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SUNDAY POST

HERE . NOW



RAKSHA BANDHAN-AUGUST 19

Beyond sibling bond

COVER STORY

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With Boman Irani and Shankar Mahadevan



With AR Rahman

Born in Thane, Maharashtra, Gulraj Singh came to limelight after composing music for movies such as 'Katti Batti', 'Kakuda', 'Masti Express', and 'Ungli'. Gulraj has also worked alongside names such as AR Rahman, Shankar-Ehsaan-Loy, and Salim-Sulaiman. A graduate of Trinity College of Music, London, he has several awards to his credit, including the GIMA (Global Indian Music Award) and the Mirchi Music Award. Gulraj is keen on working in the non-film music space



Quiet family moments

Since I spend most of the time in studios or travelling, given an opportunity, I love to be with my family. Family time for me is mostly about being at home, dining together, and watching popular movies.

Old-school mornings

Like most musicians, I start my day with a warm cup of water and a newspaper. I know it's a bit old-fashioned, but I still prefer reading the newspaper over scrolling through it on my phone or iPad.

Staying active

Whether it's Sunday or any other day, I stay active around the house. I believe it's important to keep yourself engaged. For me, rest means taking a nap or enjoying a favourite show

Music is life

When I'm not working, I love spending time in my studio, surrounded by my instruments. I enjoy listening to music, and like to take a walk.

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

- What happens when you fall in love with a french chef? You get buttered up.
- Whenever I find the key to success, someone changes the lock.
- Why did the boy throw the butter out the window? To see a butterfly.
- What do you call a boomerang that doesn't work? A stick.



MEMORY LANE

Sir, The write-up on German fairy tale Rapunzel last week was really informative. It took me to the sweet memory lane of my childhood. The story of Rapunzel told during the Middle Ages and early modern eras by folklorists like Hans Christian Andersen is narrated to audiences even today through Disney productions and a variety of other media. In 2010, Walt Disney's animated musical adventure Tangled, loosely based on Rapunzel, reached the summit of the worldwide box office a few weeks after its release. I'm thankful to the editorial team of Sunday POST for sharing the origin of the fairy tale. Hereby, it is requested to present the 'behind the scene' stories of other fairy tales like Hansel and Gretel, Cinderella, Beauty and the Beast, Sleeping Beauty and others.

SURESH MISTRY, JAGATSINGHPUR

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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RAKSHA BANDHAN-AUGUST 19

The festival is not just about bonding between a brother and a sister, there are instances where elder siblings step into parental roles embodying selflessness and dedication in the lives of their younger siblings

Beyond sibling bond

younger brothers and sisters, guiding them to become responsible adults while continuing her own education. To provide for them, Mankhusi turned to farming, cutting off her hair and working tirelessly in the fields.

In the MV-11 village of Malkangiri District, Mankhusi has dedicated herself to raising her siblings, sacrificing her own happiness for their sake. Reflecting on her situation, Mankhusi shares, "When my parents passed away, I knew I had no choice but to step up. It was my responsibility to make sure my siblings had a chance to grow up well. I chose farming because it was the only way I could support us all."

Four years ago, Mankhusi's mother succumbed to cancer, and soon after, her father fell ill and passed away. Left alone, Mankhusi took on the role of guardian for her two younger brothers and sisters. One of her brothers suffers from a mental illness, and Mankhusi has taken on the burden of funding his treatment and caring for his daily needs. "It's been incredibly tough," she says, "but seeing my siblings in need keeps me going. I have to make sure they're taken care of, even if it means putting my own dreams on hold."

Balancing her responsibilities is a daily struggle. She juggles household chores, cooking, and helping her siblings with their studies while also attending Malkangiri University. "Sometimes I wonder if I'm doing enough,"



she admits. "I worry about how to manage everything—what to cook, what we need, and how to make ends meet. But I've learnt to focus on the essentials and push through."

Mankhusi has become a dedicated farmer, sowing paddy, planting rice, and tending to the land with the same determination she applies to her family. "I've sacrificed my own ambitions," she says. "I don't have time for dreams right now. My focus is solely on ensuring my siblings have a better future." Despite the challenges, Mankhusi remains steadfast in her commitment, driven by the love and responsibility she feels for her family.

