

OCTOBER 20-26, 2024

SUNDAY POST

HERE . NOW



INFLUENCER MARKETING

Heralding a new era

COVER STORY

P
3,4



Tagged as the style icon of the Odia film industry, Subhasis Sharma, aka Mantu, shot to stardom with the daily soap 'Swabhiman'. Mantu's performance in drama shows such as 'Aaina', 'Apa', and 'Durga' not only made him a household name in the state, it paved the way for his entry into mainstream movies. He later starred in films like 'Prema Adhei Akhyara', 'Criminal', 'Tu Mo Arambha Tu Mo Sessa', and 'Krishna Govinda'. The Kendrapara-born actor keeps his Sundays reserved for daughter Viyona.

ANISHA KHATUN, OP



Sunday laziness

Idle Sunday is an ideal Sunday for me. Though Sundays are usually like any other day for an actor, I prefer to lounge about for a few more hours after finishing my sleep cycles. However, I'm an early bird on other days.



With colleagues

Fitness freak

Being a fitness enthusiast, I never skimp my workouts, and Sunday is no exception. However, I don't adhere to any diet regimen. Home-cooked food appeals to me.

Movie maniac

Sundays without movies is incomplete for me. While I'm a fanboy of SRK, Kajol, and Ranveer Singh, my favourite genres are romantic and action.



With wife Anisha, a renowned actress, and daughter Viyona

Daughter's day out

Sundays are mostly reserved for family, my daughter in particular. In the evening, we go to a nearby park or any game zone where Viyona enjoys her time.

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

- Never marry a woman who was captain of the debate team.
- The adjective for metal is metallic, but not so for iron which is ironic.
- When everything's coming your way, you're in the wrong lane and going the wrong way.
- If i had a dollar for every girl that found me unattractive, they would eventually find me attractive.

NON-VIOLENCE IN CONSERVATION

Sir, The writeup by retired Divisional Forest Officer Dr Mihir Pattnayak during National Wildlife Week was an interesting read. It's a fact that several countries have introduced laws that recognise the rights of ecosystems and animals, reflecting the nonviolent principle of protecting nature's intrinsic value. Unfortunately, we are yet to follow suit. Historically associated with figures like Mahatma Gandhi, nonviolence (ahimsa) is a commitment to avoid harm to any living creature. Even in ancient traditions like Jainism and Buddhism, nonviolence toward animals is a moral duty, recognising the interconnectedness of all life. Moreover, practicing environmental nonviolence can include climate activism, composting, and reducing our carbon footprint by eating locally grown food or taking public transportation. We can also conserve and restore habitats and ecosystems.

SOUMYARANJAN MEHER, SONEPUR

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

INFLUENCER MARKETING

Heralding a new era



Collaborating with trusted and skilled online content creators to connect with their niche audiences may seem like a simple concept, but navigating the realities of influencer marketing calls for a great deal of understanding and expertise

ANISHA KHATUN, OP

In today's rapidly evolving society, the emergence of social media influencers has ushered in a new age of digital engagement. We spend more time in the virtual world than in the real one. Whether it's for studies, shopping, or business, the internet realm is our go-to place. Career choices for the youth have also changed. They are earning in lakhs by creating content for social media platforms like YouTube, Instagram, Facebook, X, and several others. A recent study suggests that the influencer industry was worth over ₹1000 cr in 2022-23 and is projected to grow by 20 per cent to reach ₹2800 cr by 2025.

In a nutshell, influencers are social media personalities that have a sizable following and the ability to sway the thoughts and purchasing decisions of their audience. No wonder brands approach these influencers and pay them based

on the number of followers they have. There is a spike in the number of influencers of late, while many are still in the fray to jump the bandwagon. But not many know the exact role of influencers and how they earn so much from the digital sphere. What are the prerequisites for becoming a social media influencer? Does this call for a particular qualification?

To address these queries and many others, **Sunday POST** caught up with a few established names in the business, and here's what they have to share.

'Consistency is the key'

Digital creator **Joyeeta Roy** is also a film producer and entrepreneur. Her Signature 24 Productions offers services in the fields of celebrity management, digital marketing, advertisement, and events.

