

DECEMBER 10-16 2023

SUNDAY POST

HERE . NOW

International Mountain Day – December 11

Preserving the peaks

COVER STORY

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MY SUNDAY

Known as the Hindi voice of South icons like Allu Arjun, Ram Charan, Mahesh Babu, Jr NTR, and several Hollywood actors, Sanket Mhatre is one of the most sought-after names in India's dubbing industry. His captivating shows have also earned Mhatre devoted following in Dubai, New York, London, Australia, and a few Asian countries. In his spare time, the voice actor enjoys reading graphic novels and Manga comics



With a pal's pet

A day to refuel

Though I'm a freelancer, I prefer not to work on Sundays. Because it's not just a day to unwind, I also reset myself for the week ahead and indulge in things like music, books, or cinema, which helps sharpen my skills.

Sweet escapes

This is the day when I love to satiate my taste buds. Sweets tempt me like nothing else. Sneaking into the fridge and having chocolates is my weekly practice. I also have a weakness for homemade chicken curry and chapati.

Family time

Spending a few hours with family on a Sunday is a must. Exploring the city like tourists, enjoying board games, getting indulged in free hand painting, and having reading sessions are regular activities that we do on holidays.

Friendship hook

I have a good group of friends from almost every walk of life. We frequently get together for breakfast, engage in fitness activities, and travel together on holidays, and Sundays are no exception.



With friends

MADHUSMITA SAHU, 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

- I was at an ATM and this old lady asked me to help check her balance, so I pushed her over.
- When do monkeys fall from the sky? During Ape-ril showers!
- What do you call the security outside of a Samsung Store? A: Guardians of the Galaxy.
- Which tea is the most popular in psychiatries? Insanitea.

TRADITION VS MODERNITY

Sir, The evolving landscape of Odia weddings reflects a delicate balance between tradition and modernity. The bride-to-be, Diptimayee, acknowledges the influence of Western styles through social media but emphasises the importance of preserving core Odia traditions during the main ceremony. Event planner Jyoti Ranjan Sahoo highlights the challenge of maintaining the balance to ensure cultural roots are respected. In contrast, voices like Ranjana and Sujata express concerns about the erosion of traditional values. Ranjana emphasises the need to strike a balance between innovation and tradition, while Sujata laments the fading charm of age-old customs due to a growing inclination towards modernity. Personally, I align with the concerns expressed by the elderly, acknowledging that the fusion of modern elements with traditional roots may potentially jeopardise the transmission of these valuable traditions to future generations.

SAMIKSHYA PRADHAN, SAMBALPUR

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

International Mountain Day – December 11

Preserving the peaks



MOUNTAINS ARE NOT MERE GEOGRAPHICAL FEATURES; THEY EMBODY BIODIVERSITY HOTSPOTS, ESSENTIAL WATER SOURCES, AND ARE CULTURAL TREASURES. THESE ARE REASONS ENOUGH ONE SHOULD JOIN THE WORLDWIDE DRIVE TO PRESERVE THESE AWE-INSPIRING NATURAL WONDERS FOR FUTURE GENERATIONS, SAY EXPERTS

MADHUSMITA SAHU, OP

Nestled in the eastern part of India, lay the picturesque mountainous regions of Odisha. Towering peaks, lush forests, and pristine landscapes paint a portrait of natural beauty that captivates millions of hearts. However, beneath this enchanting exterior, a tale of environmental peril unfolds, threatening the very essence of these majestic mounds.

Now the ancient whispers of the trees tell a story of relentless deforestation. The once-virgin forests are now scarred by the marks of human activity, as the relentless pursuit of timber and agricultural expansion has stripped the mountains of their green cloak. The loss of biodiversity echoes through the valleys, leaving behind a symphony of sorrow.

Amidst the challenges posed by deforestation and mining, the looming spectre of climate change casts a dark shadow over the mountains of Odisha. The once-predictable weather patterns became erratic, with unpredictable rainfall and rising temperatures threatening the delicate ecosystems. Ahead of International Mountain Day, a few environment lovers shared with **Sunday POST** their thoughts on the importance of mountains in ecosystems.



