

MARCH 27-APRIL 2, 2022

SUNDAY POST

HERE . NOW



World Theatre Day

Culture Matters

P
3,4 COVER STORY

MY SUNDAY

Model-cum-actor Rameswari Nanda from Berhampur is multitalented. The winner of Mrs India Body Beautiful title is also an ardent foodie. No wonder, she loves to cook a few signature dishes of south Odisha at her leisure



Rameswari being crowned by actor Minissha Lamba at a national-level beauty pageant



With family



RASHMI REKHA DAS, OP

Self pampering

Every Sunday I take some time off from my schedule to pamper myself. I do facials, manicure and pedicure on my own. I also watch motivational videos of Sandeep Maheshwari to stay positive.

Sunday special

Not only do I love delicious food, I am good at preparing them also. So, at my leisure, I cook typical Berhampur cuisines like 'pithau bhaja' and zero-oil chicken curry for my family.

Rest Day

Owing to a hectic work schedule, often I don't get enough quality sleep. Therefore, to function optimally, I complete my eight-hour sleep on Sundays, come what may.

With family

I prefer to holiday with my sons Ishansh and Shivansh during my days-off. We visit amusement parks and go out on a shopping spree to make the most of my weekends.

Playing Good Samaritan

During the lockdown phase, I offered food to the disadvantaged twice a day for over a month. With the restrictions getting lifted, instead of food, I provide rations and medicines to those who are in need.

WhatsApp This Week

Only on Sunday POST!

Send in your most interesting WhatsApp messages and memes received to: features.orissapost@gmail.com And we will publish the best ones

THE BEST MEMES OF THIS ISSUE

- I was wondering why the ball kept getting bigger and bigger, and then it hit me.
- When my boss asked me who was stupid, me or him, I told him he doesn't hire stupid people.
- I asked the IT guy, "How do you make a motherboard?" and he said, "I tell her about my job."
- If money doesn't grow on trees, how come banks have branches?

A FASCINATING READ

Dear Sir, The cover story 'Steeped in spirituality'(March 13) was a fascinating read. The beautiful portrayal of the variegated colours of the 15-day Dola Yatra at Madanpur, the meticulous observance of the rituals of the 400-year-old festival associated with the congregation of the presiding deities of 23 adjoining villages, the wholehearted participation of the villagers in the ceremonies transcending barriers of caste and creed, display of martial arts, the ceremonial offerings to the all-pervading deity, the culmination of the four-day long procession of the deities of the adjoining villages to the accompaniment of devotional music into the swing festival of Radha and Krishna and the joie de vivre associated with the festivities bear ample testimony to the rich and deeply ingrained religious traditions and cultural moorings of Odisha. Sunday Post deserves accolades for enlightening its readers about this unique event.

AMIT BANERJEE, NEW DELHI

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. Please 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

Subodh Patnaik, the only theatre man from Odisha to tour all continents, says whether it is Russia's February Revolution, German reunification or Indian Independence movement, theatre has always played a decisive role in major social, political, economical and environmental changes across the world

WORLD THEATRE DAY

Culture Matters



A scene from Hindi play *Ulgulan* staged by Yuva Rangmanch of Ranchi at Rabindra Mandap during 24th Kalinga Natya Mahotsav, Bhubaneswar OP PHOTO

BIJAY MANDAL, OP

Today is a big day for theatre practitioners across the globe. Designated by the International Theatre Institute in 1961, World Theatre Day celebrates the importance of theatre arts and their impact on life. It also conveys a message to the governments, politicians, institutions, and stakeholders around the world who have not yet realised the value of theatre to the people. As cliché as it may sound, theatre remains the mirror of a society and showcases the rich tradition and culture of a nation.

On this occasion, some well known practitioners of the art form tell **Sunday POST** about the impact of theatre, its present status and how it brought about changes at local as well as global level.

'Play is like a colourful capsule'



Subodh Patnaik

Natya Chetana founder Subodh Patnaik says, "The Natyashastra, a 2,500-year-old work of dramatic theory written by Bharat Muni says, theatre came into existence to show the conflict between 'right' and 'wrong' and to make 'right' the winner at the end. That cause can be social, political, economical or environmental. Samundra Manthan or churning of the ocean is an example. The main objective of

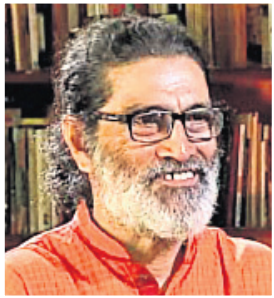
the theatre is to raise questions in the mind of the audience. So, I believe the theatre performances in rural areas have inculcated values in people. For example, the enactment of *Ramayana* or *Mahabharata* in villages and the messages these Hindu Epics convey has enriched the rural lives."