She says, "To be a suc-

cessful social media influencer, you need to be authentic. People today crave realness, and they connect deeply with those who are genuine and true to themselves. It's about sharing your journey, your highs and lows, in a way that others can relate to."

She further states that apart from authenticity, one also needs to be creative because creativity is something that makes content fresh and exciting.

Emphasising the phrase 'consistency is the key' Roy continues: "It's not an easy road; it takes persistence to keep showing up, to create even when you're tired or feeling uncertain. Being an influencer means building a connection with your audience, and that's a bond that grows slowly but steadily over time."

She goes on to explain, "Content creation is about balance. On one hand, you need to stay relevant with what's trending, but on the other hand, you must create something that resonates with your unique voice. Every piece of content is an opportunity to connect with your audience—whether it's an Instagram post, a reel, or a story, the quality should never be compromised.

"As for frequency, it depends on what keeps your audience engaged without overwhelming them. Posting too little may make you seem distant, while posting too much can feel like noise. The goal is to find that

rhythm where your audience looks forward to what you'll share next."

There is a misconception that there is no role for talent in the world of social media. One just needs to have proper knowledge about the platform.

On this, the social media expert says, "It's a delicate balance. Talent is undeniably important because it's what makes you unique. Whether it's your creativity, humour, or expertise, that's what draws people in. But without proper knowledge of how social media platforms function, even the most talented person might struggle."

Social media has a lot of potential. It has the ability to connect people from different parts of the world, but in recent years the misuse of social media has overshadowed its good deeds.



Sharing her thoughts on the issue, Joyeeta says, "Yes, I do believe there's a side of social media that's being misused. We've seen the rise of misinformation, the pressure to present perfect lives, and sadly, cyberbullying. It's heartbreaking because social media has so much potential for good—it can connect us, educate us, and even inspire change."

Advising those who wants to make a career social media wisely, she concludes, "As influencers, we have a responsibility to be mindful of the content we put out and the impact we have on our audience. But I also believe in its power to create positive change, to bring people together, and to give a voice to those who need to be heard. It's about using it wisely and responsibly."

Local brands are always tough to work with'

On how he bumps into this world, stand-up comic and content creator **Satyabrat Mohapatra** shares, "I uploaded a part of my stand-up clip where I talked about the controversy on the ownership of Rasagola (Odisha vs. Bengal), and it fetched 5.1 million views overnight. That was the beginning of my journey as a social media creator. But I never wanted to be one. It's just that by luck I fetched some views and people followed me. After that, I made some funny vlogs, and they went viral too. Social media users' choices are very unpredictable. I'm glad that people liked me."



Asked about the potential and challenges he and his team face in this field, the Comedy Highway creator states that there is ample potential for earning or generating business. His company has managed to grab some brand collaborations, but he still thinks that Odisha needs a push as regional creators are not being provided good

remuneration.

"Local brands are always tough to work with as they confuse marketing with sales. For any commodity, digital marketing is all about proper targeted exposure. Sales happen eventually once the correct target group is reached and potential clients see the output reel/content video. Also, payment cycle is a big issue in Odisha. Clients barely follow the formal procedure for payouts," he shares.

"It will take time to rationalise and sediment. Till then, there is some struggle every day. But we are enjoying the journey," ends Mohapatra.

'There's more content to make and thousands to entertain'

She studied hard to make a career in medicine, but ended up entertaining people as a stand-comic and influencer which she likes like no other.

Sharing her journey as



an influencer, **Barsha Mishra** from Bhubaneswar says, "It started long before anyone noticed me. I began by making funny videos on YouTube, writing my own scripts, shooting with a simple Android phone, and editing everything myself. I loved the process, and my small community of 200 subscribers supported me, often being my best critics. However, as a medical student with busy clinical and theoretical classes, I had to stop creating videos to focus on my studies and exams."



For Barsha, things became even tougher after she landed a job after her graduation.

