

JANUARY 21-27, 2024

SUNDAY POST

HERE . NOW



NATIONAL GIRL CHILD DAY - JANUARY 24

Nip not the buds

COVER STORY

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SINGER AND SONGWRITER MRINMAY MANORANJAN SUNDARAY, AKA MRINMAY MS, FROM JATNI, IS A TRUE MUSIC FANATIC. HAVING POPULARISED THE ODIA VERSION OF ARIJIT SINGH'S CHALEYA SONG FROM SHAH RUKH KHAN-STARRER JAWAN, MRINMAY IS ALSO CREDITED WITH NUMEROUS REMIX TRANSITION TUNES: HUA MEIN AND SEFALI, TO NAME BUT A FEW. SONG & MUSIC IS ALWAYS IN HIS HEAD AND SUNDAYS ARE NO EXCEPTION

Pakhala passion

Being from Odisha, I am a huge foodie, and my go-to comfort food is the simplest local cuisine, like pakhala (fermented rice soaked in water) paired with chutney or mashed potatoes. I also have a fondness for indulging in gupchup and various street snacks.

Every day is a holiday

As a freelance singer, every day feels like a day off to me. I also enjoy spending time with my friends, going on trips, and hosting vibrant jam sessions.

Park serenades

I take pleasure in entertaining people at the park through impromptu singing sessions, crafting my own songs, and strolling amidst the serene surroundings.

Downtime delight

During downtime, my family and I bond over Indian sitcoms like *Taarak Mehta Ka Oolta Chasma* while my father playfully roasts the TV characters, turning it into a laughter-filled experience.



Pet polyphony

I enjoy dedicating my time to my feline companions. I share my home with five cats, as well as a Labrador. At one point, I even had a turtle as a pet.

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

- Why did the lady wear a helmet every time she ate? She was on a crash diet!
- What did the tree say to autumn? Leaf me alone.
- My math teacher called me average. How mean!
- Turning vegan is a big missed steak.

START-UP BOOM

Sir, Last week's story 'Igniting Innovation' featuring the emergence of cutting-edge start-ups in Bhubaneswar, spearheaded by the city's brightest minds, was quite engaging. With Bhubaneswar evolving into the latest IT hub, a multitude of ingenious individuals have embarked on crafting innovative start-up concepts for the tech realm. The proliferation of start-ups marks the inception of a transformative era, simplifying various aspects of life. The city is witnessing the rise of numerous start-ups, and the featured companies in the article are particularly invigorated by this trend. Examples include NUDE, a pioneering clothing brand leveraging web3 technology, specialised UAV drones employed for disaster response, and Scomm, a start-up aiding fledgling companies in gaining traction. Additionally, the article on Pongal festivities, shedding light on traditional practices such as Jallikattu, made for an interesting read.

