

JULY 9 - 15, 2023

# SUNDAY POST

HERE . NOW

# It's circus time!

P 3,4

COVER  
STORY



# MY SUNDAY

He wanted to be a painter. But fate had something big in store for him as 'Gangs of Puri' fame Krishna Kar, also known as KK, is now one of the most in-demand performers in the Odia movie business. He has also won the hearts of millions by appearing in various TV shows and performing in stage plays. When he is not working, the Utkal Sangeet Mahavidyalaya alumnus enjoys going on family outings



## Vacationing at Holy City

When I'm not shooting, I enjoy spending time with my wife Sneha and son Saiansh. Her viewpoint is important to me because she is an equal partner and we frequently travel to Puri to maximise our vacation time.

## Hanging out with friends

Actors do not have a day off. So, when I get a break from work, I organise activities with my pals, and we all have a great time.



With wife

## Passionate singer

I believe that if my acting career hadn't taken off, I could have made a fortune from singing. In stage shows, I still croon some popular numbers, and my style is well received by the crowd. I not only enjoy singing, but it also helps me relieve life's stress.

## The ideal host

Aside from performing, my favourite pastime is wearing an apron in the kitchen. I enjoy preparing Indian cuisine, particularly non-vegetarian fare, for my friends and family.

## Tryst with paintbrush

I always wanted to be a painter but couldn't since I failed to qualify for the course at the Government College of Arts and Crafts, Khallikote. But I try to keep the painter in me alive by putting brush to canvas whenever possible.



With family

BIJAY MANDAL, OP

## WhatsApp This Week

Only on Sunday POST!

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

### THE BEST MEMES OF THIS ISSUE

- I haven't spoken to my wife for 18 months - I don't like to interrupt her.
- Yesterday I donated my watch, phone, and \$500 to a poor guy. You can't imagine the happiness I felt as I saw him put his pistol back in his pocket.
- Waking up this morning was an eye-opening experience.
- Excuse me miss, can I have the time? I'd check my watch but I can't take my eyes off you.



## MODELS VS ACTORS

Sir, It's startling to find that there is bias against supermodels in the film industry from Sobhita Dhulipala's piece in last week's Tinsel Town. In both Bollywood and Hollywood, there is no dearth of examples that models are more than just gorgeous dolls. In addition, they comprehend beauty and fashion more naturally than people in industries like Bollywood, where norms are created. They bring a new appeal to the screen and make advantage of their notoriety to tell their viewers about their real-life adventures. The models' screen presence is refreshing. Although they are not professionally trained actors, their grace and charm are endearing to observe. While actors like Zeenat Aman, Aishwarya Rai, Deepika Padukone, Sushmitha Sen, and Priyanka Chopra succeeded in the Hindi film industry, Angelina Jolie, Demi Moore, and Emily Ratajkowski are just a few well-known names who took the logical next step into performing in Hollywood.

KETAKI MISHRA, BALASORE

## 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](mailto:features.orissapost@gmail.com) B-15, Industrial Estate, Rasulgarh, Bhubaneswar - 751010, Orissa. Phone (0674) 2549982, 2549948



Though there are no animals in the show, the entertainment is never compromised as the troupe presents gymnastic acts similar to those seen at Olympic Games, claims Sanjit Ghosal, the manager of Ajanta Circus, which has been captivating people in Bhubaneswar for the last couple of weeks

# It's circus time!

a world of difference between the circus of those days and the circus of today. The primary change is that there used to be animal shows, but now there aren't any. This is why we have performers from Ethiopia, Africa, and Russia among us. The show lasts approximately two and a half hours. Every day, there will be 30 to 32 acts to entertain the fans" he adds.

"When we visited Bhubaneswar 17 years ago, we had lions, tigers, elephants, horses, bears, monkeys, dogs, and parrots. Our next trip to the capital city was in 2012, and there were only elephants, horses, dogs, and parrots with us. But this time we have arrived without animals following the guidelines of the government that impose restrictions on the use of animals in circuses. But there will be no compromise with entertainment as we present gymnastic shows similar to those seen at Olympic Games," claims Sanjit.