"But when you stop seeing 'impossible' as a roadblock, you start pushing yourself. I began performing at open mics with local comedy collectives in Bhubaneswar, especially with Comedy Highway. It feels unreal, but after working an eight-hour shift, I'd head straight to open mics. I believe it's the dream that drives you to work hard and chase it," adds Barsha, narrating the turnaround.

Elaborating more about her rise as an influencer, she continues: "While performing, I started posting random

videos on social media, not caring too much about the quality or judgments. I had only 2,000 followers at the time. Then, a video I made about Berhampur went viral, and I received lots of praise. Motivated by this, I began posting more regularly. Today, people call me an influencer, though I prefer being known as a comic or content creator."

How is the experience so far? On this, she shares, "The journey itself has been the best part. It's taught me how to manage things, be observant, and stay open to learning. The challenge of being relevant, active, and selective on social media is real. You also have to be careful about the brands you associate with and the content you put out because people are following you. As a creator, especially in comedy, I believe there's a responsibility to uplift others' moods and maintain a positive influence."

Barsha sees great potential in Odisha's growing content market, as over the last few years, there's been a huge shift in content creation and consumption, thanks to fellow creators.

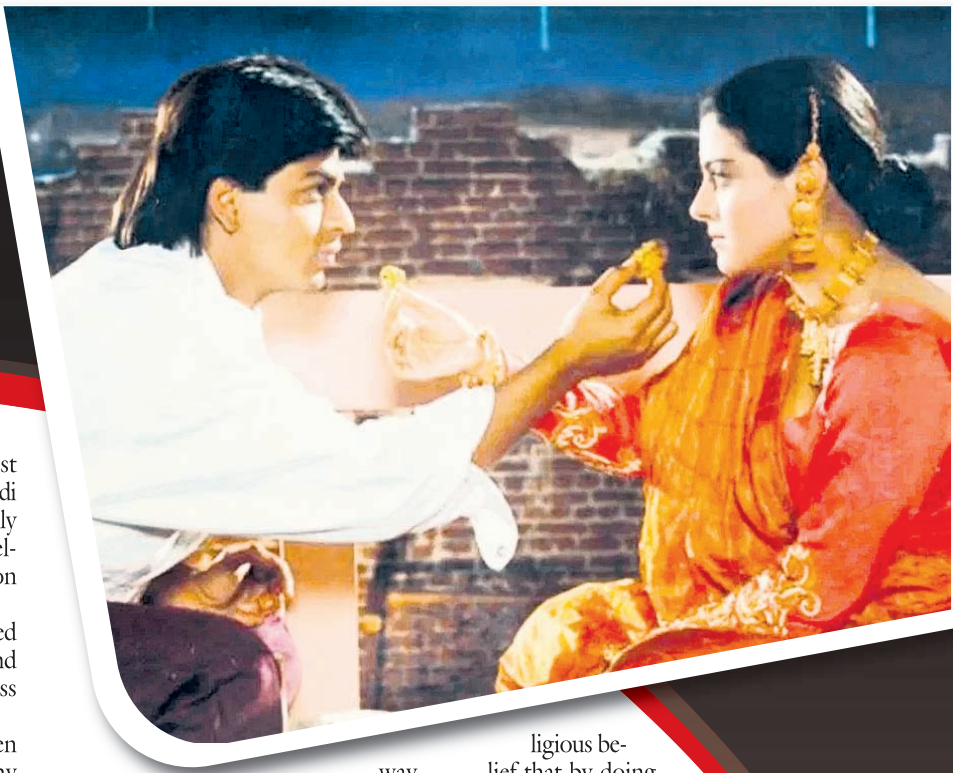
But every bright light casts a shadow, and being a social media creator comes with both positives and negatives, she cautions.

"Still, there's much more to explore, more content to make, and thousands of people to entertain. Cheers to the journey and the lessons along the way!" signs off Barsha.



KARVA CHAETH TODAY

Spreading pan-Indianism



Though the festival was earlier observed by married women in northern and western part of India, it is now being followed across the nation including Odisha, marking cultural homogenisation

OP DESK

Long before the emergence of vibrant social media and south movies minting hundreds of crores at box offices across India, the makers of *Dilwale Dulhania Le Jayenge* made Karva Chauth, an age-old tradition, popular among the newer generation.

