

JUNE 23-29, 2024

# SUNDAY POST

HERE . NOW



# Sliding into **obscurity**

P 3,4  
COVER  
STORY

MY SUNDAY

Ananya Anupama from Bhubaneswar is a rising star in the state's showbiz circuit. After bagging Best Smile trophy in a reality show, Ananya appeared in several popular music videos, before getting her big break on television with Odia drama show 'Tu Khara Mu Chhai'. The actor/dancer, who wants to pursue a career in management while acting, likes nature walks



Self-care Sundays

I always look forward to Sundays to recharge myself. I rest, enjoy good sleep, and indulge in self-care with natural skincare routines like applying Multani mitti paste and scrubs.



With family

Holiday traditions

I make sure to take advantage of the opportunity to spend time with family on holidays, even if my hectic schedule rarely permits it. My dad is my favourite person to go shopping with.

Friends and meals

Sometimes Sundays are for friends, enjoying meals, exploring new places, and sharing our adventures on Instagram.



With friends

Nature exploration

Taking a walk in nature and hiking are my favourite pastimes. I also want to have new experiences like kayaking, beach walks, and learning about different places.

Mood-lifting mantra

My pet dog, Cookie, lifts my mood and helps me relieve stress. Grooming her on Sundays is a joy, and we spend lots of time together playing with her.



With Cookie

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

- Who doesn't eat on Thanksgiving? A turkey because it is always stuffed.
- What is a vampire's sweetheart called? His ghou-friend.
- Why can't Trump go to White house anymore? It's FOR BIDEN.
- What do you call someone who is afraid of picnics? A basket case!



STAY IN LIMITS

Sir, This refers to the article 'Bible and Sexuality' that appeared in the **Sunday POST** the previous week. In this regard, I contend that everything ought to have boundaries. For instance, electricity is a wonderful invention that, when used properly, benefits all of mankind. However, electricity can be lethal if used improperly. The same is true of human sexuality. Sexuality is a good gift, provided we use it to live within the appropriate bounds that God established for us. But often we misuse the gift of sexuality and this is the direct or indirect cause of a large portion of the world's issues. Most of such problems like abortions, divorce, STDs, AIDS, pornography, sex trafficking, rape, and paedophilia would disappear or be significantly reduced if everyone adhered to God's rules for sexuality.

DHARMASIS BEHERA, KENDRAPARA

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

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# Sliding into obscurity

While Bhubaneswar's crown jewel Lingaraj Temple and the intricately carved Mukteshwar Temple are celebrated worldwide, the city houses a plethora of lesser-known temples that are equally captivating, offering a glimpse into the rich tapestry of state's heritage

MADHUSMITA SAHU, OP

**B**hubaneswar, the capital of Odisha, was named after Tribhubaneswara, or Lord of the three worlds, which refers to Lord Shiva. The Odia name was Bhubaneswara, and the name has been anglicised to Bhubaneswar. In 1949, it replaced Cuttack as the capital of Odisha.

Though the modern city of Bhubaneswar is traced to just two years after Independence, the history of the city and nearby areas goes back to the 7th century BC, and there is a lot of Buddhist, Jain, and Hindu heritage associated with it. Bhubaneswar, often referred to as the City of Temples, is renowned for its architectural splendour and historical significance. There are more than 700 temples in the city, including small and large ones, which are dotted throughout the city.

While Bhubaneswar's crown jewel Lingaraj Temple and the intricately carved Mukteshwar Temple are celebrated worldwide, the city harbours a plethora of lesser-known temples that are equally captivating. These hidden gems offer a glimpse into the rich tapestry of Odisha's heritage, drawing the interest of historians, archaeologists, and culture enthusiasts.

Here's what some of the top experts of the state have to share with **Sunday POST** on a few lesser-known temples in Bhubaneswar.

### Vaital Temple

**Deepak Kumar Nayak**, a prominent archaeologist specialising in architecture, emphasises the city's ancient



roots. "Bhubaneswar's history dates back over 2,000 years, and it has been a significant religious centre for much of that time. While the major temples attract most of the attention, the lesser-known ones are equally vital in understanding the region's architectural and cultural evolution."