MADHUSMITA SAHU, OP

Raksha Bandhan, a cherished festival in India, celebrates the unique bond between siblings, particularly highlighting the protective and nurturing role of brothers and sisters. Traditionally, this day symbolises a sister's prayer for her brother's well-being and a brother's promise to protect and support his sister. However, beyond the festive rituals and symbolic threads, Raksha Bandhan also brings to light the often-overlooked reality of elder siblings stepping into parental roles. As the guardians and guides for their younger siblings, elder brothers and sisters embody selflessness and dedication in their daily lives.

In many families, elder siblings assume the role of second parents when circumstances demand it. Whether due to the loss of parents, financial difficulties, or other challenging situations, elder brothers and sisters often rise to the occasion, taking on responsibilities that extend beyond mere sibling duties.

Sister turns farmer

When both parents passed away, leaving four siblings to fend for themselves, the responsibility fell to the eldest sister. Nineteen-year-old **Mankhusi Sarkar** made a critical decision: she would take care of her



Mankhusi with her younger brother



She supports her sister's kids against all odds

Onka Chittama, a nearly 50-year-old woman from Paradip, remains unmarried and tirelessly dedicates herself to her family, working from 4 am until evening. She shoulders the immense responsibility of feeding thirteen people. Her livelihood revolves around the dry fish trade; she purchases fish from the Paradeep port, dries it, and then transports it to places like Rambha, Brajrajnagar, and other parts of Odisha.

Reflecting on her life, Onka shared, "When my father passed away, I was just 18. His sudden death due to an overdose left us all



in shock. My mother and five younger sisters left the house, and I found myself responsible for my younger brothers. I knew I had to step up, so I ventured into the fishing business, something our community was familiar with. It wasn't easy, but with my brothers' help, we managed to get by."

In a community where fishing in the sea was the primary occupation, Onka acquired a boat and ventured into the business herself, with her younger brothers helping out. They survived on the income they earned, and over time, Onka managed to save enough to purchase two more boats. "There were days when I wondered if we could make it," Onka recalls, adding, "but I kept pushing forward. My goal was to see my siblings settled."

Life seemed to be improving as she was able to arrange the marriages of her younger sisters and one of her brothers. However, tragedy struck again when Ravee, her married sister, died in an accident. "Losing Ravee was a blow I didn't see coming. Suddenly,

I had to care for her children too," Onka said, her voice heavy with emotion.

Adding to her burdens, her younger brother fell seriously ill, and despite spending large sums of money on his treatment, he did not recover. His mental health deteriorated, and he became unable to work. "Watching him suffer and being unable to help was heartbreaking," Onka confessed. "But I couldn't give up. My family depended on me."

Onka's family now consists of thirteen members, including her widowed elderly mother, her ailing brother, and the children of her sisters. To support them, she continues her dry fish business, but the financial strain is overwhelming. "Some days, it feels like I'm carrying the weight of the world on my shoulders," Onka says. "But I've made peace with it. My happiness lies in seeing my family cared for, even if it means sacrificing my own."

Jagannath Rao, a former counsellor, and her neighbours all speak highly of Onka's sacrifices. "Onka's devotion to her family is unparalleled," says Jagannath Rao. "Despite her lack of formal education, she understands the importance of relationships in a way that many highly educated people often overlook."

Onka herself remains humble about her efforts. "I'm just doing what needs to be done. Family comes first, always."

A brother in the service of a differently-abled sister

Sister ties a rakhi on her brother's hand, securing a promise of protection from him. Her wish is to stand by him through all of life's joys and sorrows. In Rayagada Sadar, behind Rama Talkies, there lives a brother who has been fulfilling this promise for many years, selflessly protecting and caring for his sisters without expecting anything in return. This brother is **Ram Chandra Kar**.

Ram Chandra has devoted his life to his two sisters, understanding the mental challenges faced by his elder sister, Ranjee, with great patience. He also takes care of his younger sister's two daughters, ensuring their education and well-being. Despite these heavy responsibilities, he has no time to think about himself and remains unmarried.

Ram Chandra recounts, "When I was 2 years old, my father passed away. He was a jail warden, and after his death, my mother took over his job. Twelve years later, she was promoted to Head Jail Warden. Our family—my mother, elder sister Nalini Mohanty, younger sister Sarojini Padhi, and I—lived happily together."