Many still remember Shah Rukh Khan quietly breaking the fast of a restless Kajol before her marriage to Parmeet Sethi. Cut to the present day, where women of all ages queue up at beauty salons ahead of Karva Chauth to get their hands decked up an inscribe the name of their partner.

Back home, like many north and west Indian traditions such as Sangeet and Mehndi during weddings, Karva Chauth is gradually becoming a permanent feature of Odia celebrations, thanks to endless consumption of movies and TV shows.

Here's a festival, predominantly observed by the Hindu married women in north and west India, is now being celebrated across the nation, spreading pan-Indianism.

On this day, a couple of Odia women share with Sunday POST the reasons why they celebrate the festival even as it has never been part of the state's tradition.

'Another way to make the couple bond stronger'

Dipti Sahoo, a newly-wed wife says, "I don't see Karva Chauth through the prism of any region or state. I celebrate it as a mark of love and devotion towards my life partner. It's the same with him too. We both keep fast for each other as we believe that celebrating Karva Chauth is just another way to express our feelings for each other and make the couple bond even stronger."

'Karva Chauth is a journey towards deeper connection'

Tapaswini Nayak, a 32-year-old home maker from Bhubaneswar explains, "As a movie buff I was always fascinated by the



way Bollywood celebrated Karva Chauth. So, I had this desire that once I am married I will definitely celebrate this festival even though it's not a part of Odia tradition."

She goes on to add, "In a world that prioritises the material, Karva Chauth is a celebration of love, tradition and the enduring human spirit and it has the power to enrich our lives in more ways than one. No matter whether I'm from Odisha or Rajasthan, for me the festival is a spiritual journey towards a deeper connection."

The tradition

On Karva Chauth, women wake up early, take a bath, have Sargi before sunrise, and observe a 'Nirjala' fast for the entire day. They break their fast only after looking at the moon and offering 'arghya' to it using an earthen pot, and by having a bite of food and a sip of water from their spouses' hands.

During the Puja, women wear traditional clothes and do Solah Shringar (like sindoor, bangles, bindi etc), and apply henna on their hands, as it is considered auspicious. Many also sing songs and read the Karva Chauth Vrat Katha in groups.

On the day of Karva Chauth, Solah Shringar has special significance. Married women do the sixteen adornments before worship. There is a re-

ligious belief that by doing these adornments, women get the blessings of unbroken good fortune. Apart from this, their husbands live a long life. For all these reasons, sixteen adornments are done.

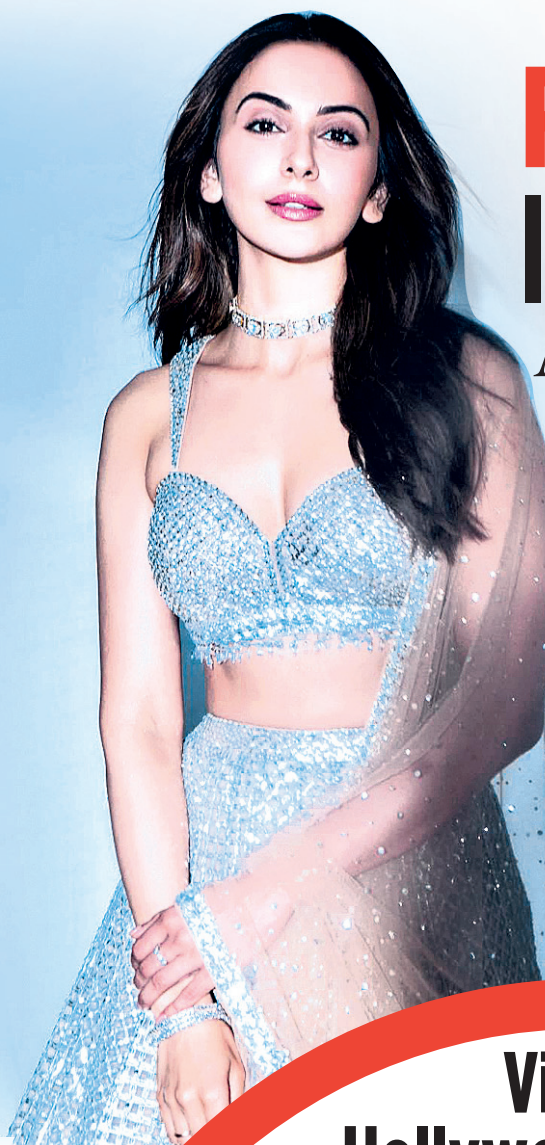
Legend There are many tales associated with the celebration of Karva Chauth. One such legend is the one about Karva who was deeply devoted to her husband. One day, while taking bath in a river, her husband was caught by a crocodile. Karva tied the croc with a cotton yarn and asked Yama, the god of death, to send the crocodile to hell. When Yama refused to do so, Karva threatened to curse him. Afraid, Yama sent the crocodile to hell and blessed her husband with long life.