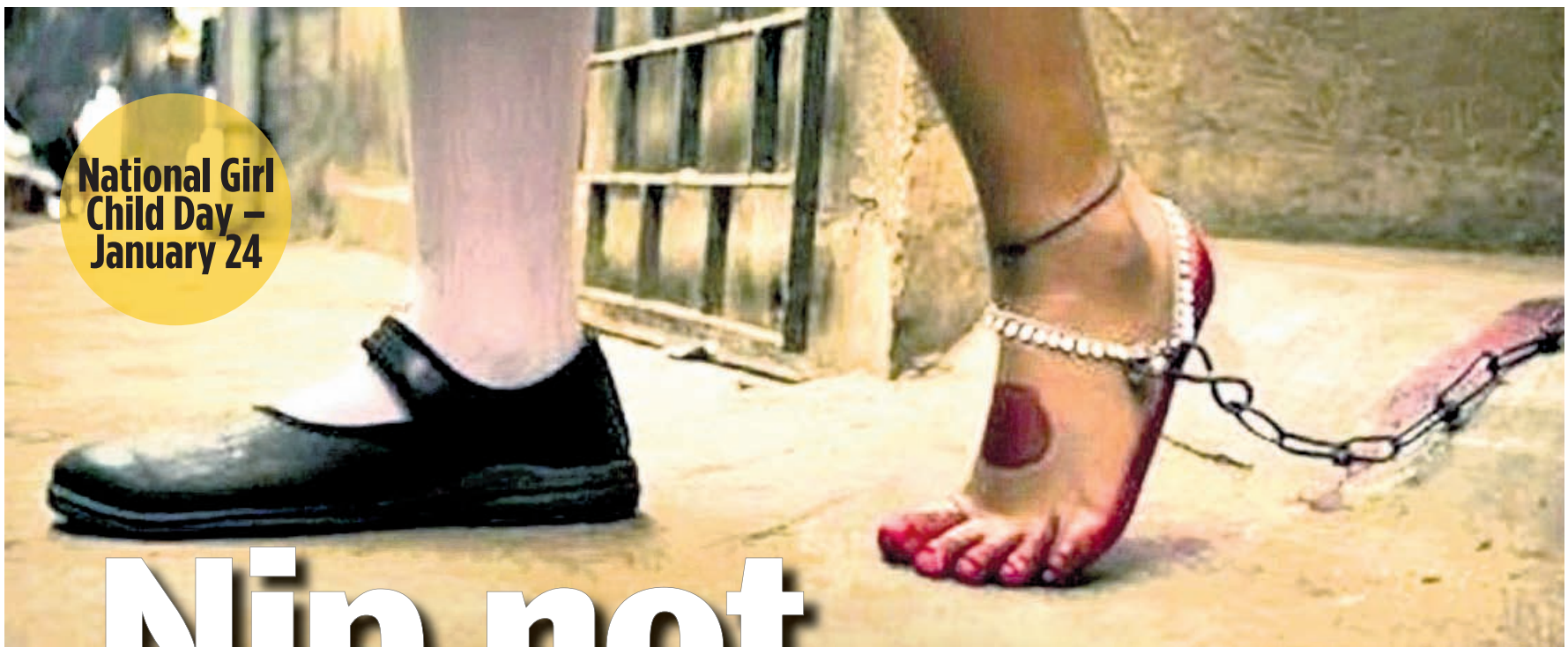
SANDHYA PRUSTY, BHUBANESWAR

LETTERS

A WORD FOR READERS

Sunday POST is serving a platter of delectable fare every week, or so we hope. We want readers to interact with us. Feel free to send in your opinions, queries, comments and contributions to features.orissapost@gmail.com
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National Girl Child Day – January 24



Nip not the buds

Apart from the killing of female fetuses and newborn girls, the issue of child and underage marriage is also a significant threat to the well-being and future prospects of countless young girls across the globe

MADHUSMITA SAHU, OP

The first National Girl Child Day was celebrated in 2008 and the theme was 'Saving Our Girls: Educating Our Girls.'

But even though it has been over a decade and a half since the day came into being to underline the importance of empowering and protecting the rights of girls, the theme still hasn't lost its relevance.

Be it dumping a newborn in a borewell in a Sambalpur village or putting her literally under the wheel of a bus at Champua in Keonjhar district recently, the fate of a girl child remains unchanged over the years, in remote regions of the country in particular.

Even as the girls survive the early years, in many educated families also they are treated as burdens and married off before they become adults.

Suparna Das (name changed), 18, of Joda region, who works as domestic help at Bhubaneswar, says there are hardly any girls above 15 years of age in her village who haven't become mothers. However, she is fortunate that the people who have hired her have gotten her admitted to a city-based government school, and she will appear for her matriculation examination in June, adds Suparna.

So, apart from killing newborn girls, the issue of child marriage is also a significant threat to the well-being and future prospects of countless young girls.

A recent study also reveals that one in five girls in India is still married off below the legal age in India.

Ahead of National Girl Child Day, a few experts shared with **Sunday POST** their perspectives on the issue.

'Healthcare system can play a vital role in reducing child marriages cases'

Sharing her views, **Namrata Chadha**, a former member of the Odisha State Women's Commission and a dedicated

social activist, said, the increase in reported cases child marriage can be viewed positively, as it indicates a growing awareness and willingness to address the issue.

"In the past, child marriages occurred but often went unreported, but now the proactive role of social workers, district administration, and various organisations in controlling child marriages is highlighted, emphasising the importance of reporting," she pointed out.