One such temple is the Vaital Deul, an 8th-century structure dedicated to the tantric cult of Goddess Chamunda. Its unique architectural style and iconography distinguish it from other temples in the region. He elaborates, "Vaital Deul stands out due to its distinctive Khakara style, which resembles the Dravidian gopurams rather than the typical Kalinga style. The temple's intricate carvings depict tantric rituals, making it a fascinating study for those interested in the esoteric traditions of ancient India."

"Quite unlike the architecture of these temples, the Bhaumakaras built this temple and are believed to use it for tantric worship," Nayak continued. This is the only Bhubaneswar temple with Khakara architecture (Deul with an oblong plan, with pilasters and a wagon roof, and a flat-roofed Jagmohana)."

He said, "That temple is a sculptural beauty. Some of the sculptures include 4 armed Ardhanarishwara, Lakulisa, 4 armed Siva, 4 armed Parvathi, 8 armed Mahishasura Mardhini at 2 places, Harihara, 10 armed Nataraja, Surya with Usha and Pratyusha, and a few Shalabanjikas (women holding trees) and Nagas (half snake, half human beings). The sanctum sanctorum has an eight-armed Chamunda, aka Kapalini. She is a fierce-looking goddess seated on a corpse, accompanied by an owl and jackal, wearing a garland of skulls with sunken eyes and belly.

Other sculptures in the sanctum sanctorum include Virabhadra, six of Saphthamathrika, Bhairava, etc."

### Paramguru Shiva Temple

Historian **Anil Dhir** has spent years studying Bhubaneswar's lesser-known temples. He highlights the Paramguru Shiva Temple, one of the oldest surviving temples in the city, dating back to the 7th century. "Paramguru Shiva Temple is a gem that often goes unnoticed. Its beautifully carved exteriors and well-preserved interiors provide a snapshot of early Odishan temple architecture. The Paramaguru Siva temple is situated in the private



land of Rabindra Paramaguru, located on the right side of Ratha Road, leading from Lingaraj Temple to Rameswara Temple, Old Town. It is situated 20.00 metres north of Vaital temple and 100 metres south of Gosagareswara precinct."

He also points out the significance of the temple's preservation. "The fact that Paramguru temple has withstood the test



Paramguru temple in a state of ruin

of time is a testament to the advanced engineering skills of ancient craftsmen. It's crucial that we continue to study and preserve these structures to gain insights into the technological prowess and cultural richness of that era."

He also said, "The lesser-known temples of Bhubaneswar are not just remnants of the past; they are living testaments to the city's enduring spiritual and cultural legacy. As historians, archaeologists, and conservationists continue to uncover and preserve these hidden gems, they enrich our understanding of India's vast and varied heritage.

For those willing to look beyond the well-trodden paths, Bhubaneswar offers a treasure trove of ancient marvels waiting to be explored."



Vaital temple

Satrughna Group of Temples

Local tourist guide Suresh Mishra brings attention to the lesser-visited temples of Satrughneswar, Bharateswar, and Laxmaneswar. These temples, situated in close proximity to each other, are collectively known as the Satrughna Group of Temples. Mishra explains, "These temples are dedicated to the brothers of Lord Rama and are excellent examples of the early Kalinga architectural style. They are relatively simple compared to the later temples but are significant for understanding the evolution of temple architecture in Odisha."

"The Shatrughaneshwar group of temples are a trio of 6th century A.D. temples built during the Sailodbhava rule, consisting of Shatrughaneshwar temple, Bharateshwar temple, and Lakshmaneshwar temple. They are located immediately opposite the Rameshwar temple, on the left side of the road leading from Kalpana Chowk to Lingaraj temple in Bhubaneswar," he adds.

