativity flourishes in solitude. As constantly being 'on' doesn't give a chance to our brain to unwind and replenish, I prefer isolated places where I can sit and plan for my future shows.

Hostel chef

Being an unofficial cook during my hostel days, I am the perfect person for hostel-style recipes. My family loves when I prepare chicken in that style.



SMRUTI REKHA BARIK, OP

WhatsApp This Week

Only on Sunday POST!

Send in your most interesting WhatsApp messages and memes received to: features.orissapost@gmail.com And we will publish the best ones

THE BEST MEMES OF THIS ISSUE

- Smaller babies may be delivered by storks but the heavier ones would need a crane!
A bus station is where a bus stops. A train station is where a train stops. On my desk, I have a work station..
Why did the scientist install a knocker on his door? He wanted to win the No-bell prize!
The deeper the pit you're falling into, the more chance you have to learn how to fly.



ADDRESSING SOCIETAL ISSUES

Sir, The Sunday POST's recent cover story, "Breathing Life into Art" (April 9) made for an interesting read. It highlights how World Art Day (April 15) celebrations reinforce the connection between artistic expression and society. These celebrations certainly create awareness of the diverse range of artistic creations and emphasize the contribution of artists towards sustainable development. In the article under the sub-head Touching the Chords of Sensibility, the role of music in addressing societal issues is explored. The efforts of singer Susmita Das in raising awareness of contemporary community-based issues such as environmental conservation, women's empowerment, tribal and folk music, and Odia pride are praiseworthy. Similarly, painter Firdausi Tabassum's initiative in mobilising public opinion in Nirbhaya case and sensitising people during COVID-19 pandemic is commendable. I would like to thank the editorial team for underlining the role of artists on this occasion.

PARUL BANDYOPADHYAY, KOLKATA

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. Please 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



Odisha's craft entrepreneurs

Catalysts of change

At a time of globalisation when India is overexposed to cultures from across the world, a few entrepreneurs constantly keep reminding people to embrace and adorn the local culture with a sense of pride

SMRUTI REKHA BARIK, OP

Be it handlooms or handicrafts, there is one thing common to both: they have that humane touch and affection through which an artisan tries to express his feelings and experience for a living. In an era of industrialisation, when every product in the nooks and crannies of our house is almost factory-made, handicrafts and handlooms keep us adhered to that indigenous identity of ours. They provide us with a sense of connectivity with nature and creativity of generations unadulterated.

Today, the Indian handlooms and handicrafts sector is considered one of the largest unorganised sectors after agriculture and forms an integral part of rural and semi-rural livelihoods. Few entrepreneurs are trying to organise the market and bridge the gap between consumers and producers, even though it's quite a herculean task. Along with crafting a successful business out of it, they are trying to create awareness among the masses about the ethereal impact the sector possesses. The Sunday POST spoke to a few of these entrepreneurs who are striving hard to keep the heritage alive:

Kavya on quest

Before joining the hospitality and lifestyle sector quitting her highly-paid job, **Kavya Saxena** from Rajasthan worked in the corporate sector for eleven years after securing an MBA



from the Loyola Institute of Business Administration (LIBA). But it was during the COVID-19 pandemic that she found her true calling and that was to explore rural India.

She collaborated with automotive manufacturer Mahindra & Mahindra on a one-of-a-kind eight-month-long journey that offered her an opportunity to travel across rural India, showcasing the skills of the underprivileged artisans. Odisha was her first pitstop in January 2021, when she visited Mayurbhanj and Koraput. That trip made her fall in love with the state. After the end of her quest, she settled in Odisha, where Craftpotli was born. Talking about her venture, she says, "Craftpotli is a tribal-focused enterprise, trying to make the intangible heritage of Adivasi clusters across India and Asia accessible in terms of stories, art, product and experiences. Started in Odisha, the enterprise is expanding to other states like Arunachal Pradesh, Jharkhand and Chhattisgarh."