'Conservation of mountains indispensable to minimise climate catastrophe'

Sharing his views on the current

state of mountains, **Ranjan Panda**, an environmentalist and also known as the Water Man of Odisha, says,



"Mountains play a crucial role in local ecosystems, serving as shared resources for both hillside and valley communities. They are essential for the survival of numerous plant and animal species and serve as the origin of many rivers. Additionally, mountains significantly impact local rainfall patterns. Ignoring their significance is not an option, as they are indispensable to various aspects of life."

Panda, speaking about the peaks in Odisha, adds, "Our mountainous regions, particularly

those rich in valuable minerals, face significant jeopardy. Unfortunately, we have overlooked the vital ecosystem services that mountains offer. Instead, there is a hastiness to extract minerals through mining, posing a substantial threat to these landscapes. The repercussions extend to numerous local communities experiencing the adverse effects of mining and deforestation. Indigenous groups, in particular, bear a heavy burden, as their socio-economic and cultural foundations are intricately tied to mountainous and forested ecosystems. The Niyamgiri



This area scales the mountain regions

struggle by local communities vividly illustrates the complex interdependence these people share with their hills and forests."

He ends by saying, "Across numerous indigenous territories worldwide, communities are actively safeguarding their mountains, forests, and water resources, yielding advantages not only for themselves but for all of humanity. Similar instances abound in Odisha. Indeed, on a global scale, even within scientific circles, there is a growing recognition that these conservation endeavours are indispensable in shielding humanity from the repercussions of climate change. From my perspective, the preservation of mountain ecosystems is imperative for ensuring our water security, conserving biodiversity, and adapting to the challenges posed by climate change."

'Preserving the mountainous regions calls for a holistic approach'

Soubhagya Kumar Rath, a mountaineer, shares his opinion on why International Mountain Day is important. He says, "International Mountaineering Day holds great significance for climbers, emphasising the essential need to preserve the ecosystem of mountains. Notably, prominent peaks such as Mt. Stok Kangri (20,200 ft) have been off-limits for expeditions since 2020. This restriction stems from mountaineers contaminating the Stok River and excessive water consumption during expeditions, leading to protests from villagers against tourism activities."



Scaled mountain of Odisha



Listing a few adverse impacts, he adds, "The influx of tourists to mountain towns during the summer exacerbates pressure on infrastructure, including roads, hotels, transportation, and water resources. The softer mountain soil increases the risk of landslides, and the construction of expansive roads, bridges, dams, and structures has detrimental effects on environmental sustainability."

Soubhagya further says, "Mountains are calm and peaceful. The atmosphere is free from pollution. The valleys are full of herbs, which benefit the masses. Population density in mountains is quite low compared to that of sea level cities. But mountains are important for ecology. All the big rivers originate from the mountains. Their cleanliness and maintenance of flow should be paramount for ecology. The excessive use of plastic bottles and garbage by tourists negatively affects the mountains."

Expressing concern for mountains in Odisha, the mountaineer shares, "The mountainous regions of Odisha face a precarious environmental future, with threats that imperil their ecological balance and pristine beauty. Deforestation, driven by logging and agricultural expansion, erodes the natural habitats crucial for the region's unique flora and fauna. As a mountaineer, witnessing the dwindling forests means losing not just the breathtaking landscapes but also the very essence of the

mountains. He continues: "Mining activities further worsen the environmental challenges. The extraction of minerals not only scars the mountainsides but also contaminates water sources, impacting both the local ecosystems and the communities downstream. This poses a direct threat to the fragile mountain environment that is often home to endemic species."

On the conservation of mountains, Soubhagya suggests that preserving the mountainous regions of Odisha necessitates a holistic approach involving sustainable forestry practices, responsible mining regulations, and concerted efforts to mitigate the impacts of climate change.

The naturalist signs off by saying, "The onus is on us, as adventurers and nature enthusiasts, to advocate for conservation and tread lightly to ensure these majestic landscapes endure for future generations of mountaineers to explore and cherish."