Chadha delved into the complex factors contributing to child marriages, citing religious, ethnic, and socio-economic considerations prevalent in Indian society. She said that certain religious groups, tribal societies, and migrant communities have different perspectives and practices regarding marriage. So, there is a need to understand the deep-rooted societal norms influencing these decisions, she added.

Asked about gaps in existing laws or policies, Chadha comments, "Merely enhancing the stringency of laws and resorting to the arrest of parents, as seen in the Child Marriage Act and the deployment of Child Probation Officers and units throughout Indian districts, may not offer a comprehensive solution. Instead, I believe it is imperative to focus on altering societal mindsets and addressing attitudes toward both early and late marriages."

Chadha, however, drawing on her 30 years of activism, expressed confidence that the cases will come down gradually. Talking about the role of the healthcare system in identifying and intervening in child marriage cases, she said, "I think the healthcare system plays a vital role in reproductive health. Healthcare professionals, including paramedical staff and nurses, can play a significant role by counselling parents and creating awareness about the implications of early marriages on physical and mental health."



'Early marriages, in many cases, get family and social sanction'

Sneha Mishra, Secretary of the Aaina, a prominent social organisation of the state that works on the issue, shared the impact of child marriage on individuals and communities.

She said, "Child or early marriage in our society is still rampant but not as visible as it gets family and social sanction. Underage or early marriage always poses a health and development risk for the girl and the boy. Before they understand what responsibility it is, they become parents, and there is always a health risk specifically for the girl. The risk of infant mortality rate (IMR) and malnutrition is equally high in those situations. There is also developmental risk, as it often follows dropping out of the education forum which subsequently challenges the economic status of the young couple. Many a time, due to elopement, they also face a lot of legal challenges, which breaks them into the chore."



She also shared insights on the kind of support systems that should be in place for individuals at risk of or affected by child marriage.

“To effectively support children, it is crucial to foster their strength and empathy, making prompt decisions in their best interest. While dissolving already established marriages within a robust family structure is challenging, persistent counselling and mentorship can guide children toward independence. Family support is essential in preventing elopement, enabling young couples to pursue education and financial independence to fulfill familial obligations. Continuous counselling on reproductive health and contraceptive education aims to delay pregnancies, allowing girls to mature before embracing motherhood in early marriages. Maternal benefits for pregnant girls, despite legal hurdles, and facilitating 10+2 years of schooling with accessible higher education nearby discourage child marriages.”



‘Time to educate communities about the ails of early marriage on young brides’

Barsha Mishra, a content creator, expresses her surprise at the prevalence of child marriage despite living in a society where such practices are deemed unacceptable.



She shared, “The shame associated with this issue emphasises the need for increased awareness. There is a variance in family beliefs and rituals, stressing the importance of government-led awareness campaigns to counteract ingrained practices. I also want to question the adequacy of awareness efforts, attributing the continuation of child marriage to some people’s stubbornness rather than a lack of information.”

She believes there’s insufficient awareness about the grave consequences of child marriage in society.

“However, it’s imperative to educate communities about the physical, emotional, and societal impacts on young brides. This harmful practice hinders the development and well-being of our girls. Collective efforts must focus on fostering understanding and dismantling cultural norms that perpetuate child marriage, ensuring a brighter and more equitable future for our daughters,” Mishra adds.

She is concerned about the gaps in existing laws and policies regarding child marriage.

“While legal frameworks exist, implementation and enforcement often fall short. The loopholes allow the persistence of this

harmful practice, impacting the lives of young girls. Comprehensive measures and stricter penalties are needed to bridge these gaps, ensuring the protection of children’s rights and promoting a society free from the shackles of child marriage. It’s essential for authorities to address these loopholes to safeguard the well-being and future of our girls,” she adds.

‘Underage marriage can put a nation’s future in jeopardy’

Airing her view, Kirti Adatia, an English literature student, said, “There has been a partial decrease in child marriage cases in recent years. However, complete eradication remains elusive. Regrettably, specific regions in India, particularly villages in



Uttar Pradesh, Jharkhand, and Kerala, continue to witness a troubling increase in the prevalence of child marriages.”