He continued, "In 2002, my elder sister was married in Chikigi, Berhampur. But her in-laws mistreated her, and the abuse escalated when she was pregnant with her second child. The trauma affected her so deeply that her child was born with deformi-

ties. Eventually, her in-laws threw her and her daughter out of the house. I brought them home. The same fate befell my younger sister, who also lost her mental stability when her husband abandoned her. Now, I am responsible for caring for my mentally disturbed niece and my two sisters. I also take care of my younger sister's two daughters."

"I once had dreams of studying, travelling, and getting married, but I sacrificed them for my family. During this time, I was involved in a road accident while travelling in Andhra Pradesh as a marketer. The injury left one of my legs 3 inches shorter, making it difficult to walk. But I have never neglected my duties. My sisters, in their disturbed states, often leave the house unexpectedly. I am now old, and my mother and sisters don't understand my situation. Still, I have been unable to work to support them. Yet, despite everything, there is no bitterness in my heart," he ended.



Sister remained single for brothers

Swayamprabha Dash, hailing from Rajnagar village in the Rajnagar block of Kendrapara district, currently serves as the principal of Kancheshwar Girls High School. Known



for her academic excellence and her role as a devoted sister, Swayamprabha has earned a reputation for her unwavering selflessness.

In an era where many relationships seem to be losing their strength, Swayamprabha's dedication to her three brothers is truly remarkable. She explains, "My brothers are my world. I chose to dedicate my life to their well-being and growth, and I have no regrets." Despite her parents' efforts to persuade her to marry, she made the conscious decision to remain single, finding her happiness in nurturing and guiding her brothers.

From their childhood through their education and into their careers, she has been a constant source of support and guidance. "Watching them grow and succeed has been the greatest joy of my life. Even now, my brothers have reached adulthood, and I continue to care for them and play

an active role in supporting the education of my nieces and nephews," she says with pride.

Reflecting on her life, Swayamprabha shares, "I may not have chosen the conventional path, but I have built a life that is deeply fulfilling. My love for my family has given me everything I need." Her self-sacrifice and love have earned her the admiration and respect of everyone who knows her, making her a cherished figure in her community.



WORLD PHOTOGRAPHY DAY – AUGUST 19

Freezing frames

As the world continues to evolve, photography has undergone a sea change. But no matter the advancements, the core of the craft will always remain the same: capturing the beauty, emotion, and moments that make up our lives



Ashis in his processing lab

MADHUSMITA SAHU, OP

World Photography Day, celebrated every year August 19, is a tribute to the art of capturing moments, freezing time, and telling stories through the lens of a camera. Photography has evolved significantly since its inception, with the advent of digital technology bringing in a new era of convenience and creativity. However, the charm and nostalgia of film photography remain timeless for many.

Ahead of the day, **Sunday POST** shares the perspectives of two photographers—one who embraces digital technology and another who is loyal to the classic film reel camera.

'Convenience and efficiency of digital photography are unmatched'

Ayushman Singh Thakur, a professional photographer, believes that digital photography has revolutionised the art form. "Digital cameras have given us the ability to experiment with our shots without the fear of wasting film. Working with digital cameras offers several rewards, including superior image quality, enhanced zoom capabilities, manual settings for precise control, and interchangeable lenses for creative flexibility. These features have significantly influenced my work," says Thakur.



Singh, who primarily shoots travel, street, and portrait photography, appreciates the versatility that digital cameras offer. "When choosing a camera, I prioritise key features like high image quality, fast autofocus, versatile lenses, and reliable battery life, all of which impact my work. For different photography types, I adjust my camera settings accordingly—for portraits, I use a wide aperture for shallow depth of field, while for landscapes, I prefer a smaller aperture to keep everything in focus."

He also highlights, "Inspiration comes from exploring the work of others and engaging with social media. My creative process involves planning, composing shots with care, and refining images through meticulous editing. I'm excited about trends like AI in photo editing and the rise of mirror-less cameras, which are shaping the future of photography. Smartphone photography, while presenting challenges, also offers opportunities for creative collaboration and reaching a wider audience. To overcome creative blocks, I change my environment or seek inspiration from other art forms, which often sparks new ideas and perspectives in my photography."