"Entering Ajanta Circus is like stepping into another world altogether. The bright colours, energetic music, and enticing aroma of popcorn create an environment of anticipation and excitement. The arena is buzzing with families, children, and circus fans anxious to start on an adventure. Ajanta Circus' genuine stars are its outstanding performers.

Each act demonstrates great skill and dedication, from acrobats defying gravity with astonishing stunts to beautiful aerial artists flying through the skies. The performers come from all over the world, bringing a rich diversity of cultural influences that add a unique flavour to every performance," the manager says narrating the USP of the show.

such as The Great Bombay Circus, Gemini Circus, Raj Kamal Circus, Great Rayman Circus, and Olympic Circus. There were hundreds of circus companies in India, including one owned by the royals of Aul from Odisha.

However, due to a variety of factors including new forms of entertainment, the government's prohibition on the use of wild animals, the Supreme Court's ban on child labour, and a lack of security for circus performers over the age of 40,

the circus is progressively losing its lustre and is on the verge of extinction.

From approximately 300 troupes entertaining a few decades ago, it has now shrunk to a few.

However, the Ajanta Circus of Kolkata, considered the largest circus company in eastern India, has been enthraling spectators for more than 50 years and refuses to down its shutter like hundreds of other parties.

The troupe has been performing in Bhubaneswar to a packed crowd, demonstrating that people have yet to abandon this type of entertainment.

**Sunday POST** had a hearty talk with some of its crew members on the sidelines of their acts about a variety of issues.

Here are some excerpts:  
**'Ajanta Circus is an institution'**

Ajanta Circus is here in the city after a very long time, says Sanjit Ghoshal, the manager of the troupe.

"We have already performed in practically every city, including Bhubaneswar. There is



MADHUSMITA SAHU, OP

**M**era Naam Joker, Appu Raja, Shikari, Circus Queen, Murder in the Circus, Phir Hera Pheri, Krrish, and so on. These are a few films with themes focusing on a circus party. Then, in the early 1990s, it was Aziz Mirza's TV show *Circus* that made today's Superstar Shah Rukh Khan a household name in India long before he became a national heartthrob. This was the era when Indian Circus was at its peak, and the profession was adored by people of all ages.

Crowds from all parts of Odisha would throng Bhubaneswar to watch performances by troupes





“Ajanta Circus is more than just a name; it is an institution. Founded in 1967 by Abdul Aziz with barely Rs. 5000, it is now one of the best in the country. Years of struggle resulted in a troupe of 300 people, including gymnasts from all over the world, horses, dogs, and exotic birds. Ajanta Circus has kept its head held high since its inception on the basis of its belief in entertainment and fantasy,” signs off Sanjit. **‘Our passion and commitment have kept the shows going’**

Beneath the colorful costumes and charismatic smiles lie the hearts of dedicated performers and crew members who have devoted their lives to the circus.

“Being a part of Ajanta Circus has been my life’s calling,” says **Ajay**, an Assam-based gymnastic artist.

“I specialise in gymnastics and fire acts, but my favourite is the first one. My training begins at 4 am, and I must be ready by then. Before my act, I take the appropriate steps to ensure that I do not hurt myself or anyone around me. Despite all odds, the circus employees’ passion and commitment have kept the shows going. The arduous routines, the bonding backstage, and the shared sense of purpose have created a family-like atmosphere in which each member is a vital piece of the puzzle,” Ajay adds.

“I’ve been here for about two years and have formed the strongest bonds with my

coworkers. The rush of flying high and making friends with my fellow performers are priceless. However, as our audience size shrinks, the uncertainty of our future worries us. We keep hoping, but the road ahead is difficult,” shares the worried artiste.