Recalling the early days, she shares, "In Odisha, I found out that ikkat and sabai were the only products from the state being sold outside. However, there was huge potential in the turmeric from Koraput due to its ample production and inefficient utilisation. Building a partnership with Odisha Rural Development and Marketing Society (ORMAS), which was already working with the Adivasi clusters to utilise it and turn it into bath bars, we strategized to scale up their turmeric bathing bars and take them to the next level. They started with small retail; we had our branding and packaging, focused on zero waste.

She goes on to add: "Parallely, we created a line for golden grass eco-friendly packaging, where smaller brands could replace their packaging with the same, which was economical, handy and lightweight. We also dabbled a lot in Dongria-Kondh textiles and

currently, we are working with other tribal clusters to make it big in 2023. All of these ideas came from Koraput."

Sharing the limitations of endeavour, she said, "We struggled to operate in Odisha, specifically in Koraput, because we didn't



Kavya working with tribals of Koraput

have access to consumers here, and there are a lot of logistical problems in terms of the production facility, transportation, storage and scalability. We aimed for the Adivasi or Kondh women to be financially independent and supervise the production. We have been getting requests to scale up the production from Gujarat and a lot of other states, but we don't want to make factory-produced stuff, so networking is a big challenge, and we don't get access to updated information."

It was Google for Startups that came forward as a silver lining when it incubated Craftpotli and gave both knowledge and

consulting. Sharing her success story, Kavya says, "Today, Koraput turmeric bar is our highest selling SKU (stock keeping unit) from February 2022 to January 2023. The product has alone generated revenue of over Rs. 6 lakhs. It's huge because we are dealing with 20 other SKUs. Koraput bars have been selected as a case study by TISS Mumbai."

She banks on the expansion of the enterprise and says, "2023 will be our year of expansion and backing up. We plan to revamp our website and add more products with a better shelf life."

GalangGabaan- A venture created out of love and passion

In the Santhali language, 'GalangGabaan' means 'creating something out of love and passion'. Keeping that vision in mind, **Lipsa Hembram** launched GalangGabaan, a women's clothing brand in 2014. A NIFT Hyderabad graduate, fashion designer and entrepreneur with fourteen years of experience in the industry, Lipsa is also the grooming director at Skillzage which is a life skills development company.



Narrating her journey, the Founder and Creative Head of GalangGabaan says, "I had already identified my strengths when I decided to pursue my bachelor's in design. After that, it has been unidirectional to opening my brand, GalangGabaan, with an assortment of ideas and a range of smart wear for women who are rooted, appreciate textile and believe in simplicity. The brand is based on one ideology: sustainability and uniqueness in design without reproduction of the same. So, it has been an exciting journey, fueling that ideology every day."



Dhokra Art by KalaKart

She adds, "Taking inspiration from daily lifestyles and high fashion trends, we create a collection that ensembles textiles and handcrafts from Odisha to bring the culture to the forefront in a contemporary essence."

She believes in the

cilitates authentic and traditional handicrafts and handlooms directly from the artisans, along with their craft stories. **Shweta Mishra**, hailing from Bihar and currently based in



Bhubaneswar, along with two others with a similar vision of creating grassroot impacts through business, built the



A KalaKart artisan at work

active participation of the local community in the process. "I advocate the idea of engaging local artisans and talents. I source my fabrics from Kotpad and my tailoring unit has staff from in and around Bhubaneswar," says Lipsa.

Grassroot impacts through business

KalaKart is yet another one-of-a-kind e-commerce platform in the making that fa-

platform under Paz Farming and Solutions Pvt. Ltd.

Shweta has a background in travel and writing, and she currently handles marketing and the front end of the venture. **Surya Mishra**, the other founder of KalaKart and an IIT and IIM alumnus, handles the finances. Mishra, who had years of corporate experience, came back to Bhubaneswar and worked as a professor at a B-school until recently. **Sourabh Choudhury** from Koraput handles the operations and has an entrepreneurial background in organic farming. Three of them, with dynamic personalities and decent academic backgrounds, have chosen to build something for the communities, taking the road less taken.