For him, the convenience and efficiency of digital photography are unmatched. "You can store thousands of photos on a single memory card, instantly share your work online, and even back up your images to the cloud. It has made photography more accessible to everyone, democratizing the art form in a way

'Analog photography is like learning alphabets before writing poems'

On the other side of the spectrum is **Ashish Sahoo**, from Delhi, a passionate film photographer who cherishes the traditional methods of capturing images. "There's something magical about the process of shooting with film. Each shot is precious because you only have a limited number of exposures on a roll. It makes you slow down and really think about your composition before pressing the shutter," says Ashish.

The Co-Founder of Maze Collective Studio, who specialises in only film and alternate processes, believes that film has a unique aesthetic that digital cannot replicate. "Film has a certain warmth and depth that comes from its organic grain structure. The colours are more natural, and there's a tactile quality to the images that digital often lacks."

For him, the physicality of film photography is an essential part of the experience. "Developing the film in a darkroom, watching the image gradually appear on the paper—it's a process that connects you to the craft in a way that digital can't. There's a sense of anticipation and satisfaction that comes from creating something tangible."

Despite the convenience



Ashish Sahoo

of digital photography, he remains devoted to film. "It's not just about the final image; it's about the journey. Film teaches you patience, discipline, and a deeper understanding of light and composition. It's a slower process, but that's where the beauty lies. The key to good photography is understanding and connecting with your subject. Without that connection, no camera will help you take meaningful photos."

He also highlighted the advice for young photographers, "I always suggest that beginners start with analog photography. It's like learning the alphabet before you can write poetry. Film photography teaches you the fundamentals—lighting, exposure, composition—which will make you a stronger photographer overall. Once you've mastered those basics, you can move on to digital. Photography is more than just Instagram—it's about using your camera to tell the truth and capture meaningful images. That's something you have to learn through experience, not just by taking pictures for social media."

Both have their own strength and appeal

As we celebrate World Photography Day, it's clear that both digital and film photography have their own unique strengths and appeal. While digital photography offers unparalleled convenience and creative possibilities, film photography provides a timeless, hands-on experience that many artists find irreplaceable.

For Ayushman and Ashish, photography is not just about the tools they use; it's about the stories they tell through their images. Whether through the precision of digital technology or the artistry of film, their work captures the essence of the world around us, reminding us that photography is not just a medium—it's a way of seeing.

Rani on Indo-Aussie cinematic alliance

At a milestone event celebrating Indian cinema at the Australian Parliament, Bollywood actress Rani Mukerji unveiled a commemorative stamp in honour of the late legendary filmmaker Yash Chopra, who is also her father-in-law. The event, held last week, was a prelude to the 15th annual Indian Film Festival of Melbourne. During her speech, the Mardani actress spoke about how she is manifesting a huge India-Australia cinematic collaboration - a musical that features her with the Hollywood icon Hugh Jackman!

Speaking about the same, Rani said, "Just as cricket connects us, I hope the co-production treaty between our countries fosters a similar bond in our films. There is no better time than now to tell our shared stories. If you love our songs and dances there are so many Australian creative talents who have left a lasting impact on us."

mance between Nicole Kidman and Shah Rukh Khan and of course a Hugh Jackman and Rani Mukerji musical."

AGENCIES



Kat recognises fan's feedback

Actress Katrina Kaif, who owns her beauty brand Kay Beauty, recently responded to a customer who had a very unique feedback for her product line. The customer, who got completely drenched in the Bangalore rain, shared a video about her experience and while most of the video was about her complaining about the rain, she took a moment to highlight how the

eyeliner from Kay Beauty had stayed on. Talking about the eyeliner, the woman said, "I am so impressed with a product that I stopped in a corner amid heavy rainfall to talk about it." She said, "Look at my face, can you see my eyes? My eyeliner is as it is. All my foundation and lipstick got washed out due to rain, but the eyeliner just stayed throughout. What is this Kay by Katrina? I am really impressed", she added. Days after her video went viral, Katrina took to her Instagram Stories to thank her customer for her feedback. Sharing the customer's video, Katrina wrote, "So happy that you are *Bhowchik*, *Achambhit*, and *Prabhbit* by our Kay Beauty liquid eyeliner. Life can be unpredictable but your eye liner shouldn't be." AGENCIES

Talking about Aussie stars, she added, "We absolutely love Baz Luhrmann and his cinema and his musicals you have Hugh Jackman & Nicole Kidman who we adore in India they have stolen our hearts with their performances and their brilliance in musicals. I am really manifesting a ro-