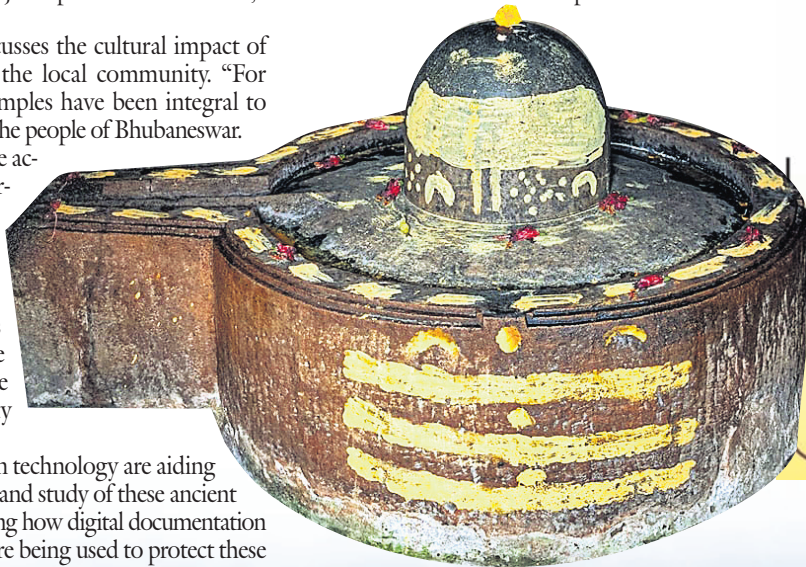
Mishra also discusses the cultural impact of these temples on the local community. "For centuries, these temples have been integral to the spiritual life of the people of Bhubaneswar. They continue to be active places of worship, and local festivals and rituals revolve around them. These lesser-known temples thus play a crucial role in maintaining the cultural continuity of the region."

Advancements in technology are aiding in the preservation and study of these ancient structures. Discussing how digital documentation and 3D mapping are being used to protect these

temples, he said, "Drones and laser scanning have created detailed digital models of these temples. This not only helps in preserving their current state but also provides invaluable data for restoration efforts."

He also emphasised the importance of community involvement in preservation. "Educating the local population about the historical significance of these temples is crucial. When people take pride in their heritage, they are more likely to participate in preservation efforts. Community-led initiatives can be incredibly effective in ensuring the longevity of these ancient structures."

He concluded by listing several temples in the Old Town area that require preservation and public attention, including Taleswara Temple, Uttareswara Temple, Chitrakarini Temple, Daiteswara Temple, Labakeshwara, Kusakeswara, Swarnajaleswara Temple, and Subarnajaleswara Temple.



AWAY FROM LIMELIGHT!

The City of Temples holds in its embrace a treasure trove of heritage wonders. But what could be the reasons behind its lack of popularity? Let's learn from Adyasha Das, an Associate Professor at the Indian Institute of Tourism & Travel Management, Bhubaneswar. She says, "The lesser-known temples in Bhubaneswar are not as well-known to the public for several reasons. Some temples are located in the eastern part of the old city, which is slightly removed from the central temples. This distance from the main tourist areas might contribute to their relative obscurity. The history of these temples is not as well documented as that of more famous temples, making them less well-known to the general public."



The travel blogger goes on to explain, "While the architecture of these temples is impressive, it might not be as ornate or visually striking as some of the more famous temples. Despite being well-preserved, these temples might not have received the same level of restoration and maintenance as more famous temples, which could affect their popularity. The lesser-known temples might not be as easily accessible as more central temples, which could limit the number of visitors."

Besides, the infrastructure for tourism in these areas might not be as developed, making it more difficult for tourists to visit these temples, she adds. But these temples are still revered by locals, who continue to visit and worship there, Das further says.

"The historical context in which these temples were built and their significance in the region might not be as well-known or widely understood, which could contribute to their lesser-known status. These factors, combined, might contribute to the relative obscurity of these lesser-known temples in Bhubaneswar," signs off the multiple award-winning academician and researcher.



Satrughna Group of Temples, Bharateswar temple Shiv ling (Top)



# Peril abounds

*One snake per square metre and unparalleled natural wonders elevate Brazil's Ilha da Queimada Grande, famously known as Snake Island, to a realm of fascination and fear*

OP DESK

**N**estled off the Brazilian coast, Ilha da Queimada Grande has long been considered to be one of the most dangerous, terrifying parcels of land anywhere on the planet.

Beneath the island's picturesque façade of rocky shorelines, there is a sinister truth that remains utterly undiscovered.

The is-

Atlantic Ocean is about 430,000 square metres.

It has a varied topography spanning from verdant rainforests to desolate cliffs. At its tallest point, the island rises to a height of 676 feet over the surface of the water.

The weather on Snake Island is generally temperate. In the southern hemisphere, average temperatures range from a low of 65°F in August to 81°F in March, the start of summer.