"In October 2022, we decided that handicrafts and handlooms needed a brand because

of their diversity and depth. Hence, KalaKart was born. We realised that there is little to no means for authentic traditional artisans to tell their stories or sell their products without middlemen. They do not get the amount they deserve. So we got in touch with national award-winning traditional Pattachitra artist Bibhu Maharana from Dandasahi village and a young Pattachitra artist from Raghurajpur, Sachikant Sahoo. We then explored Dhokra art and started working with Sanatana Pradhan from Nuagaon, Dhenkanal. We also explored handlooms, and now we work with Ajay Mahapatra and his wife Ranjulata Mahapatra," says Shweta, sharing the enterprise's journey.

Describing the vision of the company, she says, "Our major driving forces are empathy and the spark of being catalysts for change. We are further going to bring onboard more artisans from different traditional handicrafts and handlooms from all corners of the country. We work with artisans on a partnership basis. Whatever they quote, we pay them without any bargains or cost reductions. One of the most important factors of empowerment is money, especially for local communities. Once the trust is built, it is going to stay only if we deliver our promises. Local artisans have stayed with us for so long primarily because of our unflinching support towards them, their craft, and their cause."

Bringing Odisha handloom to the fore

Orissa by Tania (OBT) is a handloom and lifestyle product venture started in 2019 by **Tania Khosla Taneja**. Tania, who returned to Odisha after nine years, was working as a corporate lawyer at Khaitan and Co, Delhi post her LL.M in 2010 from Duke University School of Law of the United States.



Sharing her inspiration behind the venture, she says, "As someone who loves nature, I like to explore new places and travel. I am a

certified open-water diver and golfer. All these experiences have provided me with a better understanding of art and beauty. OBT is a homegrown brand, with sustainable solutions being an integral part of its ethos. We are on a mission to revive age-old techniques of fabric production. The endeavour produces modern and comfortable silhouettes and products while increasing awareness."

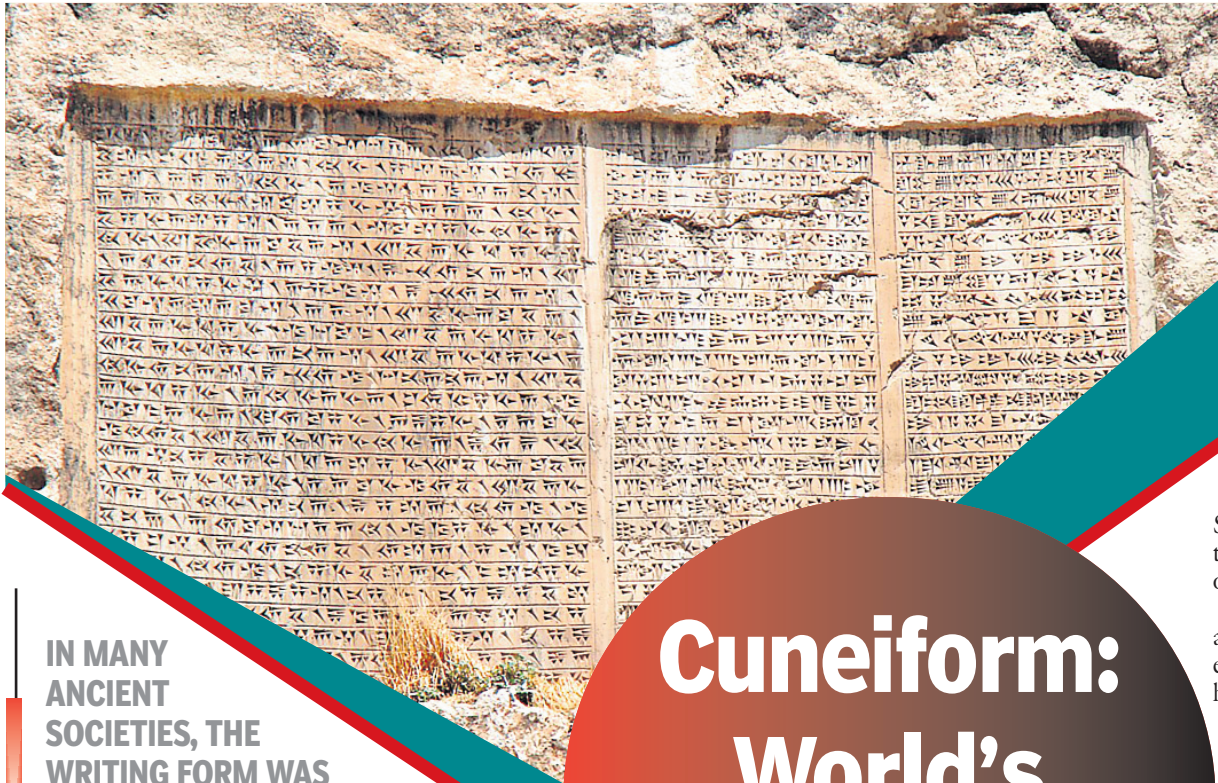
She further elaborates on the consumer behaviour of current times and says, "Today's consumer is conscious of their carbon footprint and wants information about the origin of the product. We are very transparent about our processes and often use our Instagram page for this purpose (@OrissabyTania)."