**‘Get memories that last a lifetime’**

Another crew member **Sartho Mandal** says, “I have had the privilege of witnessing firsthand the magic and wonder that unfolds under the big top as a ticket collector for Ajanta Circus for the past 25 years. Ajanta is more than simply a circus; it is a dynamic tapestry of breathtaking performances, heart-stopping acts, and unforgettable experiences. Working as a ticket collector allows me to see the behind-the-scenes preparations that go into making each event a success. The entire team works tirelessly to produce an unforgettable event, from setting up the complex stage to guaranteeing the safety of both performers and onlookers.”

Sartho goes on to say of his team’s main draw: “What sets Ajanta Circus apart is its emphasis on audience participation. It actively involves the audi-

ence, making them feel like a vital

part of the show, from allowing toddlers to join the clowns on stage to immersing spectators in mind-boggling acts. The joy and excitement on children’s and adults’ faces attest to the circus’s capacity to produce moments of sheer magic and wonder. Being a part of Ajanta Circus has been an amazing experience. The combination of talented performers, fascinating acts, and a lively setting creates an experience unlike any other.

“Ajanta Circus brings people of all ages and cultures together to enjoy the fun and thrill of live entertainment. If you ever have the opportunity to witness the enchantment of Ajanta Circus, do not pass it up; it will leave you with memories that last a lifetime,” suggests Sartho.

**‘Entertainment dynamics has changed’**

“I remember the first time I went to Ajanta Circus with my parents, and now it’s back after a long time, which is really exciting,” said **Satabdi Sinha**, a long-time circus admirer.

“The circus experience as a whole was nothing short of breathtaking. I could

sense the excitement growing in the air the moment I stepped into the colourful and crowded tent. The extraordinary quality of the performers was the first thing that hit me. Each act seemed to stretch the limits of human capability, leaving me in awe. Every performer displayed incredible ability and passion, whether it was the daring acrobats soaring through the air with elegance and accuracy or the fearless tightrope walkers defying gravity. There was never a boring moment, from the colourful and funny clown antics that had me giggling hysterically to the mesmerising show of contortionists twisting their bodies into unfathomable postures. Furthermore, the connection between the performers and the crowd was fantastic. The clowns interacted with the audience with ease, eliciting laughter and applause at every turn,” she continued.

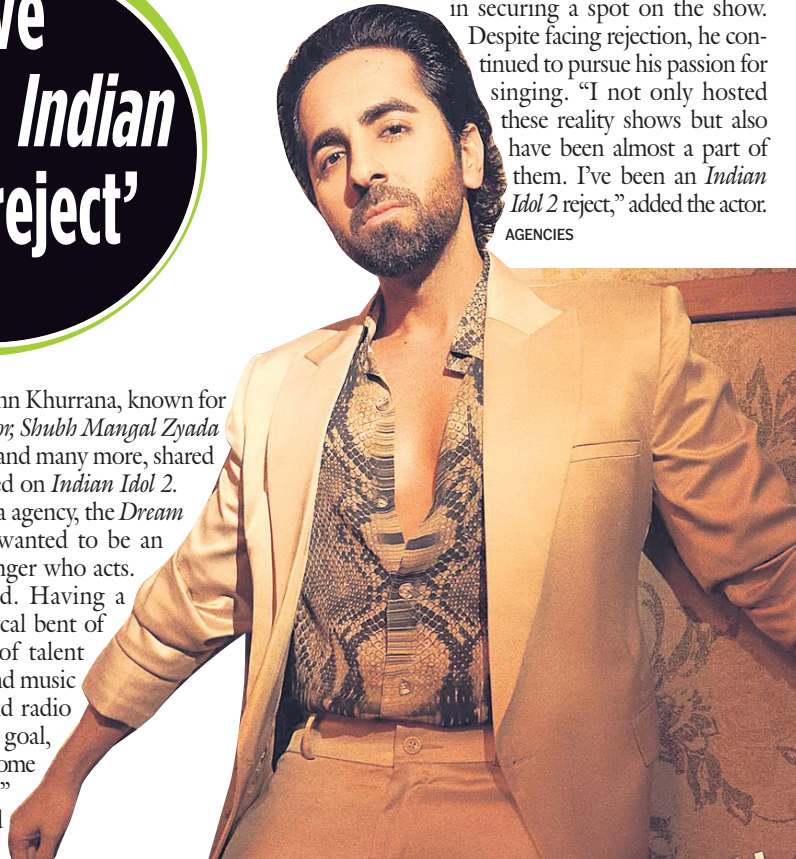
The circus enthusiast, on the other hand, was dissatisfied with the form’s declining popularity. “Changing dynamics of entertainment has reshaped how people seek entertainment these days. Virtual reality, online gaming, and streaming platforms have slowly replaced the allure of live performances, eroding the traditional circus audience base,” Sinha concludes.