She went on to add, “The persistence of child marriage poses a serious threat as a form of exploitation, endangering the prospects of our nation’s future. To truly advance as a country, India must actively engage in efforts to reduce this practice, placing emphasis on the well-being, education, and safety of women and girls. The ongoing prevalence of child marriage hampers the nation’s progress, necessitating immediate attention and comprehensive initiatives to break away from this detrimental tradition. Through decisive actions and increased awareness, India can pave the way for a future where every child, irrespective of gender, has the right to a secure and fulfilling life, thereby making a positive contribution to the overall development of the nation.”

On the present status, she quipped, “It is in decreasing sequence, and with a continuous effort and awareness, moreover, involving young girls and boys in the child marriage discourse, it will certainly be reduced.”

“There are, of course, legislative steps and awareness of the legal consequences so that people are aware of the legal consequences and refrain from encouraging or conducting child marriages. Continuous, consistent monitoring and raising awareness, as well as making the facilities available in local places, will help in curbing the incidents,” she ends.



Connecting past to present

A lawman named Constandin (Teodor Corban) and his deputy, Ionita (Mihai Comanoiu) — who is also his son — ride through broad mountain valleys and sun-dappled forests on horseback, looking for a fugitive. They travel through what feels very much like a half-civilized stretch of frontier, encountering a motley collection of bandits, farmers, stagecoach drivers and talkative oddballs. One of the aristocratic boyars has dispatched Constandin and Ionita to capture an enslaved Gypsy who has run away after an affair with the boyar's wife.

Set in 1830s feudal Wallachia, a region that is between the Russian and Ottoman empires, power and wealth is held by aristocratic boyars, one witnesses the structural oppression of Gypsies embedded in the 19th century Balkan society. A Gypsy could be bought and sold like animals, subjected to beatings, scoldings, mutilation, and worse - by anyone in authority. The word Aferim! is a Turkish loanword into Romanian that means "bravo" with sarcasm.

Shot in widescreen black and white, the landscape, in wide vista, dappled light, is brought to the screen along with painstaking attention to the costumes and sets, Jude Radu along with his co-writer novelist Florin Lazarescu, created a script that's archaic, credible and illuminates the beliefs, aspirations, values and ideas of the period. The work is about historical 'mentality' and social structures that links the past with the present. Pay attention to the pre-credits, it enhances the engagement with the work and brings out the questions that persist in our current times.



The Wiesel Commission led by Nobel Peace Prize laureate Elie Wiesel as well as Jean Ancel, released its report in late 2004. The Romanian government recognized the report's findings and acknowledged the deliberate participation in the Holocaust by the Romanian regime during World War II. The report assessed that between 280,000 and 380,000 Jews were murdered or died under their supervision, a result of the deliberate policies of Romanian civilian and military authorities. Over 11,000 Romanians were also killed. The Wiesel Commission report also documented pervasive anti-Semitism and violence against Jews in Romania before World War II, when Romania's Jewish population was among the largest in Europe.

"So yes, it's a political film. Generally it's been received pretty warmly in Romania, though some right-wingers have taken against it. There are some who obsess that we shouldn't speak badly of ourselves. I don't understand why we're so keen to make ourselves look good to Western Europeans even if that means lying. Some people asked, 'Why make this film? Why not make one about Stephen the Great?' But I want us to have the courage to face what we are and where we come from. Being in denial seems to be a problem in Romania"

"It's a mistake to discuss the past as if it's simply dead and long gone... at some point I started reading books dealing more critically with the past - memoirs, biographies and so on - and I discovered aspects I hadn't known about: for instance, the relationship between Romania and Nazi Germany. Any my interest just grew. Indeed, looking at possible connections between the past and present became a bit of an obsession."

--Radu Jude, Director
 Born in 1977 in Romania, Radu Jude studied Film Direction at the Media University of Bucharest. His first short film *The Tube with a Hat* (2006) was internationally acclaimed. *Aferim!* is his third feature, this work won the Best Director award at the 2015 Berlin Film Festival.