Elaborating more, Patnaik, the only theatre man from Odisha to tour all continents, says, "Theatre is like a colourful capsule. It looks attractive from outside but the content is always bitter. But, it cures the disease only after getting dissolved in our stomach. Similarly, people are drawn towards theatre for its entertainment quotient but get a strong message once the show is over."

On the impact of theatre he says, "Theatre played an important role in the Russian and French revolution. It is a theatre that also paved the way for the historic German unification. Indian People's Theatre Association (IPTA) also played a crucial part during the Indian Freedom Movement. In our case, we have felt the impact during our cycle expedition. So much so, that we were also hounded by the police and supporters of industries for exposing the flaws in the system."

'Theatre of realism will return'

Internationally acclaimed director Probir Guha from Kolkata is an established figure in the Indian theatre circle. Known for his experimental theatre with various marginalised groups such as landless peasants, juvenile offenders and socially and politically relevant plays, Guha's work has been lauded by leading minds in world theatre like Peter



Probir Guha

Brook, Jerzy Grotowski and Eugenio Barba.

Talking about theatre's influence on society, the Sangeet Natak Akademi winner says, "Theatre alone can't bring about any social or political changes. It is one of the factors that can motivate people to transform or revolutionise a system. Whether it is Russia, France or Germany, theatre played

the role of a catalyst to mobilise public opinion. In fact, the form was originated to make people differentiate between good and bad. Theatre always draws people's attention towards the faults in an establishment, which unfortunately is missing at the moment. However, some troupes in Bihar, Jharkhand, Delhi, Maharashtra and West Bengal are still making people aware of various issues. This sort of awakening through theatre has just started in Kerala. Hope, this will continue."

Speaking about Odisha's theatre scene, the founder of Alternative Living Theatre says, "I have conducted quite a few workshops here but never seen this protest culture developing in Odisha. Most of the troupes here prefer to do mainstream theatres in auditoriums. People are more peace-loving here."



Subodh at a rehearsal session



Probir's Bengali play *Titas Ekti Nodir Nam* staged at 20th Bharat Rang Mahotsav, Delhi



Perhaps, they lack political consciousness. For example, they have to think about livelihood issues, they must think about what would be consequences of the Ukraine crisis on people here in Bhubaneswar. You have to take to the street to do protest theatre. I am not seeing this culture developing here and in several states of India.”

Is he pessimistic about the future of theatre of Realism in India? To this query, Guha retorts, “Not at all. I think this slump is temporary. It will make a comeback. People like Praveen Gunjan in Bihar, Asmita’s Arvind Gaur in Delhi and Atul Pethe in Maharashtra are doing good, innovative and realistic theatre. It will catch up with others and we need not worry.”

‘Theatre creates a civilised ambience’

Dolgovind Rath, a committed theatre practitioner of Odisha and an alumnus of National School of Drama, has been conducting workshops across India to promote theatre art among the youths.



Dolgovind Rath

He says theatre has always given the common man his voice and encouraged him to question the ruling class. History is replete with examples of theatre playing significant roles in revolutions.

“To name a few that brought social order into a disciplined and ethical approach to life like industrial revolutions, the French Revolution, Russian Revolution/Bolshevik Revolution, the American war of Independence, Italian Renaissance and Indian freedom movement. All these movements were rooted in the rise of mass protest against the then rulers through the intensive move of philosophers like Montesquieu, Rousseau, Voltaire, Plato, Socrates and Aristotle to secure the freedom of living. Back home, we have Vasa, Shri Harsh, Bhaba Bhuti, Shudrak, Budhayan and Kalidas, Bharat, Bharatendu Harishchandra, Prasaad, Devaki Nandan Khatri, Mohan Rakesh, Vijay Tendulkar, Dharmveer Bharati, Girish Kannad, Chandrasekhar Kambar, K.N. Panikar, Ebrahim Alkazi and Ratan Thiyam. All these revered personalities chanted the hymn of revolutionary creative force that turned the global scenario into a civilised atmosphere,” he added.

MAKING ALL THE DIFFERENCE

The art of theatre has always been in forefront when it comes to protest and revolution across the world. Here is a close look at a few major events that were triggered by theatre and the people involved with dramaturgy.

