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SUNDAY POST

HERE . NOW



PERIOD LEAVES

A call for **inclusivity**

COVER STORY

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Model-actress Priyanka Mohapatra, aka Pihu, has captured millions of hearts with her roles in Odia TV shows like 'To Pain Tori Pain', 'Nua Bohu', 'He Prabhu', besides film 'Happy Ending'. The Mass Communication student enjoys spending free time with her pets



With family

Comfort food

I enjoy making a variety of dishes, especially sweets, to satiate my taste buds. However, my ultimate joy lies in preparing traditional Odia foods like 'pakhalā', 'tomato bhaja', and 'chhatu bhaja', which I prioritise above all else.

Family bonding

A holiday is the occasion to spend time with family. I help my mother with home duties, interact with my brother, and discuss future plans with my father.

Sundays for recharge

On Sundays, I like to relax and revitalise by doing mild workout routines like meditation and yoga, as well as preparing nutritious salads in the morning.

Feline friends

I take pleasure in spending time with my beloved Persian kitty buddies -Teddy, Bear, Barbie, and Doll. I adore the times we spend together on our balcony, taking in the beauty of nature.

Social media detox

During my off days, I prefer withdrawing from the outside world and dedicating time to myself. I prioritise self-care and nurturing my mental well-being by immersing myself in nature and embracing a simpler lifestyle.



With furry 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

- Why doesn't the bike stand by itself? Because it's two tired.
- I bought my son a fridge for his birthday. - I can't wait to see his face light up when he opens it.
- What do you call a magic dog? A Labracadabrador.
- Laughing stock: cattle with a sense of humour.



CHANGING DYNAMICS

Sir, The evolving landscape of love during Valentine's Week, especially with Gen Z, reflects a digital transformation where memes, dating apps, and unique expressions redefine romantic connections. While traditional notions of love seem romanticised by some, others appreciate the fluidity and authenticity Gen Z brings, though concerns about commitment and stability linger. Despite these shifts, the essence of love as a transformative force remains, offering hope amidst changing dynamics. It's evident that Gen Z's approach to love shapes future romantic alliances, emphasising communication, consent, and flexibility, ultimately reshaping societal norms and fostering a refreshing perspective on relationships. And in my opinion, I am in support of traditional notions, as I am an old-school lover, totally despising Gen Z's way of relationship and their way of addressing love.

ISHIKA SINHA, JABALPUR

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



Period Leaves

A call for inclusivity

tives from individuals across all walks of life. Here's what they have to say:

'Menstrual leave can enhance productivity at workplace'

Rani Rout, a penultimate year student of BA LL.B. (Hons.) from Capital Law College Bhubaneswar, shared,

"Menstruation is still considered taboo in our society, and a lot of stigmas are attached to it. Though it's a natural biological process in women's lives, it's often accompanied by debilitating pain. This perpetuates the stereotype of women being erratic during 'that time of the month,' necessitating seclusion. Despite this, the lawmakers in India are still hesitant about implementing paid period leave. But people must understand that such leaves not only support women but also enhance productivity, challenging societal taboos."

When asked about the statement of the Central Minister assessing that women are not 'handicapped' and a paid period leave is unnecessary, she said, "Irani's perspective overlooks the diverse experiences women have with menstruation. Merely providing access to sanitary products is insufficient to address the complexities of menstrual health. Globally, approximately 25 million women of reproductive

age suffer from conditions like endometriosis, necessitating time off for rest. In addition to menstrual cramps, women often endure fatigue, nausea, and other symptoms, impacting their productivity at work. While concerns about equality are valid, it's essential to recognise the biological and hormonal distinctions between men and women. Many countries, including Japan, China, and Spain, have implemented policies granting period leave, acknowledging the need for accommodations based on gender differences. Therefore, advocating for menstrual leave aligns with the principles of equality outlined in the Constitution of India and international precedents."



Pointing out the primary benefits of introducing paid period leave at work, Rani added, "Introducing menstrual leave in organisations fosters constructive discussion on menstruation and promotes sensitivity among the workforce and society. Allowing women time off during their menstruation cycle can enhance productivity and help them focus on professional tasks. Implementing such policies aids in employee retention and assures employees that their concerns are addressed positively. It also helps reduce stigma and societal taboos surrounding menstruation. Period leave ensures individuals experiencing menstrual pain can prioritise their health without jeopardising their job or academic performance. A policy over the issue will not only break stigma but also highlight the seriousness of menstrual issues. Ultimately, such initiatives can empower women to perform better and break the glass ceiling while prioritising their health."