A poster of the Romanian movie *Aferim!*

<p>Language - Romanian (B&W)</p> <p>Year of release - 2015</p> <p>Duration - 101 minutes</p> <p>Story- Florin Lazarescu</p> <p>Screenplay and direction - Radu Jude</p> <p>Producer: Ada Solomon</p> <p>Cinematography: Marius Panduru</p>	<p>Music: TreiParale</p> <p>Editing: CatalinCristutiu</p> <p>Art: Adrian Cristea</p> <p>Sound: Dana Bunescu</p> <p>Cast: Teodor Corban (Constandin), Mihai Comanoiu (Ionita), Toma Cuzin (Carfin), Alexandru Dabija (Iordache)</p>
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Subrat Beura

Shilpa wants to team up with her former co-stars

Actress Shilpa Shetty, a stalwart in the Hindi film industry for nearly three decades, took a trip down memory lane, reminiscing about her iconic collaborations with various co-stars throughout her illustrious career.

During her conversation, when quizzed about her on-screen chemistry with the likes of Govinda, Suniel Shetty, Sunny Deol, and Akshay Kumar, Shetty candidly mentioned 'Khiladi Kumar'. Expressing a fondness for their dynamic, she pointed to *Dhadkan* as a movie that holds a special place in her heart and resonates with her audience even today.

In her reflections, Shilpa emphasised that the chemistry shared with Akshay Kumar and Suniel Shetty in

Dhadkan has been cherished by fans over the years. The film, which tugged at the heartstrings of audiences, showcased a remarkable on-screen rapport that contributed to its timeless appeal.

The actress went on to express her eagerness to collaborate with all her co-stars once again, given the opportunity. Specifically, she expressed a desire to work with Govinda, citing that she had learned a great deal from the versatile actor.

On the work front, Shilpa will be seen in the OTT series *Indian Police Force*.

AGENCIES



Ananya's yearning for real characters

Actress Ananya Panday, who is basking in the success of her recent film *Kho Gaye Hum Kahan*, opens up about the success of the film and future roles that she wants to explore.

Reflecting on the unexpected love the film received, the 25-year-old shared, "Somewhere, we were proud and excited about it, but never expected that it would go to this level of love, which is a really good thing."

When asked about playing the soft, innocent girl in several past projects, how do future projects look for her?

"I want to do characters that are neither black nor white, but grey. I want to do characters that represent how people are actually in real life—some real characters. People should be able to relate to me," she answers, adding, "I have just started out, and there is so much that I want to do. It is a longer journey ahead."

The *Gebraiyaan* actress further said, "I want to do big commercial massy cinema because I also love watching that as an audience. I also want to do a biopic of a sportsperson or a classical singer or dancer, something where I have to learn a specific skill for something."

AGENCIES



Neha's sustainable fashion choices

Actress Neha

Joshi has emphasised on the transformative power of up-cycling outfits.

Talking about embracing eco-friendly practices within the realm of fashion and entertainment, Neha, who essays Krishna Devi Vajpayee in the show *Atal*, said: "We've all faced the familiar scenario of having a full wardrobe yet feeling like there's nothing suitable to wear. Our first impulse often leans toward purchasing something new. While purposeful shopping can be advantageous, one of the most eco-friendly and valuable steps is to make the most of what you already possess. I don't fall into that trap."

"I readily repeat outfits -- I avoid buying new ones and mix and match old ones for different occasions.

Instead of hitting stores or browsing online, I craft something distinctive from my closet or occasionally from my mother's vintage sarees. I repurpose and reuse my clothes," shared the *Doosri Maa* fame actress.

Neha further said she has also fashioned pouches and handbags from her old denim that complement her outfits.

"Not only for my wardrobe, but I also repurpose old clothing to make curtains and cushions at home with the help of a friend. Moreover, I support small businesses prioritising recycling and converting waste into practical items," added Neha.