Fall of Berlin Wall



East and West Germany became one state again following the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989. Significantly, it marked the symbolic end of the Cold War. But not many know that the Alexanderplatz demonstration, one of the largest in the history of the German Democratic Republic, had been planned by actors and directors from leading East German theatres. They invited playwrights and actors to address the crowds, alongside dissidents and politicians which paved the path to German unification.

Russian Revolution

Konstantin Stanislavski, the co-founder of the famous Moscow Art Theatre is one of the most pioneering thinkers in modern theatre. He laid the foundations of modern opera and gave instant popularity to the works of playwrights and writers like Maksim Gorki and Anton Chekhov. Stanislavski could not separate the theatre from its social context. He viewed theatre as a medium with great social and educational significance. During the civil unrest leading up to the first Russian revolution in 1905, Stanislavski courageously reflected social issues on the stage. Twelve years later, during the Red October of 1917, Bolshevism had swept through Russia and the Soviet Union was established. Following the October Revolution in 1917 until the early 1930s, Russian artistes produced massive spectacles, circus-theatres, living newspapers, and agitprop dramas, employing both realistic techniques and explicit theatricality in order to engage a new proletarian audience.

French Revolution

The French theatre of the late 18th century functioned as a forum for political expression and debate and during

this period, society and art became highly politicised. The French took great national pride in their theatres. Honoré Gabriel Riqueti, Count of Mirabeau was a leader of the early stages of the French Revolution. He rose to the top of the French political hierarchy in the years 1789–1791 and acquired the reputation of a voice of the people. In addressing the National Assembly in early 1791, his declaration sums up the role of theatre in the French Revolution. It suggests, the revolutionary governments used theatre to promote republican ideology and morality. According to F. W. J. Hemmings, in the plays produced in Paris between 1793 and 1794, over two-thirds conveyed a political message.

Indian Independence Movement and IPTA

Indian People’s Theatre Association (IPTA) came into existence at the backdrop of World War II and Bengal famine. The objective was to represent the crises of the time through the medium of theatre and help people understand their rights and duties. Artistes who felt the need to be part of the political process and play a role in India’s Freedom Struggle, chose to use creativity to popularise nationalism. IPTA fueled this sentiment, arguing in favour of the need for artistes to stop limiting themselves to ‘art for art’s sake’.



Utpal Dutt’s Revolutionary Theatre

Actor, director and playwright Utpal Dutt is a pioneering figure in Modern Indian theatre. His Little Theatre Group staged many English, Shakespearean and Brecht plays before



it immersed itself completely in highly political and radical theatre. He used theatre as a tool to educate the masses and considered it to be a theatre of revolution. For Dutt, the common was always more important than all the intelligentsia put together. He used theatre to expose wrongdoings of the state.



Rooted in tradition

Whether they live in Singapore, Dubai or California, the members of Odia diasporas always promote their distinct culture by celebrating all popular festivals of the state and Odisha Day is no exception



Odissi dance being performed as part of Utkal Diwas celebrations in Singapore

RASHMI REKHA DAS, OP

Celebrating Utkal Diwas or Odisha Foundation Day is certainly one of the joyous moments in the life of all Odias. No matter how far they remain from their birth place, the members of Odia diasporas always carry a part of traditions with them wherever they go. With a spike in the number of Non-Resident Odias (NROs) over the years, popular festivals like Rath Yatra, Raja and Utkal Diwas are celebrated on the foreign soil like never before. Even the outbreak of Covid-19 failed to dampen the spirit with Odia societies celebrating them virtually. Ahead of Odisha Foundation Day or Utkal Diwas, a few Odia diasporas share with Sunday POST their celebration plans.

Odia Society of Singapore (OSS) president Alok Nayak says, "Utkal Diwas is the largest annual event that we have been celebrating here for the last few decades. The scale of celebration has only been upped with guest of honours from Singapore Public Service, Indian Ambassador to Singapore and public figures and celebrities from Odisha gracing the event. The core objective is to celebrate Odia identity and take pride in being Odia."

About preparation, Alok says: "The celebration starts with months of preparation and activities and ends on the evening of the final day of celebration where winners of different competitions and performers are felicitated. Artistes from Odisha from different fields are invited to perform and recognised for promoting Odia art and culture. This way

we try to bring Odisha closure to Singapore and promote the rich Odia culture and heritage in Singapore's multi-racial culture."