The amount of rainfall varies throughout the year, ranging from nearly nonexistent in July to a good amount in December.

Ilha da Queimada Grande has seen extensive deforestation in recent years. After the villagers set fire to the forest to make way for a banana plantation, the area gained the Portuguese name 'Queimada,' which translates to 'forest fire.'

Snake Island would have been connected to the Brazilian mainland. But thousands of years ago, this connection was severed by rising sea levels. Numerous poisonous snakes got stuck due to nature's fury. They have since thrived in their remote sanctuary, surviving on birds.

A lighthouse was built in 1909 to direct sailors away from the rocky coast. When the lighthouse was automated, its last keepers eventually departed permanently. They left behind an uncontrolled wilderness ruled by snakes.

### The forbidden haven

The history of Snake Island starts at the end of the last ice age, some 11,000 years ago. A population of snakes got trapped on the tropical enclave when sea levels rose.

The serpents underwent incredible adaptations after being isolated for thousands of years. They spread quickly, transforming the island into a forbidden paradise.

According to local folklore, pirates used Ilha da Queimada Grande as a shield to keep their hidden wealth safe. But its unusual seclusion and evolutionary history are the



An aerial view of the Snake Island

real causes of its unique residents.

These days, this extremely venomous pit viper species rules over Snake Island, with a more realistic estimated population of 2,000 to 4,000 golden lanceheads. The island has a reputation for being extremely dangerous due to its density—many reports place there to be one snake for every square metre.

There are lots of stories and myths out there. However, the delicate dance between the golden lancehead snakes and their

isolated world provides an explanation for those who dare to wonder if Snake Island is really as hazardous as its reputation suggests.

### The golden lancehead

They are the rulers of Snake Island. The scientific name for this notorious and extremely poisonous pit viper is *Bothrops insularis*.

They are unique to Ilha da Queimada Grande; they are the only native species on the island. They are among the deadliest snakes in Latin America, named for their peculiar head shape and bright yellowish-brown underside.

Their strong venom, which is the fastest-acting and five times more effective than that of other closely related species, is tailored to feed on local birds.

### No documented human deaths from snakebite

There are no documented cases of golden lancehead snake bites on human skin, despite their lethal venom. Nevertheless, migratory birds are less fortunate. But more people have died at the hands of other lanceheads in the Americas than any other category of snakes.

When a bite occurs, which is rare, the consequences are dire. The symptoms include nausea, edoema, and severe pain. Internal bleeding or even renal failure may also occur.

### Adventurers' allure

The Brazilian Navy has strictly restricted public access to Snake Island due to the large number of snakes there. It's an attempt to preserve the lives of both humans and snakes.

Vital data collection on the island is restricted to authorised researchers who have been granted waivers by the Brazilian federal conservation unit. This guarantees the delicate ecosystem's survival. Additionally, it protects the population of golden lanceheads, which is under grave danger.

### Species under threat

The island continues to be a target for animal smugglers despite the restrictions. These traffickers catch the rare snakes and resell them on the black market. Amateur thrill-seekers who try to visit Snake Island also end up there.

The island is confronted with issues like habitat destruction. The rise of illnesses and the elimination of vegetation are the causes of this. Over the past 15 years, it caused a notable decrease in the number of golden lanceheads.



A closer look at Snake Island

land appears peaceful and serene, but it is actually home to an extraordinary density of venomous snakes that are unmatched anywhere else. Tens or perhaps hundreds of thousands of deadly snakes slither through the greenery, waiting to strike any invader that steps foot on the island with their poisonous fangs.

The amazing history of Snake Island, a place where peril abounds, is one of fearless adventurers, fabled tales, and, in the end, a never-ending struggle for survival.