Shefali: Owing the look is important

Actress-singer Shefali Jariwala has opened up on body positivity and outfits, saying she would not wear something that makes her uncomfortable. The *Kaanta Laga* singer had recently appeared on a podcast and offered a fresh take on the paparazzi who are often accused of taking pictures from inappropriate angles and talked about actors getting uncomfortable with their revealing outfits at events. She told this agency: "I've seen that some actors appear uncomfortable in revealing outfits at events, but I think it's their choice whether to wear them. Personally, it's not about revealing the costume; I would not wear something that makes me uncomfortable. "And being very comfortable

with your body is paramount because that's what brings the right attitude across, that's what makes you more enduring and that's what catches people's eye more and at award functions especially it's about standing out, I think you can only stand out when you are really comfortable and owning your look. So for me owning the look is very important irrespective of it being revealing or not revealing," she shared.

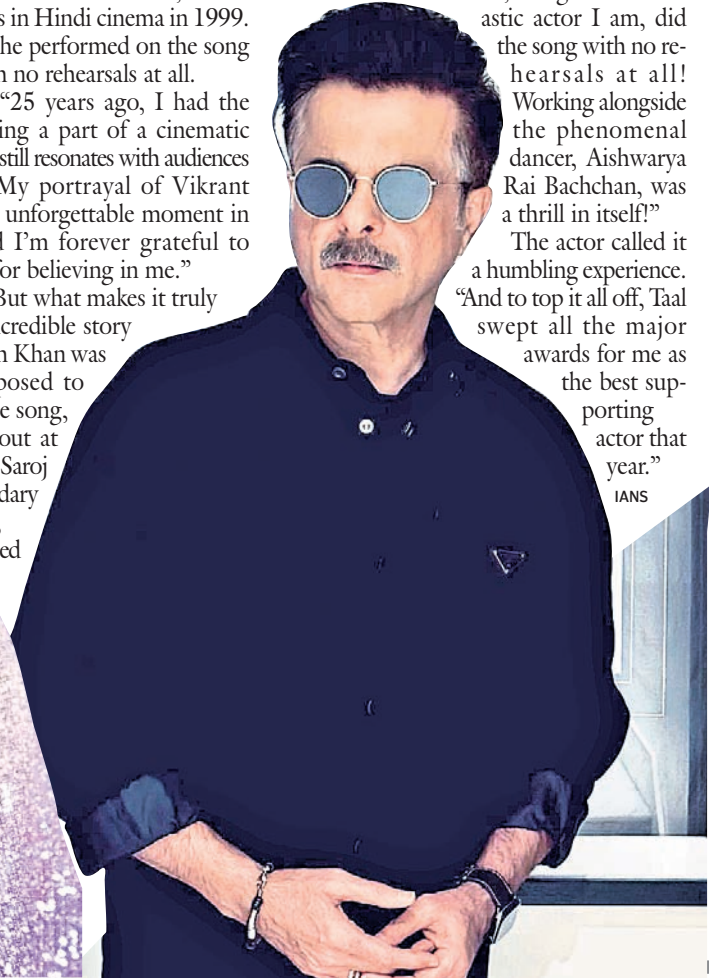
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Anil did Ramta Jogi without rehearsals