'Preserving the mountain ecosystem can never be an individual effort'

Speaking on International Mountain Day, Debiprasad Kar, another mountain explorer from Jajpur, Odisha, says, "It is quite difficult to associate my love for the mountains with just a single event or moment. I would say it is a collection of numerous heart-filling moments, may they be small or big, and many memorable adventures that make me feel more and more connected to the mountains. Many of those moments have involved not only sunsets, sunrises, or mesmerising landscapes, but also the people I have got to meet along the way and the way they have always welcomed me with open arms and a wide



smile. All of it surely makes me want to go back there again." Nonetheless, he doesn't undermine the importance of the day.

"International Mountain Day is crucial as it celebrates the majesty and significance of Earth's elevated landscapes. Mountains are not mere geographical features; they embody biodiversity hotspots, essential water sources, and cultural treasures. This day raises awareness about the environmental fragility of these regions, promoting sustainable practices to safeguard their ecosystems. As a mountain lover, it's a chance to emphasise the interconnectedness of all life and inspire global efforts to preserve these awe-inspiring natural wonders for future generations," opines the naturalist.

Being a mountain lover has opened his vision towards environmental conservation, says Kar.

On the protection of these natural wonders, he adds that preserving the mountain ecosystem and biodiversity can never be an individual effort. "We, as a community, have to understand its importance. The best way to do that is by educating others, by making people understand how our lives are intertwined with the mountain ecosystem," Kar says.

And to drive the point home, he suggests, "We can begin by acquainting ourselves with the forests and mountain ranges near our homes. Initiating activities like guided forest walks can foster a community that comprehends the elements of these ecosystems and their relevance to daily life."



Mining in Odisha has stripped many poor households in villages of Keonjhar



Destinations to escape haze

AS INDIAN METROS GASP FOR CLEAN AIR, IT'S TIME TO TAKE A MUCH-NEEDED BREAK. HERE'S A LIST OF QUAIN BEACH TOWNS, ISLANDS, AND VINEYARDS WHERE LUNGS CAN BREATHE EASY WHILE TAKING A PLUNGE IN LOCAL CULTURE AND CUISINE



Sopron, Hungary

Tucked in northwestern Hungary, Sopron is a quaint wine-producing region with its bucolic terrain creating a tranquil atmosphere. Dotted with heritage sites and ancient Roman empire ruins, you can enjoy the bird's eye view from a 13th Century Fire Tower and relive the past at the Fabricius house, just a short walk from the tower. Visit Esterházy, Classicist Széchenyi Castle, and the Old Synagogue. Nature lovers can hike in the Fert-Hanság National Park, home to the 20,000-year-old Lake Fert, a UNESCO World Heritage Site. To cap off the day, go wine-tasting at the wineries, especially Taschner Wine and Champagne House for Blue Frankish and Green Veltliner. Try local delicacies, Fert Lake fish soup, bean soup with plums, and Winzer cabbage.

ESTIMATED AQI: LESS THAN 10 (IQAIR.COM)

South Shetland Islands, Antarctica

Far from the effects of industrialisation, Antarctica makes for a perfect clear-air destination. The South Shetland Islands, a 540 km-long chain of islands lined with ice-filled fjords and massive icebergs, are populated by seabirds, penguins, seals, and whales. The best way to explore it is with Antarctica 21 fly-cruise expedition. After a luxurious ride to the peninsula, you can reach the islands on inflatable Zodiacs accompanied by polar guides. The unique aspect is that the routes are altered as per the climate, rendering a different experience every time. Apart from the South Shetland Islands, the voyage includes visits to the Antarctic Sound, the Gerlache Strait, and the Penola Strait.

ESTIMATED AQI: LESS THAN 15 (ACCUWEATHER.COM)



Izu Peninsula, Japan

Located in the picturesque Shizuoka province, the Izu Peninsula stands out for its captivating natural beauty, pristine beaches, upscale highland resorts, and hot springs. An idyllic seaside getaway, this region is surrounded by mountains, striking rock formations, and the expansive sea, ensuring fresh air. The allure of Izu is enhanced by its proximity to some of Japan's best beaches and historically rich Atami and Shimoda. The distinct charms of Higashi Izu, Nishi Izu, and Ito City contribute to its appeal. It is accessible via a swift bullet train journey from Central Tokyo, taking just under an hour.