Of late, there has been a lot of uproar in India about the necessity for menstruation leave after Union Minister Smriti Irani opposed legislation on 'paid period leave' in Parliament

MADHUSMITA SAHU, OP

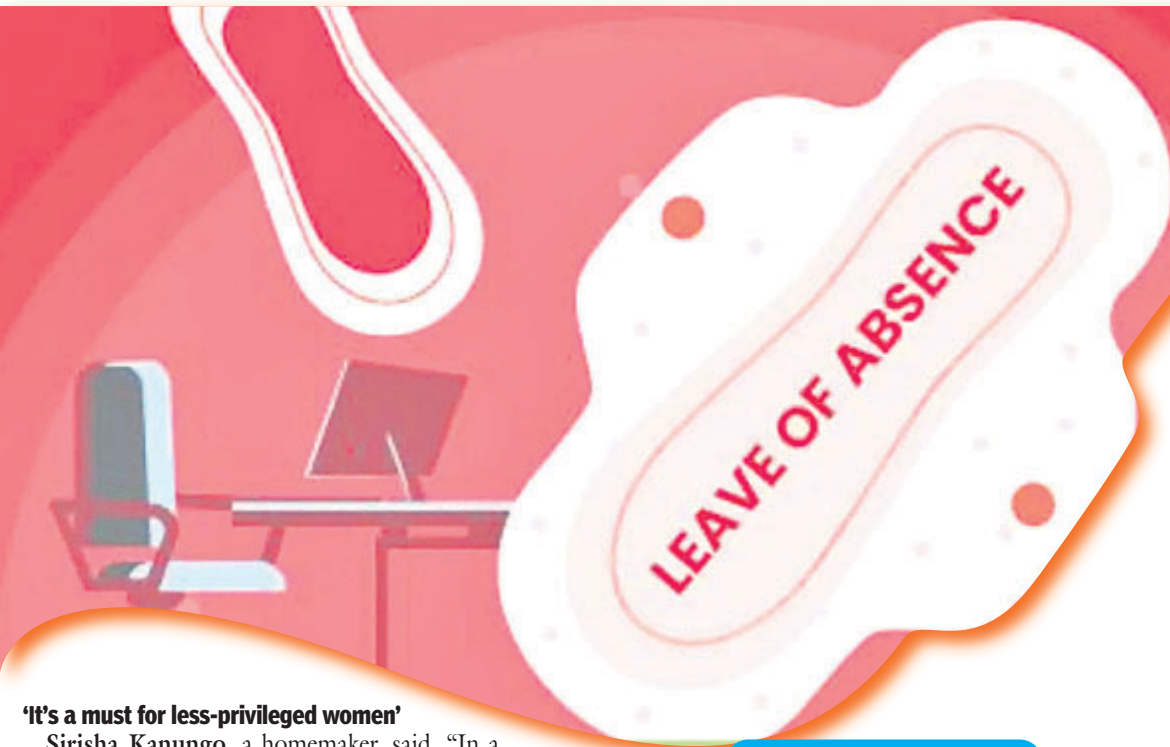
In 2020, food delivery company Zomato announced its commitment to provide up to 10 days of 'period leave' annually for all female employees. The initiative was aimed at fostering inclusivity within the workplace culture. This progressive step garnered nationwide appreciation, and subsequently, a few other companies like Swiggy and Byju's also jumped on the bandwagon.

Even though more than three years have passed after that, the government has yet to come up with a policy on the issue.

Earlier, Congress presented the Menstruation Benefits Bill in 2017 and the Right to Menstrual Hygiene and Paid Leave Bill in 2019 on the issue. Of late, there has been a lot of uproar in India about the necessity for menstruation leave after Union Minister Smriti Irani opposed legislation on 'paid period leave' in Parliament.

Amid this ongoing debate, **Sunday POST** sought perspec-





Even to date, we have seen a lot of malls, multiplexes, and companies that do not have the necessary products to address women's needs. Sanitation is also a big problem, because of which women face a lot of health issues. Organisations should come forward to make the basic necessities, like the availability of tampons and sanitary napkins, mandatory. Also, we should ensure that the washrooms are clean so that they do not land up with any other health issues."