"OBT has a unique presentation style. We are constantly reinventing our work and thinking outside the box. Odisha handloom has so much potential. We started small and now have customers in many countries all over the globe. During the Indian Chamber of Commerce (ICC) Women's Entrepreneurship Council (INWEC) Fashion and Lifestyle event in January 2023, we presented our first runway show," claims an elated Tania, sharing her breakthrough.

Asked about the challenges, she responds "Visiting tribal areas can be challenging as there is a language barrier, but it has all been part of the learning curve. Being a lawyer, I was learning on the job and educating myself by visiting many clusters about weaving and dyeing techniques, thread counts and designs. It's all an extremely technical process."

On the issue of motivation, Tania says, "The biggest stimulus is seeing the response from our clients. Their encouragement keeps us going. OBT has clients from all over the globe that are handloom connoisseurs. The fabric speaks for itself, so we have a lot of happy regular customers. For me, success would be helping bring Odisha handloom to the fore and getting the artisans their due."

Expressing disappointment on the lack of backing for the artisans, she concludes, "Artisans that have the skill to do such beautiful work are not being promoted or supported to their true potential. This art may be lost forever as the younger generation is moving away from traditional professions."



IN MANY ANCIENT SOCIETIES, THE WRITING FORM WAS USED AT SEVERAL LEVELS, FROM BASIC FUNCTIONAL KNOWLEDGE FOR AVERAGE CITIZENS TO TECHNICAL USE FOR MEDICINE, MATH, AND BUSINESS

Cuneiform: World's oldest writing system

In short, cuneiform writing is logo-syllabic, meaning each of its written symbols – themselves composed of wedges pressed into the soft clay by a reed stylus – is representative of a spoken syllable or of a certain character or word.

Since the Sumerian language was monosyllabic, the cuneiform signs typically represented syllables, resulting in a word-syllabic script.

The writing became increasingly complex as time passed, and the pictographs evolved into conventionalized linear drawings. The writing system developed in stages, starting with pictographs and abstract signs and progressing to the more well-known wedge-shaped signs. As cuneiform transitioned from pure words to a partially phonetic script, the 'rebus principle' became necessary, where pictographic shapes were used to evoke an underlying sound form rather than the basic notion of the drawn object.

With time, the written script would become quite complex. Still, until the first century AD, written Sumerian continued to be utilized as a scribal language. The spoken language, on the other hand, eventually died out around 2000 BC.

Clay tablets were the most common writing material, and as a result, the marks took on a wedge shape from the slanted edge of a stylus. About 6,000 of these early cuneiform tablets have been discovered, while hundreds of thousands of later, more developed cuneiform tablets are housed in museums worldwide.