Impact of movies, social media and more

Sangita Agarwal from Bhubaneswar who works as a senior editor at an online news portal, says "Karva Chauth is specifically celebrated in the northern states of India like New Delhi, Haryana, Rajasthan, Gujarat, and Punjab. But nowadays, we find that women from different regions are celebrating it as it symbolises the unconditional love and is dedicated to the beautiful bond of marriage. Moreover, Bollywood has given it a glamorous makeover. So, people love decking up and professing love for their spouses by keeping this fast irrespective of the culture, caste or creed. I have witnessed many people here in Odisha who love doing it and it is so beautiful to see people across regions sharing the same emotions."

She further adds, "Social media also plays a major role in the rising popularity of the festival. Many do it so that they can post their fasting pics with their spouses, in their traditional attire."

Rakul's dedication lands her in trouble



Actress Rakul Preet Singh, who will be next seen in *De De Pyaar De 2*, recently suffered a serious injury.

An 80 kg deadlift during her workout session resulted in an injury to her back.

A well-placed source said, "It all started on the morning of October 5, when Rakul was doing her workout. She did an 80 kg deadlift without wearing a belt, which resulted in a spasm on her back."

The source further mentioned, "Despite this, she continued to shoot for *De De Pyaar De 2* taking a muscle relaxant in order to

fulfil her commitment, for 2 consecutive days. After 3 days of bearing the pain she visited the physios, and each time the pain would be back after 3-4 hours. She continued the physio but on October 10, an hour before her birthday party, she went through the worst situation."

The injury had resulted in an excruciating situation where in her L4, L5, and S1 nerves got jammed.

Soon after her BP dropped, she broke into a sweat and she was made to sleep on the bed.

The actress has been on bed rest for more than a week now and is said to be recuperating steadily.

AGENCIES



SRK lends star power to support son

Shah Rukh Khan is not only a talented actor but also a proud father, and his recent Instagram post highlights his unwavering support for his son Aryan Khan and to his entrepreneurial venture that seamlessly blends high fashion with youthful energy.

SRK will be visiting Dubai October 27th to promote Aryan's brand at a nightclub. Proving to be a supportive dad, the *Kuch Kuch Hota Hai* actor recently posted a video on his Instagram handle asking, "Dubai, are you ready?" In the clip, Aryan also made a chic appearance.

This isn't the first time Shah Rukh has promoted his son's luxury brand; He frequently shares videos and photos showcasing Aryan's work.