He adds: "Since last two years we have been celebrating the event virtually because of Covid. While the format of celebration is the same, the interaction is virtual. This year will not be an exception. The local Odia community is busy preparing for the event to showcase their talent."

Auditor of OSS Subrat Nayak, talking about its formation, says, "OSS was launched informally in the year 1995 thanks to some like-minded Odia expatriate in Singapore with an aim to spread the essence of Odisha and make the Odia people residing in Singapore feel at home. However, OSS was officially inaugurated in the year 2011. OSS has made head start and grown over the last decade with more people arriving in Singapore in search of jobs and higher education. The outfit focuses to promote socio-cultural activities and to promote the rich heritage of Odisha. Apart from Utkal Diwas, we do celebrate Ganesh Chaturthi and Diwali with fanfare. Odissi and Sambalpuri dances are a special attraction of Utkal Diwas celebration."

"Our society has been organising Utkal Divas for years. We feel proud that we could celebrate our roots and enjoy everything Odia despite living in a foreign country. Our Utkal Diwas programme also includes various cultural events which witness the maximum participation by expatriate Odias. Among the attendees are also many officials, a few celebrities and established businessmen from among the



Actor Gargi Mohanty and filmmaker Snehasis Das during Utkal Diwas celebrations held at Singapore by OSS

expatriate community in Singapore", he says.

Speaking about the importance of such celebrations, a resident of Singapore Pabitra says, "Observing such events is a great way to make our kids understand the rich heritage of our state and learn about the importance of statehood. When it comes to Utkal Diwas, this festival also helps wards to know about Odisha and its glorious history. We get an opportunity to spread our state's rich heritage by celebrating the occasion."

Odia Society of the Americas (OSA) and Odia Society of California have also been celebrating Utkal Diwas for years to spread the Odia culture on foreign lands.

Dhirendra Kar, a member of OSA says, "OSA was set up with a vision to promote Odia culture in America by bringing all Odia-speaking people under an umbrella. We leave no stone unturned to celebrate the statehood day of Odisha. We do invite eminent personalities of our state as part of the celebration to make it worth remembering. Recital of country poems adds zing to the cultural programme."

Of late, Odias settled in the UAE have also started celebrating Utkal Diwas with pomp and gaiety.

Last year Odia families residing in the UAE gathered at Burj Khalifa, the tallest building in the world with 'Bande Utkal Janani' placards to mark Utkal Diwas. They sang the state anthem to celebrate the occasion.

Snigdha, a resident of the UAE says, "We had a gala time on Utkal Diwas day. Remembering motherland and memories related to it on its formation day was indeed a matter of pleasure. Apart from singing our state anthem, we had also come up with signature Odia dishes like *Dahibara Aludum* and *Arisha Pittha* to make the event memorable."



A file photo of NROs holding Bande Utkal Janani placards to mark Utkal Diwas in 2021 in the UAE

Sonam shares her pregnancy journey

Sonam Kapoor Ahuja and Anand Ahuja recently took the internet by storm after they announced their first pregnancy. They released dreamy pictures from their photo-shoot in which Sonam was seen showing off her baby bump. Recently, she spoke about a new phase of her life and embracing motherhood.



In a recent interview, Sonam said that the initial days 'have been tough' for her. Speaking about pregnancy, the actress said that 'nobody tells you how hard it is. Everybody tells you how wonderful

it is.' While interacting with Vogue, Sonam said that the reason behind motherhood is to become better versions of oneself and she is looking forward to that evolution.

Sonam announced the pregnancy with a caption that read, "Four hands. To raise you the very best we can. Two hearts. That will beat in unison with yours, every step of the way. One family. Who will shower you with love and support. We can't wait to welcome you. #everydayphenomenal #comingthisfall2022."



Radhika's Sanaa to speak for itself

National Award-winning director Sudhanshu Saria has started the shoot of *Sanaa* starring Radhika Madan, Shikha Talsania and Sohum Shah.

The filmmaker drops a gripping video that announces the start of the film's schedule in Mumbai. The video captures spectators as they blur out their judgemental notions about the female-fronted film's theme on set.

In response, the filmmaker and the lead actress fix them in a stare with a silence that says the film will speak for itself.

Saria says: "Silence can be such a powerful tool and I couldn't have thought of a better way to kick off our shoot of *Sanaa*. Ever since we announced this film, I've been asked about its theme and who this character is but I'd rather the film answer for itself."