Regional influence

The Sumerian script became a complex system that could express just about any topic of human endeavor, and the written word quickly evolved into the backbone of a growing civilization. It even played a crucial role in disseminating writing to neighboring regions, such as Egypt, with its Egyptian hieroglyphs and the Indus Valley, where writing appeared not long after on official seals featuring individuals' names and titles.

Cuneiform was adopted by many of these neighboring Mesopotamian and ancient Near East cultures, each of whom adapted it to their different languages.

For example, Linear A and B, the phonetic scripts of Crete and mainland Greece, were likely influenced in this way.

In many ancient societies, cuneiform was used at many levels, from basic functional knowledge for average citizens to technical use for medicine, math, and business.

It could even be considered a complex skill and art form for scholars and played a significant role in Babylonian scribal education.

Ultimately, cuneiform played a crucial role across the ancient Near East.

Legacy and importance

Cuneiform is largely regarded as the ancient Sumerian culture's most important and influential contribution. Its creation spurred the birth of literature, allowing for legendary epics, like the Epic of Gilgamesh, to be recorded for all time.

Moreover, the historical significance of cuneiform lies in its role as a precursor to modern writing. Its ability to record and preserve critical information about ancient societies and civilizations enables us today to understand what life must have been like then.

Cuneiform provides not just a window into the past, but in its time, it represented a new technology, driving civilization and history ever forward.



Cuneiform, the world's first writing system, is a fascinating window into the lives of our ancestors. Developed over 5,000 years ago in Mesopotamia, cuneiform was used to record everything – including everyday transactions, personal letters, and epic poems, like the Epic of Gilgamesh.

Today, it leaves historians and archaeologists with an invaluable source of information about ancient history, literature, religion, and science.

One might picture a scribe living in ancient Babylon, carefully etching the wedges onto a clay tablet as the sun sets around him.

Understanding cuneiform and its history allows us to unlock not only the thoughts, secrets, and sagas of such a scribe; but those of an entire ancient world.

The Origin of Cuneiform Writing

Cuneiform is the earliest known writing system that we know of today. It was originally developed in ancient Mesopotamia for the Sumerian language around 3500 BC.

While the Sumerians were the earliest known users of cuneiform writing, the earliest written records in ancient Sumer are pictographic tablets from Uruk. This early form could only express the basic ideas of concrete objects.

However, the need to represent proper names would eventually bring about the use of pictographic shapes to evoke in the reader's mind an underlying sound – phonetic writing.

Few physical examples of proto-cuneiform survive from its earliest period – between 3200 and 3000 BC – but by the middle of the third millennium BC, cuneiform was everywhere, utilized for all things economic, religious, political, literary, and scholarly.

Over time, the cuneiform script evolved and was used for various languages beyond Sumerian, like

Akkadian, Hittite, and Elamite.

As far as modern archaeology has uncovered, the latest known use of cuneiform was likely around 75 AD, after which the script is thought to have fallen out of use. It was completely forgotten until its rediscovery and decipherment in more modern times.

Discovery and decipherment

Early attempts at cuneiform decipherment date back to medieval Arabo-Persian historians.

Later in the 15th century, European explorers like Giosafat Barbaro, Antonio de Gouvea, and Pietro Della Valle recorded and publicized the early writing systems, including Old Persian inscriptions.

Later, in 1638, Sir Thomas Herbert from England claimed cuneiform as legible and intelligible, and the linguist Thomas Hyde coined the term "cuneiform" in 1700.

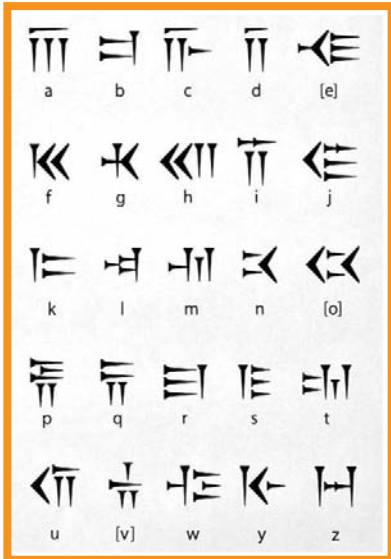
The race to decipher and translate cuneiform inscriptions would quicken throughout the late 1700s and into the 1800s.