# 'I've been an Indian Idol 2 reject'

that he had auditioned for *Indian Idol 2* but was unsuccessful in securing a spot on the show. Despite facing rejection, he continued to pursue his passion for singing. "I not only hosted these reality shows but also have been almost a part of them. I've been an *Indian Idol 2* reject," added the actor.

AGENCIES



Actor – singer Ayushmann Khurrana, known for his films like *Vicky Donor*, *Shubh Mangal Zyada Saavdhan*, *Andhadhun* and many more, shared his experience of being rejected on *Indian Idol 2*.

In an interview with a media agency, the *Dream Girl 2* actor said, "I always wanted to be an actor who sings, and not a singer who acts. I was very clear in my mind. Having a passion for music and a musical bent of mind helped me host a lot of talent shows like *India's Got Talent* and music shows. Though anchoring and radio were just a step towards my goal, my ultimate ambition was to become a part of the Hindi film industry."

Ayushmann Khurrana revealed

## Kiara's strategy to please mom-in-law



Actress Kiara Advani, in a recent interview, revealed that her mother-in-law loves pani puri, and she used her favourite street food to impress her. She shared this while promoting her latest film *Satyaprem Ki Katha*.

Kiara, who has spoken fondly about Sidharth Malhotra's mom earlier in her social media posts, opened up about her recent visit to Mumbai, where she stayed at the couple's home. Kiara said she made sure her

mother-in-law had pani puri on her first day in the city.

Kiara was asked in her recent interview, if she had a pani puri stall at her wedding. To which the actor replied, "Of course. My mother-in-law likes pani puri a lot. She is now living with us in Mumbai. On the first day of her visit, I made sure she had home-made pani puri. It really impressed her and made her happy. I knew she will love me to another level. She was so happy."

Sidharth and Kiara got married February 7 at Jaisalmer's Suryagarh Palace.

AGENCIES

## Kajol: Madhuri is an underrated actor

Actress Kajol named her contemporary Madhuri Dixit an underrated actor and hasn't gotten the range of roles she deserves.

In an interview with an entertainment portal, the actress was asked to name an underrated actor who hasn't gotten the kind of roles they deserved. To that she replied that if they're talking variety or range of roles, then the underrated actor would be Madhuri Dixit.

She said that the reason why there are more women-led content on streaming is because the economics of moviegoing is dominated by men. She added that now that women have started to earn more, they'll probably dictate what kind of movies they want to watch on the big screen.

The *Divale* actress further said that she hopes India can produce its own Wonder Woman one day and that it works as well as *Bholaa*, the action thriller directed by and starring her husband Ajay Devgn, that released earlier this year.

Kajol was last seen in Netflix's *Lust Stories 2* and will be seen next in her web series debut *The Trial: Pyaar, Kaanoon, Dhokha*.

AGENCIES



## Boss is Varsha's comeback vehicle

Actress Varsha Priyadarshini, who has been in the news because of her marital discord with estranged husband actor Anubhav Mohanty, will make a comeback with her new Odia movie *Boss*, muhurat of which was held last week at Kali Mandir of Gajapati Nagar in Bhubaneswar.

Apart from Varsha, others who were present at the ceremony include BMC Mayor Sulochana Das, actor and MP Prashanta Nanda and film's director Tripathi Sahu.