Radhika says, "Nothing beats the excitement on the first day of shoot for me. Sudhanshu has stitched together a beautiful canvas with all the right elements and we can't begin to start painting."

AGENCIES

Why John doesn't want to do biopic

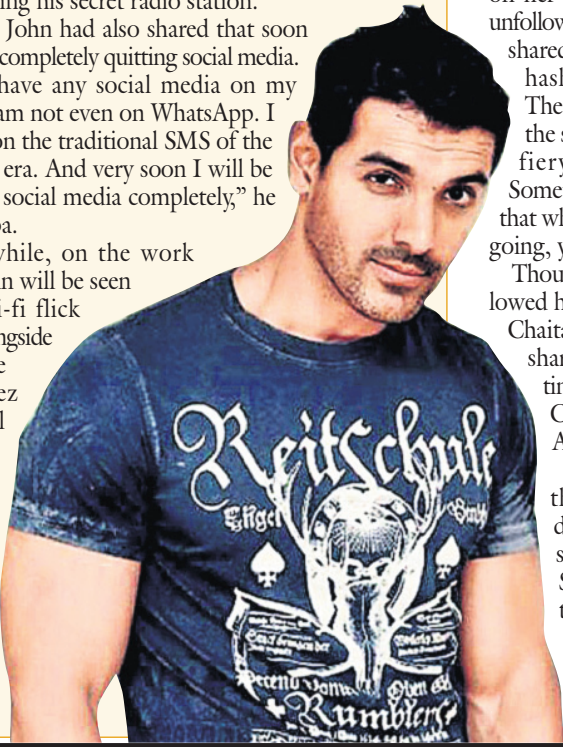
Actor John Abraham recently appeared in the latest episode of Shilpa Shetty's talk show *Shape Of You*. During the fun session, the actor opened up about his lifestyle, fitness, diet, work and even disclosed his reluctance towards signing up for a biopic.

John told Shilpa that he would rather decline an offer to star in a biopic simply because there are too many biopics out there. "As an audience, I am tired of watching so many biopics," he said and went on to reveal his fascination towards opening up a studio and even starting his secret radio station.

Earlier, John had also shared that soon he will be completely quitting social media. "I don't have any social media on my phone. I am not even on WhatsApp. I am only on the traditional SMS of the stone age era. And very soon I will be going off social media completely," he told Shilpa.

Meanwhile, on the work front, John will be seen in his sci-fi flick *Attack* alongside Jacqueline Fernandez and Rakul Preet Singh. He also has *Paathan* and *Tehran* in his pipeline.

AGENCIES



Samantha unfollows Naga Chaitanya

Samantha Ruth Prabhu and Naga Chaitanya announced their separation in October 2021. They took to their respective social media handles to issue a statement. Recently, Samantha has unfollowed Chay, but he still follows her on Instagram.

Earlier, Samantha had deleted all the pictures with Naga Chaitanya on her Instagram profile. After unfollowing him, the South actress shared a cryptic post with the hashtag #MyMommaSaid. The quote read, "Sometimes, the strength within isn't a big fiery flame for all to see. Sometimes, it's just a tiny spark that whispers ever so softly 'keep going, you got this.'"

Though, the actress unfollowed her ex-partner Naga Chaitanya on the photo-sharing app, she continues to follow Naga Chaitanya's brother Akhil Akkineni.

A few days back, there were reports doing the rounds on social media that Samantha had returned her wedding saree to Naga Chaitanya and his

family. There were also rumours that the couple could reunite soon. However, she has dismissed the rumours by making a strong statement.

AGENCIES



Day of Making Fool



THOUGH APRIL FOOLS' DAY HAS BEEN CELEBRATED FOR CENTURIES BY DIFFERENT CULTURES, THE EXACT ORIGIN OF THE CELEBRATION IS STILL A MYSTERY

April 1 is celebrated in many countries including in India as April Fools' Day or All Fools' Day for centuries. The day is observed playing practical jokes and hoaxes to fool the recipients.

Origin & History: Though April Fools' Day has been celebrated for centuries by different cultures, the exact origin of the celebration is still a mystery. According to some historians, Pope Gregory XIII introduced a new calendar called Gregorian Calendar in place of Julian Calendar in 1582. France adopted the reformed calendar. France instead of celebrating the New Year during the week between March 25 and April 1 shifted New Year's Day to 1st January. But many people who were either ignorant of the reform or reluctant to accept the new date, continued to celebrate New Year's Day April 1. Those folks who refused to acknowledge the legitimacy of the change were mocked as 'April Fools'. However, the celebration of the day is considered to have a connection with the vernal equinox that falls on March 20 or March 21, the first day of Spring in the Northern Hemisphere. April Fools' Day is also believed to have well resemblance with Hilaria celebrated by the Romans as a feria sativa on vernal equinox in honour of Goddess Cybele.