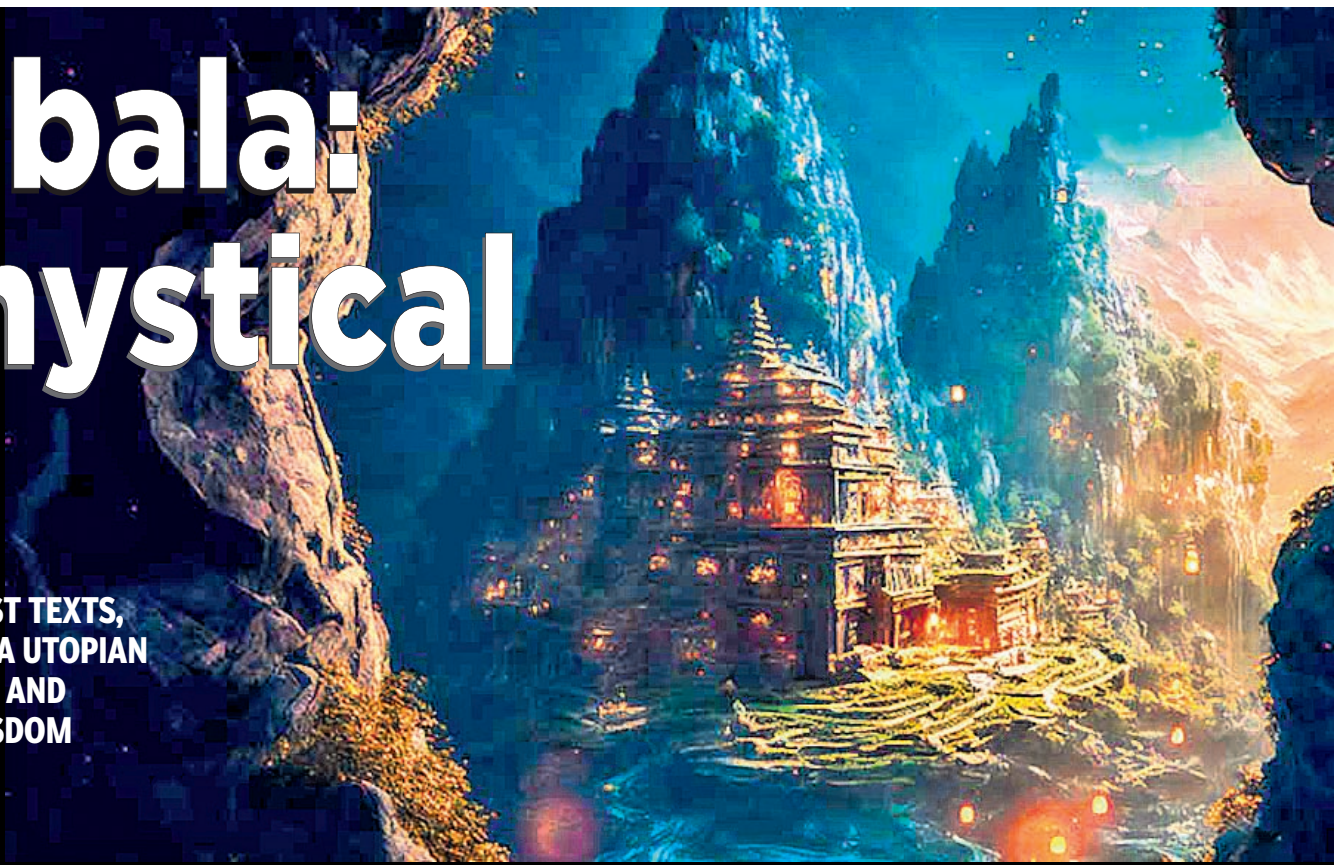
Veteran actor Anil Kapoor shared an anecdote from the film *Taal*, which clocked 25 years in Hindi cinema in 1999. He shared that he performed on the song *Ramta Jogi* with no rehearsals at all. Anil wrote: "25 years ago, I had the privilege of being a part of a cinematic masterpiece that still resonates with audiences today - *Taal*. My portrayal of Vikrant Kapoor was an unforgettable moment in my career, and I'm forever grateful to Subhash Ghai for believing in me." He added: "But what makes it truly special is the incredible story behind it - Farah Khan was originally supposed to choreograph the song, but she opted out at the last minute! Saroj Khan, the legendary choreographer, stepped

in just a night before the shoot at Filmistan. And I, being the enthusiastic actor I am, did the song with no rehearsals at all! Working alongside the phenomenal dancer, Aishwarya Rai Bachchan, was a thrill in itself!" The actor called it a humbling experience. "And to top it all off, *Taal* swept all the major awards for me as the best supporting actor that year." IAN S



Shambhala: The mystical land

ROOTED IN ANCIENT BUDDHIST TEXTS, SHAMBHALA IS DESCRIBED AS A UTOPIAN PARADISE, A PLACE OF PEACE AND ENLIGHTENMENT, WHERE WISDOM REIGNS SUPREME



OP DESK

Shambhala, the legendary kingdom said to be hidden in the remote mountains of Tibet, has fascinated explorers, spiritual seekers, and storytellers for centuries. Rooted in ancient Buddhist texts, it is described as a utopian paradise, a place of peace and enlightenment, where wisdom reigns supreme. This mystical land has not only captured the imagination of spiritual followers but has also found its way into popular culture, particularly in Hollywood and Hindi movies.

echoes the ancient descriptions of Shambhala.