### About the islet

The past is dangerous and fascinating at the same time. Situated in southeastern Brazil, about 33 kilometres (21 miles) off the coast of São Paulo, this small islet in the



# ‘Want to tell visually compelling stories’

Banker-turned-filmmaker Vishwajeet Dash from Odisha, known for his food and travel vlogs, was recently in the news after winning several awards at national and international festivals for his documentary film ‘Stripe Chasers’. An enthralling wildlife production, set in Kanha National Park (KNP), Madhya Pradesh, the film not only celebrates the stunning beauty of the forests, but also pays tribute to the park guides, the unsung heroes, who approach their job with unwavering dedication. Dash took some time off to speak to **Sunday POST** on a host of topics. Excerpts:



ARINDAM GANGULY, OP

- ▶ **From food and travel vlogger to filmmaker - what was the motivation behind this move?**
- ▶ During my early childhood, I watched my father go on long tours on his motorcycle. I would wait for him to return and tell me stories of his adventures around Odisha. I also grew up watching shows on NatGeo, Discovery, and, of course, *Jungle Book*. This has probably sparked a desire to go gallivanting across the country. In 2015, I quit my job as a banker and returned to Odisha to switch professions. In a bid to explore the state, I launched my YouTube channel Just Vish on food and travel, which was an instant hit. In 2021, I was in MP doing food and travel vlogs when I met a subscriber, Durgesh Singh. He was the tour leader

- and founder of Sinali, a wildlife resort in KNP. He had a vision to make a documentary on safari guides in parks, and I was also passionate about wildlife. At the beginning, we thought of making some short videos but ended up with *Stripe Chasers*.
- ▶ **What’s your view on tiger conservation in Odisha?**
- ▶ Odisha has a lot of tiger habitat parks, like Similipal and Satkosia. But the population is more in MP. As a filmmaker and a wildlife enthusiast, I would love to see a thriving tiger population in my home state.
- ▶ **How can their numbers be increased?**
- ▶ According to me, large-



scale education and awareness are required to increase the number of tigers in Odisha. Besides, we have to strengthen anti-poaching units with modern equipment and intelligence networks. The government should also promote sustainable tourism to generate funds

among the local communities about the issue. Mitigating human-wildlife conflict through compensation schemes and enforcing strong wildlife protection policies, along with participatory governance, are essential for long-term success. Besides, I think if the authorities decide to adopt measures undertaken by MP, there is no reason why we can’t become the No. 1 Tiger State in a decade.

- ▶ **Is there any plan in place to make feature films?**
- ▶ I am always on a mission to better myself as a filmmaker. I want to produce visually compelling stories that inspire and move people, irrespective of the format or medium. However, wildlife and travel films will always be areas of personal interest.

Actress Sharmin Segal, who has found herself at the receiving end of trolls ever since the release of Sanjay Leela Bhansali’s debut web series *Heeramandi*,



## Sharmin at ease with her physical changes

recently shared that she now has a more compassionate and empathetic relationship with her body. In her interview with a media agency, she expressed that while she loves her body, there are times when she feels dissatisfied with her appearance, especially on days when she feels bloated. She mentioned that consuming foods like french fries for dinner often makes her feel bloated the next day. “Coming to

Actress Banita Sandhu is known for her performance in films like *October*, *Sardar Ulhaan* and *Adithya Varma*.

The actress has now gone on to become a huge sensation as she bagged the role of Sita Malhotra in one of Netflix’s biggest shows, *Bridgerton*. Talking about her journey from Indian shores to the streaming platform being viewed across the globe, she said, “I don’t think I have processed it till now... it has been overwhelming, it has been so lovely. The loveliest part of the response has been from the audience in India, how proud they are to see one of their own on such a big show. I think that’s what has touched my heart the most.”

Before *Bridgerton*, the actress was last seen in Canada based singer AP Dhillon’s single *With You*. She auditioned for the show in the summer of 2022, a whole year before AP’s video came out, the actress shared.

The actress explained that her current level of comfort with her appearance is due to a shift in her mindset. She pointed out that one’s mindset must adapt alongside physical changes. She highlighted that, as women, they experience periods and pregnancy, which have significant physical impacts on their bodies. This understanding has helped her become more at ease with these changes.

She noted that sometimes, even daily workouts might not visibly transform the body, but it’s important to be content with the effort put in. With a laugh, she confessed, “And yes, sometimes I wish I looked like Bella Hadid.”