ESTIMATED AQI: LESS THAN 30 (AQI.IN)



Amboseli, Kenya

What better way to seek repose in nature than venturing into the great African plains? Kenya's Amboseli National Park has rich biodiversity and hosts hundreds of bird species, from pelicans to kingfishers and raptor species. For an unobstructed view of the free-ranging elephants in their natural habitat, a stay at OlTukai Lodge

Amboseli is recommended. Overlooking Mount Kilimanjaro offers an intimate connection with nature, complemented by eco-conscious amenities. The resort also facilitates encounters with the local Maasai tribe for an immersive cultural experience.

ESTIMATED AQI: LESS THAN 15 (PLUMELABS.COM)



Udon Thani, Thailand

Surrounded by forests, paddy fields and hills, Thailand's Udon Thani province offers an unadulterated atmosphere for outdoor activities like camping, glamping, rafting, trekking, and safari. From the natural wonders of Phu Foi Lom Eco-Park and Red Lotus Lake to the historical charms of Phu Phra Bat Historical Park and Ban Chiang Museum, this Thai countryside comprises a multitude of attractions. You can see its thriving

local textile and silk markets, buy handmade artefacts at the night markets, and relish Thai food. Don't miss trying Isaan food at the highly acclaimed restaurant Samuay& Sons. To ease travel formalities, Thailand is offering Indians a visa-exempted entry until May 10, 2024.

ESTIMATED AQI: LESS THAN 25 (IQAIR.IN)



Zanzibar, Tanzania

Zanzibar, one of the main islands in the Tanzanian archipelago, is gifted with tranquillity. Endless stretches of white sand meet crystal-clear blue waters flanked by palm leaves gently sifting warm sunlight. Tucked away in Kizimkazi village is The Residence Zanzibar, a private pool villa-only retreat. Guided by the resort's herbalist, you can relish the island's clean, refreshing air as they journey through villages and spice plantations. The uninhabited Pungwe and Kwale islands within the Menai Bay Conservation Area provide an opportunity to enjoy a seafood barbecue amidst the invigorating, untainted air.

ESTIMATED AQI: LESS THAN 20 (PLUMELABS.COM)

La Digue, Seychelles

Known for its awe-inspiring landscape and beach idylls, La Digue is one of the most hankered islands in Seychelles. The allure is heightened by granite formations, golden sands, and gently swaying palm trees. The clear water of its bays is perfect for kayaking and snorkelling. Relax at the jaw-dropping beachside of Anse Source D' Argent, dip in the natural pools of Anse Cocos, or hike to Anse Marroncoves and jungles.

ESTIMATED AQI: LESS THAN 15 (ACCUWEATHER.COM)



Cam Ranh, Vietnam

Cam Ranh finds itself on top of a Vietnam travel itinerary due to its unspoilt natural vistas and proximity to Nha Trang coastal town. With white sand beaches, vibrant coral reefs, and forests, this southwestern region serves as an excellent clean-air getaway. One of the best ways to indulge in barefoot luxury and exceptional Vietnamese hospitality is by staying at The Anam Cam Ranh. Deeply rooted in the cultural aesthetics of Vietnam, it offers epicurean journeys, including authentic traditional and global gourmet meals made using locally sourced ingredients and produce. Visit the Ponagar Cham Towers, Long Son Pagoda, the Institute of Oceanography, and Vinh Hy Bay.

ESTIMATED AQI: LESS THAN 40 (ACCUWEATHER.COM)

Bhumi spills beans on cost of styling

Actress Bhumi Pednekar has opened up about the costs actors incur for styling and talked about the expenses involved and reflected on her early days in the industry.

In a discussion with Ranveer Allahbadia, Bhumi said that after debuting with *Dum Laga Ke Haisha*, she won many Best Debut awards and revealed how she had to attend almost 15 award functions and revealed that her friend, who is a stylist, did not charge a single penny for the first two years.

The actor broke down the basic cost of styling and said, "Styling is a very big thing and it's a very expensive process. If you think about it, your styling will cost around Rs 15k to 20k, the car rental will be around Rs 15k to 20k and hair and makeup another Rs 20k. For a regular person spending Rs 75k to 80k for an event, which is basic, it's a lot. How can I go to my mother and say do this? I hustled then and I hustle now for different things." On the work front, Bhumi was recently seen in the film *Thank You For Coming*.