Another significant reference is found in *Doctor Strange* (2016), part of the Marvel Cinematic Universe. The film follows the journey of Dr. Stephen Strange, who travels to Kathmandu in search of a cure for his hands and ends up discovering a mystical order in Kamar Taj. While not explicitly named Shambhala, the themes of hidden knowledge, spiritual awakening, and a secluded sanctuary for learning mirror the myths surrounding the legendary kingdom.

The allure of Shambhala also appears in the *Indiana Jones* franchise, particularly in *Indiana Jones and the Kingdom of the Crystal Skull* (2008). Although the film focuses on a different mythical city, the influence of Shambhala's mystique is evident in the plot's exploration of lost civilisations and hidden truths.

Hindi film industry, too, has explored the legend of Shambhala, blending it with its unique storytelling style. One such film is *Shambhala* (2013), an Indian thriller that delves into the journey of a man searching for the mythical kingdom. Though the film is more psychological and philosophical in nature, it taps into the enduring allure of Shambhala as a place of spiritual awakening and ultimate truth.

Another Bollywood film that subtly nods to the idea of a hidden, mystical land is *Kaal* (2005). Although not directly referencing Shambhala, the film's setting in the dense forests of Jim Corbett National Park, where supernatural elements come into play, invokes the sense of a mysterious, otherworldly place similar to Shambhala.

Recently released film *Kalki 2898 AD*, starring Amitabh Bachchan, Prabhas, Deepika Padukone, Kamal Haasan, Shobhana, and Saswata Chatterjee, is based on the story of the Mahabharata with deep references to Indian scriptures. One such is the

kingdom of Shambhala that forms a major plot point in the mythological sci-fi drama, directed by Nag Ashwin.

In the movie, Shambhala is a secret region in the lap of mountains that is home to those whom Yaskin and his associates call rebels. The residents of Shambhala have created an army to fight any unforeseen attack by the Raiders and to safeguard Maa, aka Sumathi (Deepika Padukone). Over the years, due to Yaskin's torture and depleting resources, Shambhala is on the edge of extinction. Even its big banyan tree at the centre of the kingdom is dry and almost dead. As per the Vishnu Purana, Shambhala will be the birthplace of Kalki, the eighth incarnation of Lord Vishnu. Kalki will fight against an invading group, destroy it, and establish a new golden age that will end the Kaliyuga. As per Buddhist prophecy, Shambhala is ruled by the future Buddha Maitreya.

The legacy

The legend of Shambhala continues to inspire and intrigue, serving as a metaphor for the human quest for meaning, peace, and enlightenment. In both Hollywood and Bollywood, Shambhala has been depicted not just as a physical place but as a symbol of the inner journey towards self-discovery and truth.

As filmmakers across the globe continue to explore the mysteries of this mythical kingdom, Shambhala remains a timeless reminder of the ultimate search for paradise—not necessarily a place to be found on a map, but within the human spirit. Whether through the lens of Hollywood adventure or Bollywood drama, the legend of Shambhala continues to captivate audiences, inviting them to dream of a world where wisdom and peace reign supreme.



The origin

In Buddhist tradition, Shambhala is said to be a hidden kingdom that lies beyond the snow-capped peaks of the Himalayas. It is described as a place where only those with pure hearts can find entry, a land governed by benevolent kings who preserve the teachings of the Buddha. According to the Kalachakra Tantra, a key Tibetan Buddhist text, Shambhala will one day rise to lead the world into a new age of enlightenment.

Over time, this spiritual concept has transcended religious boundaries, evolving into a symbol of the quest for ultimate truth and inner peace. This idea of a hidden paradise, free from the suffering of the outside world, has been a powerful motif in storytelling, influencing various forms of media, including films.

In popular culture

Hollywood has often drawn upon the mystical allure of Shambhala to craft epic adventures and tales of discovery. One of the most notable references is in the 1937 classic film *Lost Horizon*, directed by Frank Capra. The film tells the story of a group of travellers who stumble upon a hidden valley in the Himalayas, known as Shangri-La—a name often used interchangeably with Shambhala in popular culture. This idyllic place, where time slows down and people live in harmony,



AI-generated images of the mystical land

Subhashree



WANT TO BECOME A MODEL?
Send us your photographs at
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