Finally, the script was cracked open with the identification of the word "king" and the name of the great Persian king, Darius the Great, by Georg Friedrich Grotefend.

Old Persian cuneiform would be successfully deciphered by linguists, historians, and archaeologists across Europe, followed by the cuneiform scripts in other languages such as Elamite, Babylonian, Akkadian, and Sumerian. Deciphering cuneiform inscriptions took decades of intense, dedicated work by hundreds of scholars, but in the end, their findings opened an entirely new world to the annals of history.

Clay tablets and a written language

But how did cuneiform work? How did the ancient Mesopotamians write it?



Kajol on being body shamed

Kajol is no doubt one of the most popular and loved actresses of Hindi film industry. The actress has been successful since the early 90s and has been a leading choice of directors.

The actress recently revealed that she has been given several tags and called names in the industry when she stepped into the acting world. She heard remarks like, 'She's dark,' 'she's fat,' and 'she wears specs.' Although Kajol didn't let these remarks affect her, for the longest time she believed that she is not beautiful. The actress shared that she believed she was cool and intelligent, but she didn't have what it takes to be beautiful.

Kajol shared that she would tell herself that she is still doing well. The actress added, 'Well, I'm sticking around in the industry and I'm doing well. So, it must mean there's something about me that's making it work.' She didn't let the naysayers get into her head, but it was at the age of 32 or 33 that she got the confidence to look into the mirror and tell herself, 'look at the beauty.'

AGENCIES



Murder Mystery 2's Odisha connection



A screengrab from Hollywood movie *Murder Mystery 2*

Jennifer Aniston and Adam Sandler starrer *Murder Mystery 2*, which was released at Netflix recently saw huge response from the fans. In the film, two detectives played by Aniston and Sandler go in search of a 'maharaja' kidnapped during his wedding. In the movie there is a dance sequence featuring a song *King Di Wedding* where the detectives dance with the bride. The dance has been choreographed by Mahina Khanum with over 70 dancers.

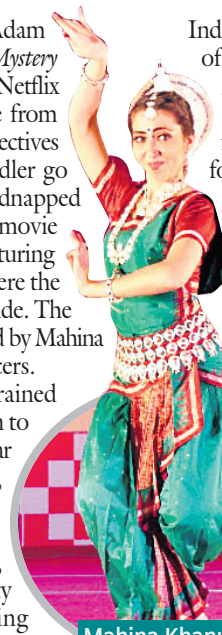
Paris-based Mahina, a trained Odissi Dancer who has been to Odisha including Bhubaneswar multiple times to perform, had learnt Odissi from Guru Shankar Behera.

Talking to Sunday POST, Khanum said Paris is a city where many films including

Indian movies are shot. "The Production of *Murder Mystery 2* called us in October 2021. Initially, they only wanted me to choreograph a dance. Then they asked for dancers, and later on they also asked for music. This is how my partner Avishai Leger-Tanger and I found ourselves casting 70 dancers and 10 musicians, creating the choreography, directing the composition of the song and staging the whole scene."

Odissi is her first love and main focus so she always tries to infuse it in her works, added the performer.

PNN



Mahina Khanum

Wamiqa's tribute to legends

Actress Wamiqa Gabbi's character in *Jubilee* is a tribute to actresses from that golden era, like Madhubala, Nargis, and others.

Wamiqa said, "I play the role of Niloufer Qureshi, an aspiring actress through the 1940's and 50's. She is unapologetically ambitious and willing to go the lengths to make it big. My research was completely based on all the actresses from that era, like Madhubala, Nargis, Asha Parekh, Waheeda Rahman, Geeta Bali, Mumtaz, Mala Sinha".