She signed off by mentioning that there are more serious concerns that require attention. "There are in fact many such pressing issues, like equal pay for both genders, combating workplace discrimination, promoting women's leadership and representation in decision-making roles, women's violence, and access to reproductive healthcare," according to Singh Deo.

'Instead of period leaves, things like rest hours for period pain should be promoted'

Ananya Mishra, an entrepreneur and software engineer from Bhubaneswar, is pragmatic in her approach. Sharing her views on the issue, she said, "It's acceptable to continue working during menstruation because it's a natural process that cannot be halted by staying home. As someone who has been a software engineer for five years and then transitioned to entrepreneurship, including managing HR policies, I understand the significance of this issue, especially as a woman. While the idea of paid period leaves may seem excessive and costly, it's crucial to acknowledge the need for comfort and understanding regarding menstrual pain and cycles. Rather than solely discussing this as a topic, it should be recognised as a personal necessity that requires professional attention."



She added, "With the rise of hybrid and work-from-home setups, discomfort during menstruation is already being reduced. Instead of advocating for leaves, we can promote initiatives like designated rest hours for period pain, the availability of sanitary products upon request, and fostering a supportive office culture regarding menstrual cycles."

Ananya concluded by saying, "This isn't about gender; let's avoid perpetuating stereotypes. Personally, I've never felt the need for paid leave. It's time to shift the conversation and encourage understand-



ing without always resorting to requesting time off."

'It's a must for less-privileged women'

Sirisha Kanungo, a homemaker, said, "In a perfect scenario, individuals like me who manage households would have the option to abstain from work during our menstrual cycles. Unfortunately, this isn't feasible for many other women. I consider myself lucky to get assistance from others with household tasks as well as a supportive husband and family. While I'm not obligated to work during my period, there are still chores that need attention around the house, so complete rest isn't always available. So I strongly feel for the less privileged women in similar situations. Therefore, menstrual leave should be made mandatory for women, especially those who belong to this class."

'Argument against paid period leave frustrating'

"My sister, who has polycystic ovary syndrome (PCOS), experiences excruciating menstrual cramps that are not alleviated by standard ibuprofen. On numerous occasions, we've had to rush her to the hospital because of the intense pain she endures. When I hear individuals argue against mandatory period leave, it frustrates me. Even if they don't endure the same level of agony as my sister, I'm certain they still experience cramps that hinder their daily activities. Furthermore, there are individuals who don't suffer from severe menstrual pain but may face other challenges due to hormonal imbalances," expressed Abhinash Mohanty, a final-year commerce student at Ravenshaw University Cuttack.

COUNTERVIEWS

'Normalising paid menstrual leave could reduce female workforce participation'

Priyanka Singh Deo, a holistic nutrition and fitness expert, sharing her perspective on menstrual leave, said, "The experience of menstruation varies among women and can even differ for the same woman from month to month. Providing paid leave for all women may not be necessary, as for many women, menstruation is completely normal (painless). It's important to recognise menstruation as a natural biological cycle and accept it as such, rather than viewing it as a disease or illness. For those who experience painful periods, sick leave can be used as needed. While many companies discuss gender equality, there remains a lingering hesitation to hire women due to assumptions about their flexibility with working hours, travel, and long-term commitment, including concerns about maternity leave. Normalising paid menstrual leave could exacerbate this issue and potentially decrease female workforce participation. It can lead to discrimination in hiring and promotion and raise the barriers for women to enter and climb the corporate ladder."



She went on to add, "By encouraging open discussions, trainings, and awareness about menstruation, we can break down stigma and foster supportive environments for all individuals.



Tales of unsung heroism

PACKED WITH CELEBRATED RULERS' STORIES, THE BOOK IS INTRIGUING AND BECOMES FAR MORE INTERESTING WHEN THE AUTHOR ADDS VERSES THAT NARRATE THE CULTURE AND LIFE OF THOSE TIMES

Odisha's golden history is reclaimed through Sibashis Mahapatra's pen. I love reading history; I love to get lost in past eras, but this book stands out for a very different reason, as it sheds light on the past that is less mentioned and that people have almost forgotten. The author accomplished tremendous research to bring out those erasing pages from history books by collecting data from verses and tales.

Tales of the Past: The Odisha Saga is a meticulously researched work crafted powerfully to give us a thorough journey in the annals of the golden age of Odisha. A very comprehensive look at the unsung heroism from history's forgotten pages is brilliantly waved here with verses and tales that focus on the very pages of history that are splendid with epic wars, imperial ambitions, and a gorgeous painting painted in a vast landscape of the Indian plateau.