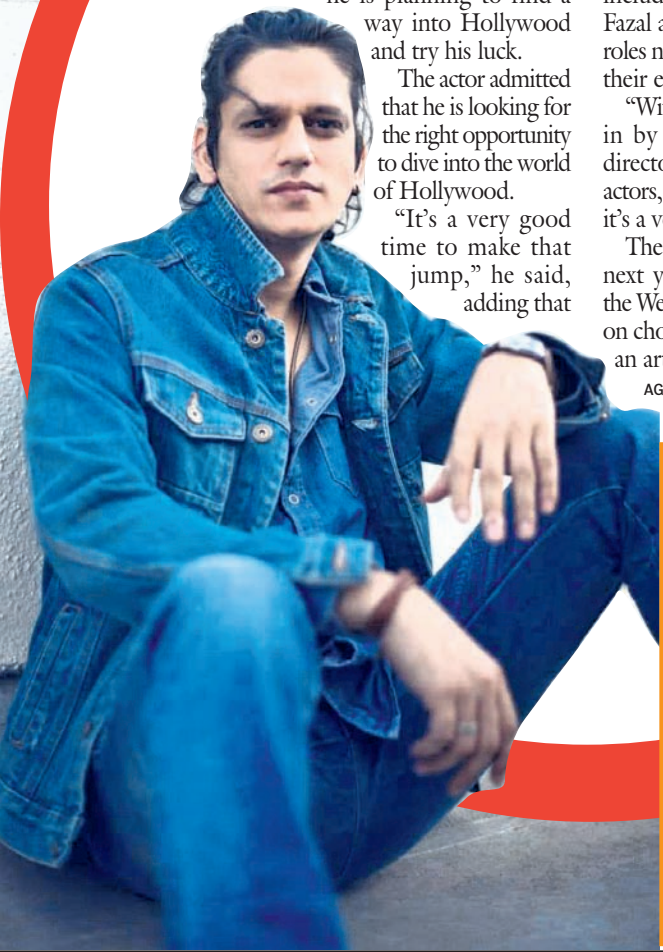


For those who may not know, Aryan launched his brand in April 2023, and it has quickly gained success. Notably, this venture also marked Aryan's directorial debut, with his father, Shah Rukh Khan, starring in the brand's first promotional video.

Reflecting on the experience of collaborating with his father, Aryan shared in an interview, "Working with my father is never a challenge. His wealth of experience and commitment makes everyone's job on set much easier. He has a remarkable ability to put the entire crew at ease and treats everyone with great respect. Whenever he's on set, I make sure to pay close attention so I can absorb as much as possible and learn from him."

AGENCIES

Vijay's Hollywood dreams



Vijay Varma is making all the right moves when it comes to his professional life, with his last project *IC 814: The Kandahar Hijack* opening to rave reviews. Now, in an interview with *Variety*, the actor confessed that he is planning to find a way into Hollywood and try his luck.

The actor admitted that he is looking for the right opportunity to dive into the world of Hollywood.

"It's a very good time to make that jump," he said, adding that

discussions have begun about finding representation internationally.

He is intrigued by the growing practice of "colour-blind casting" because of which several Indian actors including Ishaan Khatter and Ali Fazal are getting a chance to secure roles not specifically written keeping their ethnicity in mind.

"With more acceptance that is coming in by the international producers, directors looking at Indian diaspora actors, brown actors in a variety of roles, it's a very lucrative time," Vijay shared.

The actor hopes to dedicate time early next year to exploring opportunities in the West. At the moment, Vijay is focused on choosing roles that challenge him as an artiste and impress the audience.

AGENCIES

Shilpa's fitness mantra

Actress Shilpa Shetty stands out not only for her acting prowess but also for her dedication to fitness and wellness. Over the years, she has transformed her life through a discipline fitness regime and healthy living.

She often shares glimpses of her journey on social media, inspiring millions of fans. And, most recently, the Dhadkan star posted a video

of her doing exercise in the pool. Taking to her Instagram story, Shilpa posted a video wherein she showcased a creative arms workout using exercise balls while enjoying a day in the pool.

The actress surely captivated her fans with her energetic approach to fitness. Shilpa's playful approach to fitness will serve as an inspiration for many, especially those who may

find traditional workouts monotonous. Shilpa often shares glimpses from her workout session with her fans and followers.

Interestingly, as a strong proponent of yoga and wellness, Shetty has redefined the concept of 'fitness' in her late 40s. In an early interview, the 49-year-old actress had said that she has deep appreciation for the science of yoga.