"I was extremely conscious of not imitating any of them but to create something of my own. This is my little homage to them to embrace their grace and perhaps try to recreate the memories of that elegant period of cinema".

The series stars Prosenjit Chatterjee, Aparshakti Khurana, Aditi Rao Hydari, Ram Kapoor in pivotal roles. The series is created and directed by Vikramaditya Motwane.

IAN S



Kapil roped in for Tabu's *The Crew*

Zwigato actor Kapil Sharma is reportedly a good fit for Kareena, Kriti and Tabu starrer *The Crew*. "Kapil has an amazing role in *The Crew*, and the team is extremely excited to have him onboard. In fact, his role will be a pleasant surprise for the audience. He will start filming for it soon," a source said. The actor-comedian is also expected to start filming his part of the movie soon at an international location which is not yet disclosed. An official confirmation from *The Crew* is still awaited. Earlier, Kriti Sanon had begun to shoot her part and so did Kareena Kapoor Khan. The film also features Diljit Dosanjh in a pivotal role.

The story of *The Crew* follows three women who work and hustle to move on with life. But as they try to make their way forward, their destinies lead them to some unexpected and unwarranted situations, leading them to get caught in a web of lies.

AGENCIES



Ruins of Sisupalgarh



Conservation of heritage assets is essential, not only for economic benefits but also to promote knowledge, creativity, and civic courtesy, says historian Anil Dhir

World Heritage Day – April 18

Leave a legacy

MADHUSMITA SAHU, OP

Destruction of cultural heritage is an attack on people and their fundamental rights – UN expert

As if issues like armed conflicts, earthquakes and other natural disasters, pollution and uncontrolled urbanization weren't enough threats to world heritage sites, in India, history is being re-written and mutilated to suit political narratives. At a time when many historical places of the country are being renamed at the sweet will of the powers that be, the celebration of World Heritage Day carries a great significance. This year's theme 'Working on the Future' highlights the need for immediate action to safeguard our heritage sites from a host of factors. Ahead of this day, a couple of experts share with **Sunday POST** their concerns on the threats to the heritage and the measures to be undertaken to address them.

'Preservation process should start from ground level'

Eminent historian and explorer **Anil Dhir**, who has been vocal about the preservation of various heritage sites in Odisha says, "It is our duty as citizens to respect and cherish the customs and history of not only our own communities but also of other communities. Human progress has always been built on the foundation of our past, both tangible and intangible. Cultural heritage has a positive impact on many aspects of community development, and it is important to recognise and celebrate the diversity of cultures around the world. Participating in



World Heritage Day is a positive step towards achieving this objective."

Elaborating more on cultural heritage, he continues: "It is typically associated with physical structures such as temples, palaces, and forts. However, intangible heritage also plays a significant role in expressing culture. In Odisha, there are 62 tribes, many of whom belong to the Primitive Group and have their own unique history and culture. Most of their culture is preserved orally as they lack a script, making it important to preserve their rich oral culture."



Mukteswar Temple

These apart, pre-historic sites such as Caves and Rock Shelters, are particularly fascinating, but many of them are located deep within dense forests and remain unexplored, he further says.

Citing an example of a tangible heritage Dhir mentioned about the Prachi Valley, a place that offers a timeline of Odishan temple architecture, documenting the state's civilisational history. He, however, laments that many of Odisha's heritage sites have been destroyed.

"One example is the cultural genocide that occurred in

Sisupalgarh, located on the outskirts of Bhubaneswar. Many ancient Buddhist sites near Chandikhole have also been destroyed over time. In Puri and Bhubaneswar's Old Town, mutts that had been around for centuries were destroyed in the name of progress, and reports of idol thefts from ancient temples are common. The preservation of heritage is essential, not only for economic benefits but also to promote knowledge, creativity, and civic courtesy," opines Dhir who strongly opposed the Srimandir Corridor project at Puri.