Not all historical events are documented in books; there are lots of events that are often ignored by historians. All those individuals and incidents that are slipped from major author's notes are carefully depicted in this book. To preserve the golden era, the valour, and the cultural portrait, Mahapatra showed the utmost care. The importance of the past background of a country is handled skillfully.

The author is an engineer and history enthusiast. His enthusiasm and dedication are reflected from the beginning of the book, which makes me overjoyed. As a history lover, I can relate to his feelings that preserving history is an enormous emotional journey that he expressed in this book. This is not just history enthusiasm, but I would say it shows his willingness and love for country and culture, which is inherently our pride, and we are losing its small portion day by day, which isn't affordable. For our descendants, we should keep it saved.

Mahapatra seamlessly tells us about his research work on some luminous chapters of Odisha's history that are less discussed in our history books. Academically, these pages of history and these personalities are losing their space, which is certainly an issue that strongly demands exposure and thinking minds to work on the preservation of the past commentaries.

Mahapatra guides us through the periods of history that are elaborated with unsung heroism of princes and kings like Hamvira Deva, Devendravarman Rajaraja-I, Raja Trilochana Deva, Langula Narasingha Deva, and Gajapati Ramachandra Deva-I. The book recognises their heroic ascents and encapsulates them in the pages.

Packed with celebrated rulers' stories, this book is intriguing and becomes far more interesting when Mahapatra adds verses that explain the culture and life of those days.

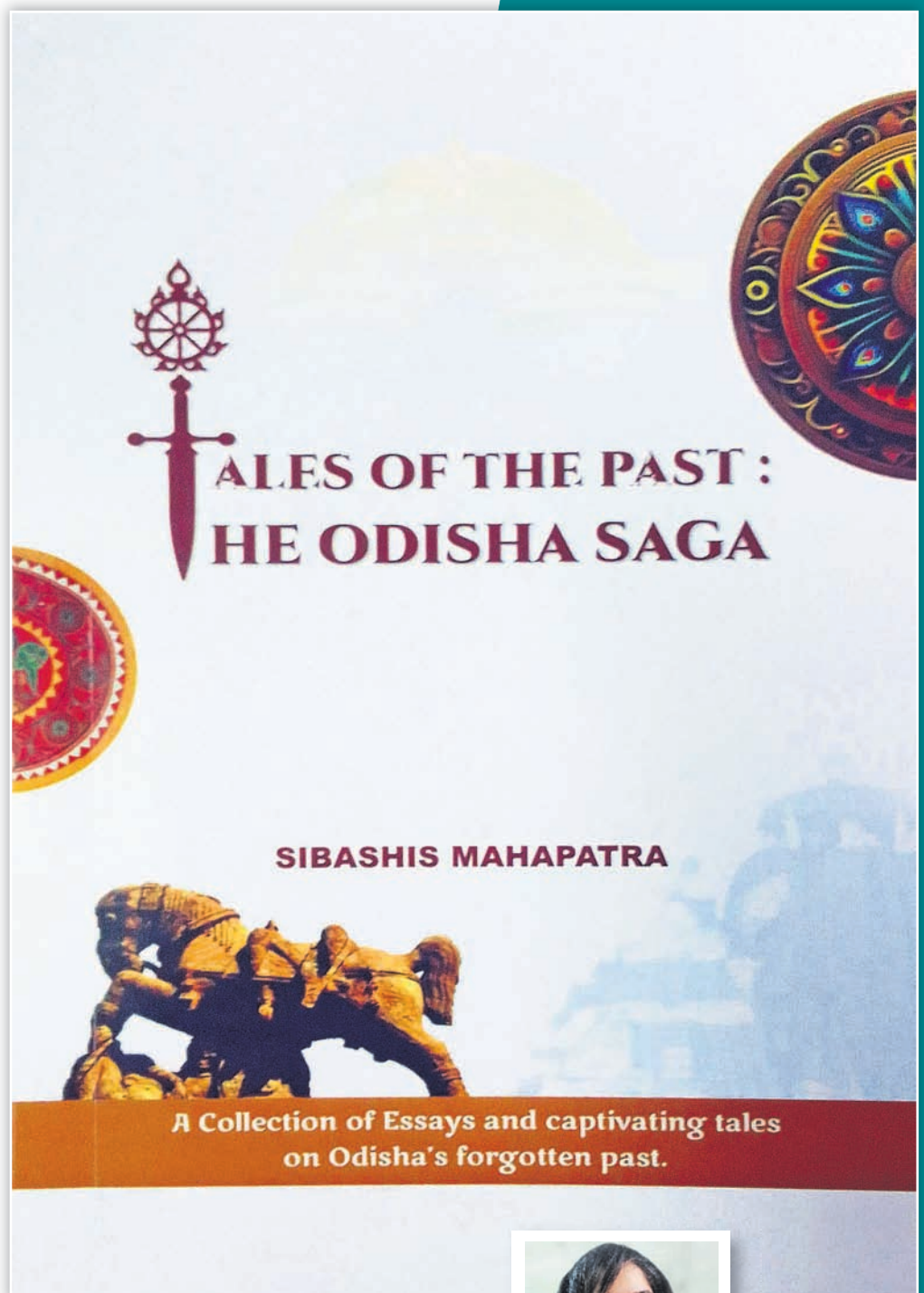
The captivating Odisha saga covered here is traced back to the era of the 11th century to the 18th century, compiled with essays, musings, and discussions that offer glimpses of illustrious legacies that remain intriguing to readers around the country and all around the world who love reading about antiquities.