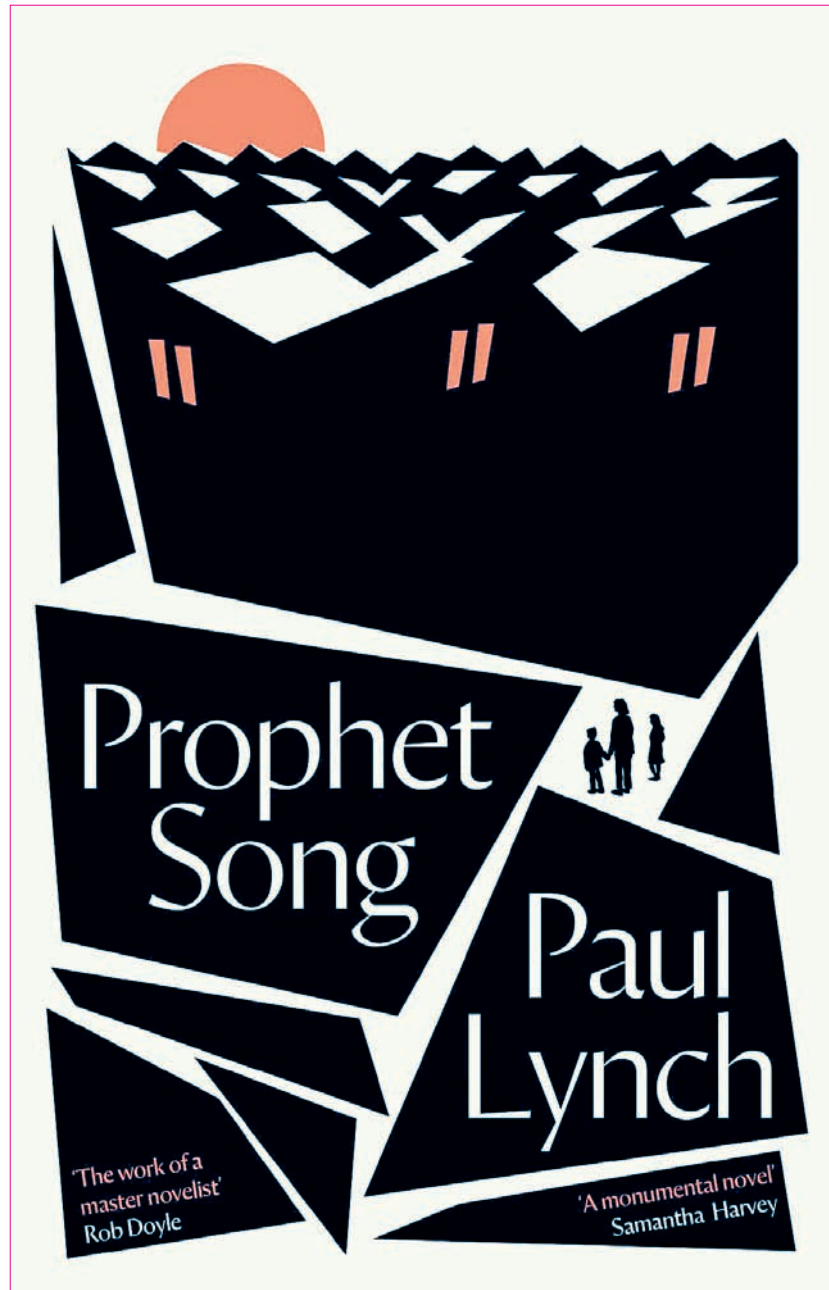
IANIS

A tale of human endurance

The novel by Paul Lynch speaks to the moment, the various humanitarian crises enveloping our present day world. It is a gut wrenching novel in the true tradition of dystopian fiction with art, reality and imagination coming together in a magnificent sweep. The novel has won the Booker Prize for the year 2023 and Esi Edugyan the Canadian writer and chair of the Booker judging panel said the book "is a triumph of emotional storytelling, bracing and brave" in which Mr Lynch pulls off tremendous feats of language that are stunning to witness. It is more than a prophecy, more than a prediction, it is an expression of the reality around us. He says "art must be free like dreams must be free" and in a totalitarian society people need to dream under difficult circumstances as he quotes on the flyleaf Bertolt Brecht's lines "In the dark times/will there also be singing?/Yes, there will also be singing./About the dark times."