How Celebrated: The pranksters tease the fools with practical jokes and hoaxes in a variety of ways. Children in France try to stick a fish picture on their friends' back. They shout 'poisson d'Avril' or April Fish when the joke is discovered. April Fish refers to a young fish that can be easily caught. In Scotland 1st April is celebrated as Gowkie Day. For the gowk symbolises foolish persons. April Fools' Day celebration is extended in Scotland as the 2nd April is observed as Tailie Day with pinning fake tails or signs reading 'kick me' on people's derrieres.

Reference in Literature: However, there are some earliest references of April Fools' Day. Geoffrey Chaucer (c. 1343 – 1400) in

his 'The Nun's Priest's Tale' narrates the story of trickery of a conceited rooster, Chauntecleer, while flaunting how splendidly he crows. It leads him to be trapped in a fox's trickery. But the vain fox is outwitted by the rooster who advises him to mock its pursuers. At last the Chauntecleer flies to safety up into a tree. The tale of trickery takes place on 'Syn March bigan thritty dayes and two'. The line signifies 32 March i.e. 1st April. It is purported by many that Chaucer set the tale April 1 as an allusion to April Fools' Day.

April Fools' Day reference may be discerned in the French term 'Poisson d'Avril' i.e. 'April Fish' that appeared in several late-medieval 15th century French poems including in the works of the poets like Pierre Michault and Eloy d'Amerval. In a comical poem "Refereyn vp verzendekens dach/ Twelck den eersten April te zyne plach" written by a Flemish writer Eduard De Dene in 1561, a nobleman is found sending his servant back and forth in absurd errands to help prepare for a wedding feast. At last the servant recognises the prank that his master is trying to pull on him as the day is April 1.

Earliest April Fools' Day: There are hundreds of creative hoaxes and pranks relating to April Fools' Day that have historical significance all over the world. April 1, 1698, people in London were sent to the Tower of Ditch to see the annual ceremony of the washing for lions at the Tower of London. But there was no washing ceremony of lions. This is considered the earliest April Fools' Day hoax on record.

Some Popular Hoaxes: The Swiss Spaghetti Harvest hoax on 1st April, 1957 is one of the most popular April Fools' Day jokes in history. The BBC news show Panorama broadcast that by the grace of mild winter and virtual disappearance of spaghetti weevil, there was bumper spaghetti harvest. Richard Dimbleby, the anchor of the show, narrated the details of the crop. When people wanted to know about the plantation of the crop,

the BBC diplomatically replied to place spring spaghetti in a tin of tomato sauce and hope for the best. Even the director-general of the BBC was the subject to the playful hoax as he later admitted that he also checked in an encyclopaedia to find how spaghetti actually grew.

Another April Fools' Day hoax that created a great sensation among a large number of people in the US was the Taco Liberty Bell hoax. On April 1, 1996, the Taco Bell Corporation circulated a full-page advertisement in six major newspapers reading that it had purchased the Liberty Bell to reduce the country's debt. The bell was renamed Taco Liberty Bell. Thousands of enraged people called the National Historic Park in Philadelphia to exhibit their anger. At last, they calmed down when Taco Bell announced that it was all a practical hoax.

The April 1998 issue of the New Mexicans for Science and Reason newsletter covered an interesting article. It suggested that the Alabama legislature had voted to change the value of pi from 3.14159 to the 'Biblical value' of 3.0. Hundreds of protesters vehemently protested the legislation. The original was penned by Mark Boslough, a physicist.

Fake News in Press: There are many notable April Fools' Day hoaxes that fool readers of the newspapers. In 1840 the Boston Post announced that a cave full of treasure had been discovered beneath Boston Common. The announcement of a 'grand exhibition of donkeys' published by the Evening Star of Islington in 1864 turned the crowd that gathered outside the Agricultural Hall into donkeys. The photograph of a man flying by his own lung power published in a large number of newspapers in 1934 was an excellent science hoax. The news of Pennsylvania Flying saucer published in The Progress with a picture of a flying saucer confused the world in 1950.



Buddhadev Nandi





KUMAR

Niharika
(Neha)

PHOTO : ODISHA FASHION VILLA