Mahapatra did a commendable job in this book; in sumptuous words, he analysed the comparison between the old historical inscriptions and the commentaries of historians such as H. K. Sherwani and BC Ray. The researched essays allow the reader to see the difference between old historical anecdotes and modern researched outcomes that unfold a major difference between the two historical documents, and the exploration is written so insightfully that it will make readers curious and result in an intriguing reading experience.

The book stands as evidence of the author's ability to unveil Odisha's rich historical tapestries; his dedication to saving the glorious past is praiseworthy. His in-depth research, exploration of valour, and understanding of common people's lives and information unfolding events add new depth to Indian historical accommodation.

The e-book edition has 62 pages and the paperback has 136 pages, but the contents are exactly the same, and one can pick any version to read.

The reviewer is an avid reader, book blogger, content creator, and portrait artist.



MILI DAS

Alia for movies that stir conversations

Alia Bhatt has turned Executive Producer with *Poacher*. The show has been created, written, and directed by Emmy Award-winning filmmaker Richie Mehta and it features Nimisha Sajayan, Roshan Mathew, and Dibyendu Bhattacharya in pivotal roles.

Talking about how she came on board the project, Alia, at a press conference, said, "Richie (Mehta) and I first met in 2022, I was full blown pregnant and was just about to pop. We spoke about everything under the sun from parenting to cinema to art to movies."

The *Raazi* actress went on to add, "He also took me through the world of poaching. Firstly I was flabbergasted that all of it was based on true events and we kept on talking...and he was nice enough to share the first two episodes. I haven't seen the whole show."

"I responded to it as a person, when I saw the show I couldn't stop watching it...you can't take your eyes off the screen...you can't take yourself away from the characters...it moved me emotionally, it moved me physically towards him asking him how can I help," she recalled.

Alia also shared that she and her production house wants to be part of stories which move the audience, and stir some conversations.

AGENCIES



Badshah shares his dream

Singer and rapper Badshah is the first Indian artiste to perform at *Untold*, world's number 6 music festival. All excited to perform, he says it has been his dream to represent Indian music and culture on the global map. *Untold* is scheduled to take place in Dubai February 15-18 at Expo City Dubai.

Badshah said: "Super stoked to be collaborating with *UNTOLD* and I'm eagerly looking forward to perform alongside some stellar artists at their maiden Dubai edition. It's always been my day one dream to represent Indian music and culture on the global map, and I'm grateful for opportunities like these. Let's take India to the world!"

The promoters have announced the addition of leading Indian rap sensation Badshah to its colossal line-up of top grossing international artists as one of the main stage headliners on Day 2 of the festival.

The 38-year-old music juggernaut will be joining an already stacked bill of headlining talent, including the likes of Armin van Buuren, Bebe Rexha, Don Diablo, Ellie Goulding, Hardwell, Sebastian Ingrosso, Tiësto, G-Eazy, PSY, Hardwell, Major Lazer Soundsystem, Paul Kalkbrenner and Timmy Trumpet. IANS



I learnt my craft on the job: Kriti

Kriti Sanon has been part of movies for 10 years now, delivering films like *Mimi*, *Luka Chuppi*, *Bhediya* and *Teri Baaton Mein Aisa Uljha Jiya* among others. She is currently in the most exciting phase of her career, with many interesting projects in the pipeline. She already has *The Crew* on floors with Tabu and Kareena Kapoor, while she has launched her own production house too, under which she is making her first film *Do Patti*, starring Kajol alongside her.