The inspiration for the book came from the Syrian civil war, the ensuing refugee crisis and the West's indifference to the plight of the refugees. "I wanted to deepen the reader's immersion to such a degree that by the end of the book they would just not know but feel the problem for themselves". Lynch imagines his native Ireland slipping into totalitarianism and civil war destroying the liberties of its people. The right wing National Alliance party seizes control of the Republic of Ireland, suspends the Irish constitution establishing a secret police force with far reaching powers. Civil war breaks out, civil rights are eroded and trade union lobbyists agitating for their rights are "made to disappear".

The book is a paean to maternal love amidst the gathering forces of darkness. It is the story of the grim struggle of Elish Stack wife and mother with the everyday pressure of her obligations to her children and frail father, to keep the family together against relentless political forces. Her husband Larry, a teacher and trade union leader is arrested while attending a protest rally against the new regime and loses all contact with his family. Mark, their eldest son is called up for military service but he goes into hiding and joins the rebel forces of defected soldiers and civil volunteers. The regime bombs the city and flushes out the rebels and the family doesn't hear from him anymore. In the ravages of the civil war her younger son Bailey is hurt by a shrapnel in his skull, he is shifted from hospital to hospital for surgery and finally she tracks him down to the morgue where



he is in a body bag completely disfigured. She is told he died of heart failure.

Elish unsparing in her daily duties towards family, her interactions with the powers that be, confronted with her own fears and forebodings and her tragedies comes through as a woman of exemplary courage and humanness. Towards the end of the book when half of her family has disappeared and her father leaves for Canada to her sisters place she decides to shift base to northern Ireland with whatever family she is left with- her daughter and infant son. The end is ambiguous as she tells her daughter before getting on to a refugee

boat "To the sea, we must go to the sea, the sea is life" and the reader is left to hope for or envision the uncertain future. This is the story of human endurance in the midst of tyrannical forces where a woman has to go through the grind of everyday living as well as cope with a state that is steadily wiping out the fundamental liberties of a civic life. Lynch does a wonderful job of how swiftly and plausibly a society like ours can disintegrate, powerless under the juggernaut of unstoppable political forces.

A monumental novel in flawless prose, darkly lyrical, chillingly rich, is told without paragraph breaks or dialogue not

distinguished by quotation marks, bringing home the sense of urgency and the prevailing breathless, claustrophobic atmosphere. Written in the style of and in homage to James Joyce's modern classic *Ulysses*, Kafkaesque in tone and content, the greatness of the book lies in the beauty of its language and in its humanity. Elish in rare moments of sanity remembers "how happiness hides in the humdrum, how it abides in the toing and froing as though happiness were a thing that should not be seen, as though it were a note that cannot be heard until it sounds from the past, seeing her own countless reflections vain and satisfied before the glass." She remembers the weather, the spring, the agile swallows, the dark swifts, seeing in the return of birds the innocence of years gone by. In the stillness "she sees the low and motionless sky, the windows with their blinds drawn, the street in silent witness as the people live out their lives, the cycles of births and deaths, the endless recurrence of human generation, a hundred years goes by."

Lynch's novel is about the lives world over experiencing upheaval, violence, persecution and displacement. It directly challenges the negative rhetoric surrounding refugees by articulating and illuminating their trauma. Prophet song is a "literary manifesto for empathy for those in need and a brilliant haunting novel to be placed into the hands of policy makers everywhere." A crucial book for our current times, in its pages lie the much larger story of displacement of people everywhere in the world, a future that could be around the corner for any people. The timeliness of the novel as with all great novels can only increase, not diminish with time.

The book has found criticism in the fact of its unconventional style and that the political crisis that led to the dark descent is not explained. The overall effect of the novel is powerful capturing the social and political anxieties of our times and will endure and resonate with readers long after it is written.



SUDHA DEVI NAYAK

Prajakta



WANT TO BECOME A MODEL?
 Send us your photographs at
features.orissapost@gmail.com