AGENCIES



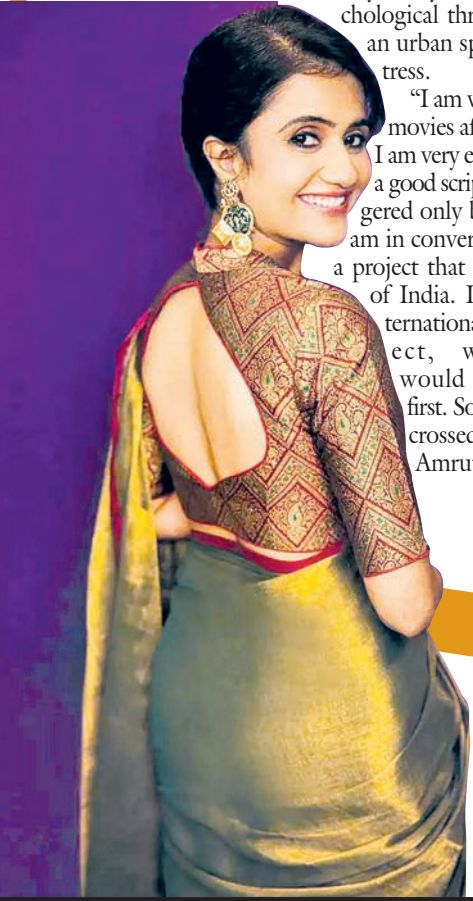
Lucky not to be typecast: Amruta

Actress Amruta Subhash, known for her role in *Lust Stories*, is thrilled with the love she has received and said that she is lucky to have never been stereotyped by any makers.

"I am very lucky, makers are not slotting me in any particular character. I am not stereotyped and that is a blessing. People told me after *Gully Boy* I only would get mother roles, but that did not happen. I did such different characters after *Gully Boy*. I played a bar dancer and an urban boss lady in my next. Now, I am doing a psychological thriller which is again it's an urban space," revealed the actress.

"I am working in Marathi movies after many years. I am very excited to have a good script. I get triggered only by scripts. I am in conversation with a project that is from out of India. It is an international project, which would be my first. So, fingers crossed," added Amruta.

AGENCIES



Ae Akasha Tale garnering rave reviews

At a time when Odia movies barely draw crowds to theatres, recently released *Ae Akasha Tale* seems to have broken the jinx.

Directed and produced by NRI filmmaker Subhendu Biswal and produced under the banner of StoryLab Creative Media, the movie has managed to hold its own on its second week. Heartwarming story, aesthetic landscapes, exquisite cinematography, powerful performances, and a few complex yet cleverly addressed social issues have made the right noises at the box office from the word go.

As per the plot, it revolves around the empowering journey of a young girl whose life takes an unexpected turn, compelling her to embark on a solo trip. The narrative beautifully unfolds as she endeavours to prove herself to her father, navigating through challenges and discovering her inner strength.

Lead actors Samarпита Dash and Abhishek Giri have mesmerised the audience with their natural performances, while veterans like Ashok Das and Pushpa Panda have done complete justice to their respective characters. The music scored by Gaurav Anand, Preet Priyo, and Ashish Pradhan and the folk dance and lyrics in tribal and other dialects of Odisha only add a layer of authenticity and cultural depth, showcasing Odisha's vibrant heritage. Also, the film's exquisite portrayal of Odisha's natural splendour has resonated with audiences. "The way the picturesque and lesser-known locales of the state are shot they take the viewer to another world," said a viewer. "It's like a visual feast that showcases the state's rich cultural legacy," commented another.

PNN



Disha to headline actioner

Actress Disha Patani and director Mohit Suri to team up for the third time after *Malang* and *Ek Villain Returns* in an untitled action film which will be produced by Vishal Rana.

According to sources close to the development, Mohit Suri and Disha are teaming up on an action film, which will be produced by Vishal Rana under his banner Echelon Productions. "Mohit and Vishal have been discussing a collaboration for a while now and things have finally fallen into place. The duo is all set to team up on a sleek action film, which will go on floors in January 2024," revealed a source close to the development.