## Banita basking in Bridgerton glory



AGENCIES



# Frames to futures

Acclaimed cinematographer Ramananda Sarkar's contributions go beyond mere entertainment to inspire and empower aspiring filmmakers from diverse backgrounds. Sarkar advocates for the democratisation of filmmaking, believing that storytelling should be accessible to all



SAYAN CHATTERJEE

In cinematic artistry, the cinematography is the silent yet profound artist, deftly wielding light and shadow to create visions that transcend reality. At the forefront of this evocative medium is Ramananda Sarkar, whose craftsmanship has not only left an enduring impact on the Indian film industry but has also significantly influenced the global cinematic landscape over the past twelve years. His work is a source of pride for the Indian film industry and a testament to its global reach and influence.

Born in Karimpur, a serene town in West Bengal, Sarkar's journey into cinematography began at Roopkala Kendro, an institute conceptualised by Satyajit Ray. Despite facing significant socio-economic adversities, Sarkar's unwavering determination and passion for film editing laid the foundation for his illustrious career. His affinity for the camera deepened at the Film and Television Institute of India (FTII) in Pune, where he immersed himself in the world of filmmaking. Reflecting on his journey, Sarkar remarked, "Learning filmmaking is like delving into life and self-discovery. Films serve as a medium for humans to narrate stories, mirroring our existence."

Our conversation in Delhi

unveiled the breadth of Sarkar's career, marked by diverse projects and enriching experiences. His professional debut in 2010 with a German crew for the Academy Award-nominated short film *Raju* was a significant milestone. It set the stage for his future collaborations with acclaimed filmmakers, including Satya Rai Nagpaul and Hansal Mehta. Notable projects like *An Insignificant Man* and *Newborns* have earned accolades at esteemed film festivals worldwide, a testament to Sarkar's professional growth and the recognition of his talent.

Sarkar's contributions transcend the silver screen, inspiring and empowering aspiring filmmakers through transformative workshops conducted across demographics and socio-economic strata. In collaboration with Netflix India and Anticlock Films, he launched a film workshop for aspiring filmmakers from Jammu and Kashmir, providing them with a life-changing platform to hone their skills amidst the breathtaking landscapes of the Gurez region.

Sarkar's journey also included an extended hiatus in Shantiniketan, where he rekindled his creative flame and reaffirmed his commitment to the craft. His portfolio includes work for platforms like Zee5, Hoichoi, and Addatimes, with projects such as *7 No. Shanatan Sanyal*, the *Feluda Series*, and acclaimed shorts like *Shoshibhusan* and *Pocketmaar*.

Sarkar was immersed in an eight-day filmmaking workshop in collaboration with Netflix India and Anticlock Films to cultivate talent and foster creative dialogue in Jammu and Kashmir. Reflecting on his motivation, Sarkar credited his partnership with director Onir, whose collaborative spirit had left an indelible mark on his artistic ethos. Onir shared a similar passion for mentorship, believing in the transformative power of storytelling.

As our conversation unfolded, Sarkar's passion for mentorship and unwavering commitment to nurturing emerging talent shone through. With Onir and a cohort of like-minded mentors, he embarks on a journey to shape the cinematic landscape of tomorrow. For Sarkar, the essence of filmmaking lies not in the glamour of the silver screen but in its profound impact on individuals and communities, fostering understanding in an increasingly fragmented world.

Cinematography shapes cultural narratives and promotes understanding among diverse communities. In today's rapidly changing world, preserving and documenting our heritage is crucial for future

generations. The widespread adoption of smartphones and user-friendly applications, along with advancements in AI, has revolutionised filmmaking, making it accessible to individuals from diverse backgrounds.

At the forefront of this transformative initiative is Onir, serving as Creative Director, supported by a distinguished cadre of mentors, including Ramananda Sarkar. This initiative promises to catalyse significant change, fostering creativity and ambition among the youth of Jammu and Kashmir. Onir's collaboration with Sarkar exemplifies storytelling's profound and universal power to connect and inspire, transcending borders and fostering understanding.

Asked about his collaboration with Ramananda Sarkar, Onir said, "Ram never limits himself to his assigned contributions. He's a great storyteller, enthusiastic and curious, and he bonds easily with the locals. I've known him since our days at FTII, and his technical expertise with the camera and his human qualities make him an invaluable collaborator. We've worked together for stretches as long as fifteen days, and those experiences are dear to me."



Onir

The writer is a Delhi-based independent contributor to print and online publications





Subrata

WANT TO BECOME A MODEL?

Send us your photographs at  
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