The women-centric movie is presented by RR Events and Cine Productions while Varsha has written its story and screenplay. Ramesh Barik is the producer of the movie. Abhijit Majumdar, Bijay Malla and Nirmal Nayak are respectively in charge of music, dialogue and lyrics of the movie.

Varsha's last release was *Bijayinee* in 2021.



## Poster release of Operation 12/17

The poster of new Odia movie *Operation 12/17*, based on the life of an Army officer, was unveiled recently. Presented by Sai Lumbini Productions and directed by Sudhanshu Sahoo, the film has Sriyan and Bhoomika in the lead.

Choudhary Jay Prakash Das, Amar Mahapatra, Dushmanta, Pankaj Mohanty, Lopamudra and child artist Saanvi also are playing important roles. Subhra Pattanaik is the producer of the movie while its story has been penned by Dwipayana Pattanaik. The Kashmir Files fame Prasantanu Mahapatra has been roped in as the Director of Photography. Dilip Choudhary has written the dialogues while Baidyanath Das has scored the music. The shooting will begin from August 7, said the makers.



## Niyati to hit big screens July 21

The trailer and audio of Odia anthology film *Niyati*, presented by Samaresh Routray's S3 Movies in association with Risa Films, was released at the Press Club of Odisha recently. The movie will be in theatres July 21.

Producer Samaresh Routray, director Pinaki Srichandan, actors Sudhanshu Narayan Dash, Divya Mohanty and Pupul Bhuyan, music director Anurag Patnaik and MO College Chairman Akash Das Nayak and other dignitaries were present at the event.

Although people plan their own lives, fate always has its own role to play in them, says the movie.

Many popular singers such as Rituraj Mohanty, Biraja, Antara Chakravarty, Krishna Mishra, Smruti have lent their voices to the songs. PNN



EARLIER, ARMIES WERE ENGAGED IN HARSH FIGHTING THAT OFTEN LASTED FOR DAYS AND TOOK A TERRIBLE TOLL ON THE SOLDIERS ACROSS THE WORLD. MANY OF THEM TURNED TO DRUGS AS A WAY TO DEAL WITH THE STRESS. GOVERNMENTS ALSO COMPELLED THEM TO USE DRUGS IN ORDER TO OVERCOME THEIR PHYSICAL LIMITS

# Drugs in war

OP DESK

Just over a week has passed since World Drug Day, an occasion set aside to encourage efforts to end drug abuse or, more simply put, to wage a 'War on Drugs.' But how does 'Drugs in War' sound

It is generally accepted that the peak of drug use occurred during World War II. But that's not true. Drug abuse during wartime is as old as the history of war itself. Roman legions are known to have transported wine to the French region for consumption. And because of the opium trade, Britain and China went to war.

For ages, Peruvian aristocracy ingested copious amounts of a mix of medicines and psychotropic substances. Then there are the infamous Viking berserkers, wild fighters who engaged in violent, drug-fueled rage. Some people utilised narcotics as an escape from the horrors of war, while others did so to improve their performance on the battlefield.

Not just the

armed forces, civilians are also often turned to drugs to escape the horrors of the war.

In this context, **Sunday POST** this week examines the link between drugs and war.

### 'Soldier's Disease'

Drug use has long been common in conflict zones. It is thought to improve a soldier's performance on the battlefield and aid in coping with the stresses of war. Opioids were frequently prescribed by military doctors to soldiers to treat their pain, diarrhoea, and coughing fits. One could even conclude that opiates were essential to the American Civil War forces' ability to perform. When the Civil War ended, an estimated 400,000 veterans still had morphine addictions. Back then, it was called Soldier's Disease. The medication was frequently used as dysentery preventive. Even when soldiers returned from battle and entered their homes, morphine was easily accessible.

Soldiers could continue to use drugs and live in a drugged state while at home. This doesn't mean that drug use was only a Civil War

phenomenon.