The source further added, "It's a female-led action film and the director-producer duo feels that very few in India can pull off action sequences with conviction like Disha." On the work front, Disha will also be seen in *Kanguva* and *Kalki 2898 AD*.

AGENCIES

Indian airport lounges

Where to find the best local cuisine

Travelling is an experience that tantalises all our senses. From the sight of new horizons to the sound of adventure, and the touch of different cultures, it's a journey that's as much about the food as it is about the destination.

Airports, while often considered transient spaces, can offer a gateway to the culinary treasures of a region. Indian airport lounges, in particular, are where you can unroll on a flavourful journey even before you've taken off. In this article, we will explore the cuisines offered at airport lounges of some of the key cities in India, and discover the hidden gems in terms of the local cuisine they have to offer.

Goa's foodie delights

Goa, known for its pristine beaches and vibrant nightlife, is also a treasure trove of delicious local cuisine. As you wait for your flight at Goa International Airport, also known as the Manohar International Airport - be sure to sample some of the state's delectable dishes.

Known for the state-



Bebinca

of-the-art facilities, Encalm Lounge at the Goa airport serves the best of delicacies and provides an amazing seating area where travellers can unwind. The lounges are known to serve the local food with great variety and finesse. The Goan cuisine is a fusion of flavours influenced by its rich history, blending Portuguese and Indian culinary traditions.

One cannot miss Goan Sorak Coconut Curry - a mouth-watering dish made from Goan coconuts and onions, garlic and chillies, seasoned with a mix of aromatic spices. If you have a sweet tooth, savour Bebinca, a traditional Goan dessert. This layered pud-

ding is a sweet delight, rich with coconut and jaggery.

Delhi's diversity in food

Indira Gandhi International Airport in Delhi offers an array of dining experiences that reflect the city's diverse culinary landscape. There are various lounges at the IGI Airport, but the flagship lounges offer a different level of diversity altogether when it comes to the cuisines. Right from chefs preparing international cuisines with the Delhi touch, to inducing live stations from chefs presenting the best of the capital, right in front of your eyes - the Delhi Airport experience promises to be an amazing one. Delhi is a melting pot of cultures, and its food scene is a testament to this cultural diversity. With superior amenities imbibed at the core, Encalm Lounge offers the finest facilities, including lounge bays, a bar, a multi-cuisine buffet, live food counters, a kid's play area, a library, and a business centre.

Hyderabad's spice extravaganza

Known as the City of Pearls and the City of Nizams, Hyderabad is a place where history and food traditions merge beautifully. Rajiv Gandhi International Airport in Hyderabad is your gateway to the culinary treasures of this city. The Encalm lounge at Hyderabad Airport is known to boast a spacious extravaganza that ensures an amazing experience for travellers. Hyderabad is celebrated for its biryanis, and you can't leave without savouring one.

Hyderabadi Biryani is a fragrant rice dish made with tender marinated meat, saffron, and spices, slow-cooked to perfection.

Another delicacy to explore is Chicken Haleem, a rich and hearty stew made from wheat, barley, and chicken. It's commonly enjoyed during festivities but is available throughout the year. And don't forget to try Hyderabadi Mirchi Ka Salan, a spicy curry made with green chilies, peanuts, and sesame seeds, typically served with biryani.



Mirchi Ka Salan



Hyderabadi Biryani

Joy of airport lounges

The airport lounges in India have evolved beyond just offering comfortable seating and complimentary Wi-Fi. They now cater to travellers with discerning tastes by providing a gastronomic experience that rivals some of the best restaurants. As you relax in the serene ambience of these lounges, you can live the tradition and experience the culture through the local cuisines.

In a nutshell, Indian airport lounges are a gateway to the heritage of the regions they represent, all through the language of the foodie marvels. The next time you travel through the airport, make it a point to arrive early and indulge in the local cuisine on offer. After all, the journey to a new destination begins long before you board the plane, and what better way to start than the taste of local flavours at Indian airport lounges? Bon appétit!



Representative pic of an airport lounge

Prajyoti