Kriti has always made her choices based on what her gut tells her, and she never goes by what is trending in the market.

In a conversation with a news portal, she said, "I don't think on the lines of what's working and what's not working, it is more about instinctively reacting to what I hear."

The actress also revealed that whatever she knows about acting, she learnt it on the job.

She said, "I have learnt everything on the job, I didn't know what a mark was...what was camera placing... I would stand and I would be told to look this way as your face is not visible. So I literally had baby steps and learnt everything."

AGENCIES



New film studio in City

BHUBANESWAR: With the opening of Swastik Studio, a facility that offers shooting of movies, TV and reality shows, here at Tankapani Road near Sai Mandir Square recently, the filmmakers of the state will no longer have to travel to other Indian cities like Hyderabad and Chennai to shoot their projects.

Built on an area measuring 90 feet by 120 feet, the facilities available in the studio include a police station, hospital, jail, doctor's chamber, operation theatre, ICU, bar, restaurant, hospital corridor, corporate office, and courtroom, among others. It also has two large

sheds, which can be used as regular and permanent sets for films, serials, and shows.

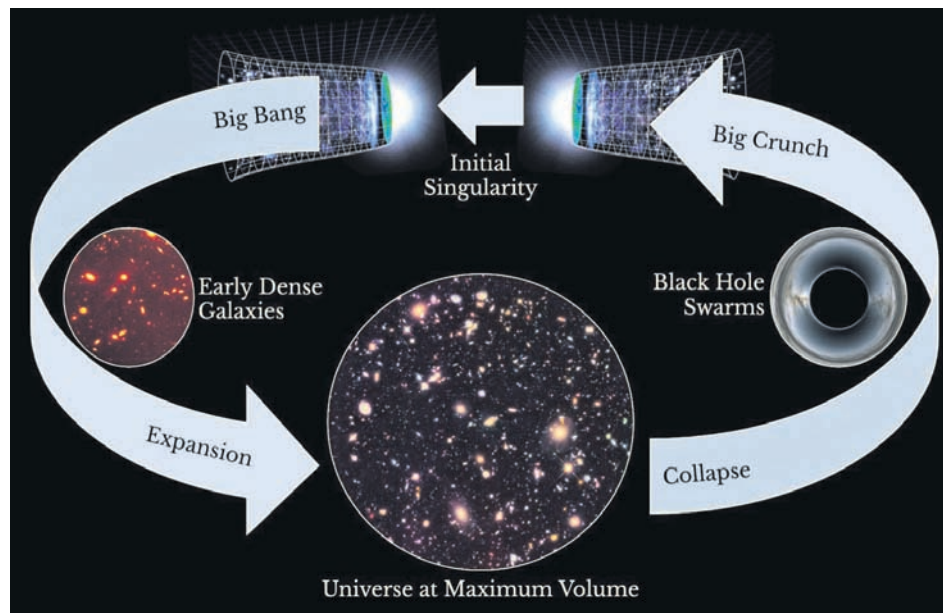
"Earlier, producers and directors had to depend on studios in Hyderabad or Chennai for shooting as we didn't have the required facilities. With all these facilities available here, they don't have to travel to other cities," said Sangram Keshari Paikaray, the founder of the studio, which has been designed by art director Subhash Behera.

Several filmmakers, producers, actors, and actresses from the industry were present at the inauguration of the facility.

PNN

THE COSMIC SERPENT

SCIENCE BEHIND MYTHOLOGY SYMBOLS



Spiral galaxy (L), Big Crunch loop

ALL EXISTENCE COMES FROM A SINGLE SOURCE AND ULTIMATELY RETURNS TO ITS POINT OF ORIGIN. THIS IS REPRESENTED BY A SERPENT COILING INTO A SPIRAL SHAPE AND HOLDING ITS OWN TAIL. IT SUGGESTS THE COSMOLOGICAL MODEL OF THE BIG BANG, FOLLOWED BY THE BIG CRUNCH

SATYABRATA PANIGRAHY

Snake has always been a mysterious creature. This reptile becomes an object of worship in some rituals, and in the yogic tradition, it symbolises the hidden Kundalini power. The lost art of snake charming revolves around playing snakes along with rhythmic music from bin or pungi. The rhythmic dance of a snake has the ability to mesmerise the audience. In fact, myriad forms and qualities of Nagas or Cobra snakes are depicted in Hindu iconography. The Naga couple, Nagabandha, Snake Door, and Lord Vishnu resting on Sheshanaga are some common pieces of art found in temple architecture.