Asked what measures can be undertaken to preserve Indian heritage, Dhir, also a novelist, suggests, "It requires starting from the ground level. School and university curricula should include ancient Indian wisdom in the arts, sciences, and philosophies to educate students and the general public about our illustrious heritage. Besides, there is a need for a specialised department akin to the Tamil Nadu Police's separate wing that handles historical thefts."

"By conserving our history, customs, and monuments, we can ensure that future generations can also appreciate and celebrate our rich heritage," he concludes.

'Use technology to protect cultural and archaeological sites'

Deepak Kumar Nayak, a historian and heritage researcher who is a member of the Indian National Trust for Art & Cultural Heritage (INTACH), finds it difficult to choose just one Kalingan legacy for preservation. An enthusiast of Odishan tradition, Nayak believes that the essential identity of Odisha lies in most of its cultural heritage sites. These have enormous influence, and the potential to become major tourist destinations and generate significant revenue for locals if they are properly cultivated and if the community is well-informed and passionate about their art, architecture, and history. Therefore, he advocates the use of technology to aid in the preservation of cultural and archaeological sites.



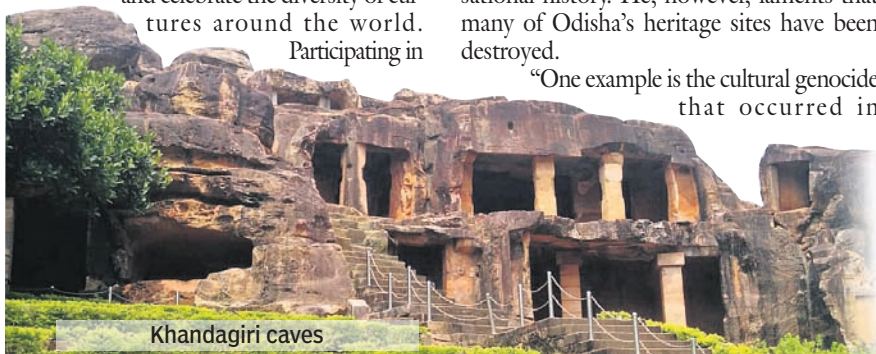
"The Archaeology Department should

always seek the aid of existing technology, such as Ground Penetrating Radar (GPR) study, which enables us to gain an understanding of subsurface things. Besides, social media platforms like Twitter, Facebook, and YouTube can be quite useful in raising awareness of heritage issues and alerting governmental agencies to any cultural or heritage damage," suggests Nayak.

He continues: "The cultural heritage sites represent the image of the state to the rest of the world, and they must be preserved to maintain the state's identity. Lack of documentation is the main obstacle to their preservation. Only a few hundred monuments have been jointly identified by the State Archaeology Department and the ASI, but Odisha may have the most historical, archaeological, and cultural landmarks. However, the majority of them are still missing from the government agencies' archaeological and cultural report."

Nayak warns that the number of cultural heritage sites that have been lost or damaged is extensive. In the course of INTACH's survey for historical sites in river valleys like the Mahanadi, Prachi, Ratnachira, and others, the members compiled data on hundreds of such historic sites that are no longer in existence. The fort of Sisupalgarh, which served as the former capital of the Great Chedi Emperor Kharavela, is among the most important lost monuments. Hundreds of acres of this designated monument's land have now been reduced to only one or two acres, making it possible that the place will one day vanish completely. The Sisupalgarh case should serve as a lesson for all government agencies and heritage campaigners. Protecting historic locations like Sisupalgarh from indiscriminate land acquisition and new building should be a top priority, he says adding that numerous cultural landmarks are still under threat, numbering in the hundreds.

Sites like the Nala Dynasty-era Jain and Vishnu Temples in Gorahandi, Koraput, the Bhaumakara-era Ramachandi Temple in Tentulia, Cuttack, the Ganga-era Ruined Shiva Temple in Ganeswarpur, Cuttack, the Pandita Matha in Narasinghpata, and many others require immediate attention, shares a worried Nayak.



Khandagiri caves



Priya



PHOTO : KUMAR SHARAT, OP

Costume design: Benorita Dash