IAN S



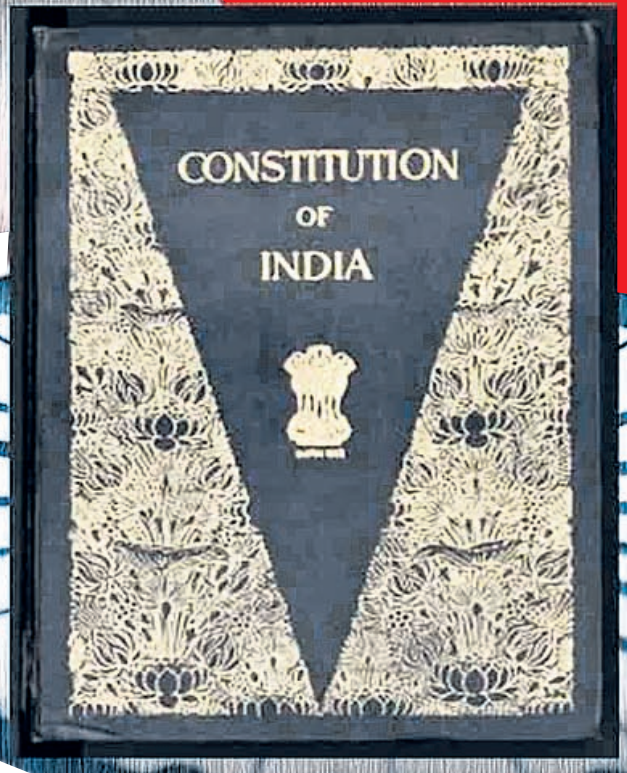
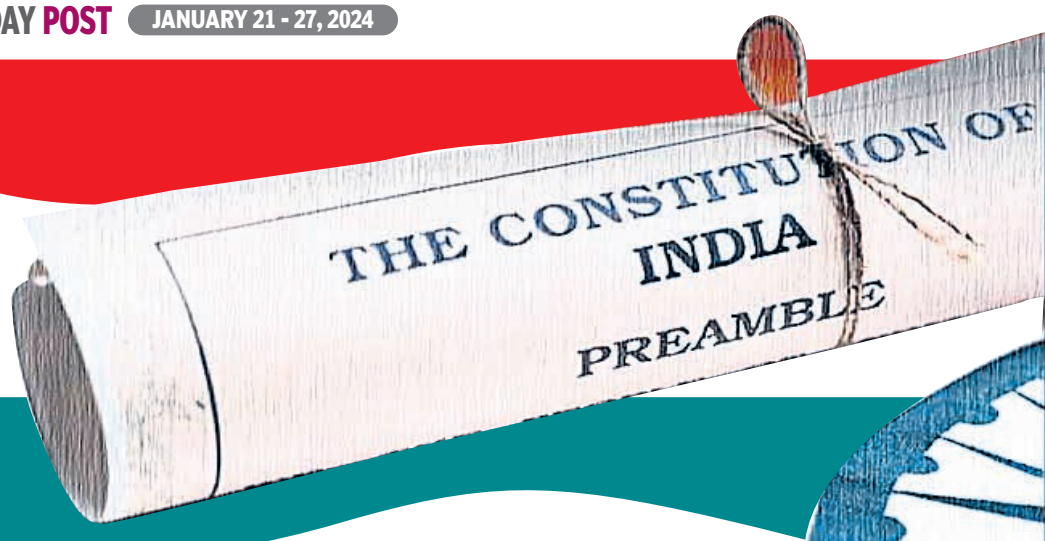
Arbaaz's ultraromantic b'day wish for Sshura

Actor-producer Arbaaz Khan, who married makeup artist Sshura Khan in December, spoke about his wedding with her in his romantic birthday post for her and also thanked the universe for making them meet.

In his Instagram post, he wrote, "Happiest birthday my love Sshura (heart emoji). Nobody makes me smile the way you do. You light up my life. I look forward to growing old with you, oops older, actually very very old. When the universe brought us together it was the best thing that's ever happened to me. From the first date I knew I was going to spend the rest of my life with you. You continue to amaze me with your beauty and kindness. Every day I'm reminded that saying 'qubool hai' to you were the best words to ever come out of my mouth. Love you to the moon and back."

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REPUBLIC DAY

Making reality checks

Though the Constitution is about secularism and equal treatment of persons irrespective of religion and belief, issues like state involvement in religious affairs and controversies over personal laws have tested the practical application of secular ideals, says Upasana Mohanty, an LLM student of National Law University

MADHUSMITA SAHU, OP

In a few days, India will celebrate its 75th Republic Day to commemorate the adoption of the Constitution of India, a guiding document that outlines the principles and ideals upon which the nation is built. Military parades will be held in the national

capital as well as various state capitals, while representatives from the Army, Navy, Air Force, and state-wise traditional dance groups of India will showcase the unity and diversity of our nation.