During Samudra Manthan, a story mentioned in Hindu mythology, the Vasuki snake became the rope for the churning of the ocean of milk. But one question arises here. Snakes are given so much importance in various cultures across different parts of the world. But, Why? We can see their symbolic presence in temple architecture, sculptures, and scriptures. It is simply because of the spiral shape of the snakes.

The Brahmanda Purana says that the shape

of the universe looks like a snake. Indian mythology has named it the Cosmic Serpent. The universe mostly consists of a number of galaxies. The spiral structure of a galaxy is very similar to that of a snake's coiled resting position. While resting, snakes form a spiral shape like a coil. Spirals exist everywhere in nature. Nature is full of aesthetics and creative designs, which inspires man to replicate the same in art. The most interesting fact is that nature repeats the spiral geometry in different objects. The same spiral pattern exists both in flowers and in galaxies. It can't be just a coincidence. Is there any scientific reason or philosophical idea behind this mysterious, deep connection? Geometrical patterns are connected through one common spiral shape.

In the natural world, we find spirals in the DNA, double helix, a snake's resting position, the head shape of a cobra snake, sunflowers, the path of draining water, weather patterns, hurricanes, snail shells, the cyclones, vine tendrils, horns of some animals, galaxies, chameleon's tail, mollusk shells, conch, the shape of our ear, the nautilus, the position

of the embryo inside the mother's womb, etc. Look at your fingertip, and you will see spirals. Now a days, the spiral patterns of our fingertips have become our unique identity.

These logarithmic spirals exist in formations such as galaxies and weather patterns because of the interplay between physical forces and matter tends towards that shape. Spirals are amazing, complex, and beautiful forms, and they link together key ideas in mathematics, physics, biology, and spiritual curiosity. The simplest life forms, such as sunflowers, grow following the simple rules of the Fibonacci sequence, mapping out the golden ratio. One of the most interesting spirals in nature is the flight of a falcon. They can dive at more than 200 mph, but in order to track their prey, they make a spiral as they dive and trace out a logarithmic spiral. Leaves, branches, and petals may also grow in spirals so that leaves don't block the sun from older leaves or so that the maximum amount of rain reaches the roots. Thus, in many cases, spirals exist in biological organisms because of a scientific principle that says that things

are connected or behave in the simplest or most economical way. Spiral staircases are built for this reason. Building a spiral staircase is the easiest way, and it involves the least amount of resources and space.

In the galaxy, billions of stars swirl around in a cosmic dance by the laws of motion and gravity, and at a small scale, electron clouds trace out complex orbits around atomic nuclei and tiny spirals in space-time. That's why famous physicist Nassim Haramein said, "Spin is happening everywhere, moving towards stillness, singularity, or the source point. From the atom to hurricanes to galaxies, we observe the same spiral dynamics on all scales."

The serpent, while forming a ring with its tail in its mouth, is a symbol of the cyclic nature of the cosmos. In Egyptian mythology, it is called Ouroboros, a serpent eating its own tail. It symbolises the cyclic model of cosmology. Ever since the Big Bang, the universe has been expanding and cooling down. Eventually, the whole universe will end in a state of dissolution, either through heat death or a big crunch. All existence comes from a single source and ultimately returns to its point of origin. This is depicted by a serpent coiling into a spiral shape and holding its own tail. It suggests the cosmological model of the Big Bang, followed by the big crunch. In cybernetics, this symbol is interpreted as the feedback loop, an essential concept of system theory.

It is found in varieties of cultures all over the world, and the importance of spiral geometry is reflected in serpent culture, mysticism, shamanism, Hindu ritual arts and designs, and the tantric traditions of India. Considering these important features, serpent symbols are employed in different religious and sacred architectures.



An artefact featuring Lord Vishnu on Sheshanag

The writer is Berhampur-based columnist, feature writer and a corporate communication professional.



PRACHI