For instance, the Bolsheviks, who supported prohibition during the Russian Revolution, regarded alcohol as a vice. Nevertheless, in spite of this widely held belief, when they eventually gained control, they taxed vodka and utilised the money they generated to finance wars and fill state coffers. While not directly tied to warfare, the 19th and 20th century's superpowers prospered through drug-funded activities.

When you take into account the significance of the opium trade, for instance, Britain created what is referred to as a narco-empire. Although drug use has existed for a long time, World War I brought it to the public's attention.

### Ushering in a new era

Drug usage increased and gained acceptance during World War I, albeit not to the same extent as during WWII. Unbelievably, cigarettes were provided by the government to soldiers during World War I to help them relax and kill boredom. Less than 0.5% of Americans smoked prior to World War I, but after the war, tobacco corporations sold almost 14 million cigarettes per day. In addition to providing soldiers with smokes, the government also provided them with cocaine. Over 500,000 cocaine doses are thought to have been administered to American soldiers during the conflict.

Additionally, despite the fact that most people associate cocaine with parties, it was really utilised during World War I as an energising substance to fight weariness and intense anxiety.

In addition, cocaine was so generally accepted that soldiers' spouses would send packages from London pharmacies containing both cocaine and heroin.

While some pharmaceuticals were provided by the government, others were easily obtained on the black market. Near army facilities in Europe, opium dens proliferated, and many soldiers developed heroin and other drug addictions. Over 40 million individuals are thought to have perished during WWI. It's understandable how conflict could have encouraged drug use given the destruction it brings. World War I ushered in a new era of drug use in many ways. During this time, pharmaceuticals expanded in availability and acceptance.

### Drugs & WWII

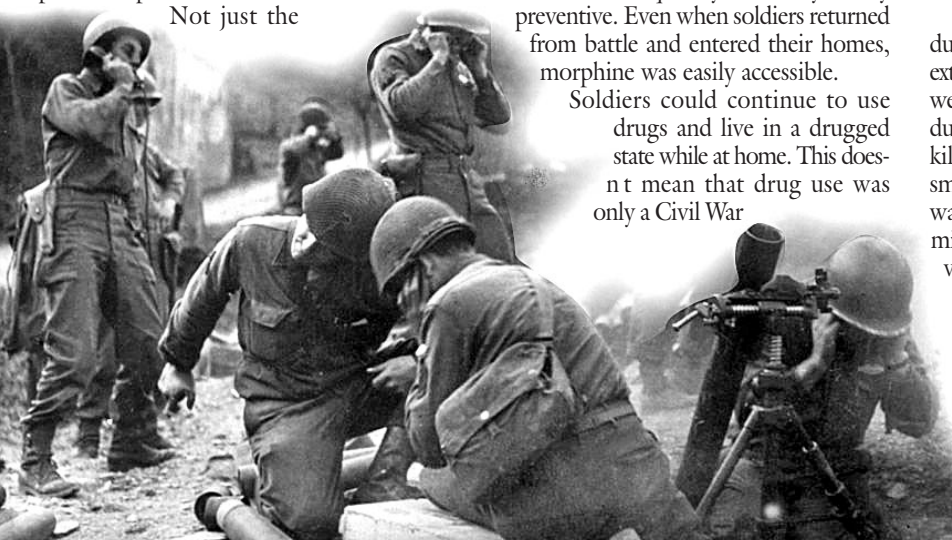
While drug use increased throughout WWI, it increased even more during WWII, a period of unmatched loss and devastation.

Armies engaged in harsh fighting that frequently lasted for days and took a terrible toll on the soldiers all across the world.

Many of them turned to drugs as a way to deal with the stress. Additionally, governments compelled them to use drugs in order to overcome their physical limits. In reality, scientists specifically developed medications to enhance soldiers' performance on the battlefield through research and development. Amphetamines, for instance, were created to help soldiers stay awake and attentive while also managing the stress of combat.

The military's usage of drugs was not restricted by the ruling class.

As a means of reducing tension, the general public also used drugs like Benzedrine.