Ahead of this auspicious day, **Sunday POST** caught up with a couple of promising law students who shared their views on the vision and value of the Constitution of India and how it has evolved over the years.

Upasana Mohanty, who is currently pursuing a Masters in Law (LLM) at National Law University, Odisha, shared, "Constitution is about secularism and equal treatment of persons irrespective of religion and belief. However, issues like state involvement in religious matters and controversies over personal laws have tested the practical application of secular ideals.

The concept of positive secularism has faced scrutiny,

posing questions about potential compromises on equal treatment. In this evolving landscape, discussions range from advocating for a stricter separation of religion and state to emphasising state intervention for addressing historical inequalities."

She added, "The recent developments have sparked both confidence and concern in the Constitution's ability to safeguard individual rights amid socio-political shifts. While judicial interventions and Constitutional safeguards demonstrate resilience, challenges like restrictions on free speech raise apprehensions. The adaptability of the Constitution and its protection by an active citizenry are crucial factors. Ongoing vigilance, legal advocacy, and public engagement are essential to fortify the Constitution's role in upholding individual rights amid evolving societal dynamics."

While signing off, she said, "The realisation of a just and equal society remains a work in progress. Efforts to promote social justice, equality, and inclusivity have been made through policies and legal safeguards, but challenges like economic inequality, educational disparities, and social divisions persist. Conserted efforts should be made to ensure that constitutional principles of justice and equality are consistently realised in the lived experiences of all citizens."

Banshita Sahoo, a penultimate year student currently pursuing BA LLB (Hon) from Siksha O' Anusandhan National Institute of Law, Bhubaneswar, said, "The Indian Constitution envisions a society that is just, equal, and free from discrimination. It laid emphasis on achieving social equality in an explicit way. While there have been some

positive developments in recent years, such as the passing of the Right to Education Act, which guarantees free and compulsory education to all children between the ages of 6 and 14, there are still significant challenges that remain to be addressed. For instance, there are concerns about the quality of education in government-run schools and the lack of access to education for certain sections of society, particularly those from economically weaker backgrounds."

"There are also concerns about the effectiveness of affirmative action policies in addressing the root causes of inequality," she adds.

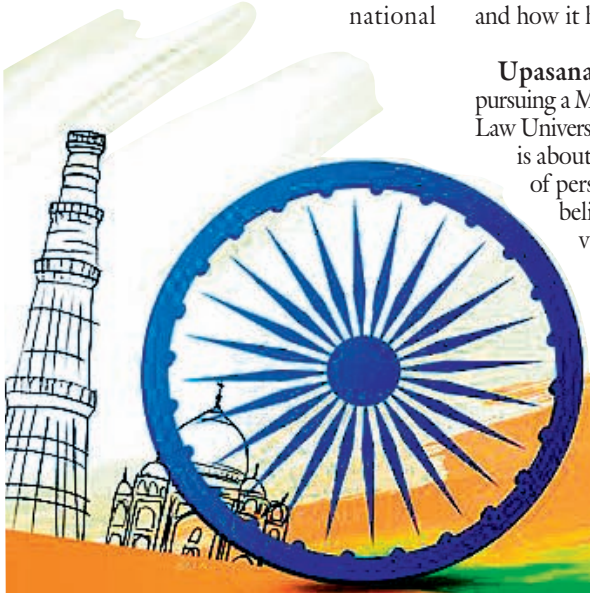
Banshita, echoing the sentiment of Upasana on secularism, carried on, "In recent years, the idea of secularism has been a topic of debate and discussion in India. A section of society believes that the idea of secularism has been diluted. The rise of communalism,

intolerance, and hate speech has led to a growing concern about the future of secularism in India."

Such apprehensions are not completely baseless, she says. "In recent years, there have been

instances of religious intolerance and violence, which have raised questions about the effectiveness of the constitutional provisions."

Concluding, Banshita said, the idea of secularism, as enshrined in the Indian Constitution, a living document that is still relevant today, has the ability to safeguard individual rights and liberties in the face of changing socio-political dynamics. However, there is a need for greater efforts to promote religious harmony and tolerance in the country."



Aishwarya



PHOTO: KUMAR SHARAT, OP