Drugs made it possible for sailors, soldiers, and pilots to frequently push themselves above their physical and mental limits. Methamphetamine use was promoted in this way as a patriotic duty in Japan

Methamphetamine was initially mass-produced as Pervitin, which became readily available in 1938. The German military recognised the drug's potential; by 1939, 35 to 40 million doses were available for the soldiers



The British troops ingested over 72 million doses of Benzedrine, a type of methamphetamine, to its soldiers during World War II

Cigarettes were provided by the government to soldiers during World War I to help them relax and kill boredom. Less than 0.5% of Americans smoked prior to World War I, but after the war, tobacco corporations sold almost 14 million cigarettes per day

### Taking drug a patriotic duty!

Drugs were intended to provide Japanese forces a pharmacological advantage over their enemies. The nation thus contracted with several pharmacies to produce the medicine, but its use didn't end there.

Drugs made it possible for sailors, soldiers, and pilots to frequently push themselves above their physical and mental limits. Methamphetamine use was promoted in this way as a patriotic duty.

Methamphetamine was used by even factory workers to assist them work. Companies distributed methamphetamine to the whole working defence force under the pretence of greater output.

Japan was forced to deal with the repercussions of its actions even after the war. They were now confronted with a big issue as workers and troops continued to abuse the substance due to their easy access to it.

Their society was drowned by a vast stockpile that flowed back into the market, providing entities like the Yakuza a lifeline. In the early 1950s, 5% of people between the ages of 1 and 25 had a drug addiction.

### Drug abuse by Hitler

According to several historical accounts, Germany was the first country to provide methamphetamine to its military. But its application didn't end there. Even Hitler habitually abused amphetamines while heading the government.

The drug was mostly known under the name Pervitin. Many drugs that were later made illegal, like heroin and cocaine, were thought to have origi-

nated in Germany.

Methamphetamine was initially mass-produced as Pervitin, which became readily available in 1938. The German military recognised the drug's potential; by 1939, 35 to 40 million doses were available for the soldiers.

In addition, Temmler Pharmaceuticals recognised that the medicine had the potential to boost German soldiers' output. The drug Pervitin allowed soldiers to march nonstop for days on end without taking breaks.

On the other side, Hitler met Dr. Theodor Morell during the Third Reich who went on to become Hitler's personal physician.

The doctor administered over 100 shots to Hitler while they were together. These injections mostly consisted of vitamins and also contained a combination of opiates, barbiturates, and amphetamines.

The Eukodal, commonly referred to as oxycodone, was Hitler's most notable injection. German novelist and filmmaker Norman Ohler did extensive research on Hitler and his drug use over the years.

### America, Britain follow suit

The American and British governments followed Germany's example and provided their troops with methamphetamines because they didn't want their soldiers to be at a disadvantage on the battlefield.

As a result, the British troops ingested over 72 million doses of Benzedrine, a type of methamphetamine, during the conflict.

The Americans provided Benzedrine to their troops, and told them to use the inhalers

whenever they felt fatigued or needed a boost.

Because the drug was so widely abused by American militaries, the military gave 250-500 million Benzedrine tablets to soldiers.

In 1942 and 1943, the army even included it in the bomber kits for American troops, which meant that 15% of them used the drug.

### Consequences

While several nations provided drugs like methamphetamine to their soldiers, it wasn't without consequences.

Governments had a huge excess of narcotics after the war, which they redirected towards their particular markets, eventually fueling a widespread addiction.

The effects of pill-pushing doctors and easy access to drugs were felt by many veterans. Countries continue to search for a pharmacological edge for their forces despite the negative implications.

The truth is that while utilising pharmaceuticals may increase a soldier's effectiveness on the battlefield, there are always adverse consequences.

Not only the soldiers, but also the citizens who continue to live in the post-war world, are affected by these effects.

So, whenever one learns about a new wonder drug' being developed for soldiers, they should keep in mind the history of drugs in warfare and the dangers that go along with it.



**Asutosh**



PHOTO : KUMAR SHARAT, OP