

SEPTEMBER 24-30 2023

SUNDAY POST

HERE . NOW

WORLD TOURISM DAY - SEPTEMBER 27

Heritage & Hospitality

COVER STORY

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Despite their enormous success on social media platforms, not all TikTok influencers get opportunities to perform in mainstream films. However, Akash Hota is an exception. After appearing in Odia music videos and short film 'Balmiki', he is set to win viewers' hearts in upcoming movie 'Dasam'. When free, Akash loves to prepare scrumptious breakfast for family and friends

Working Sunday

Sundays are no longer considered holidays; instead, they are workdays that include getting up early, working out, song choreography, power naps, casual shoots, and work discussions.



Love for life in countryside

I take pleasure in travelling the length and breadth of Odisha. The food, the landscape, and the people who live there keep me grounded. I not only enjoy the trips, but I love meeting new people, striking up conversations, and soaking in the natural beauty.

Famjam on cards

I make the most of my holidays by spending time with family - mom, elder brother and sister-in-law. We enjoy going out, appreciating small successes, cooking meals, and watching movies.

Bonding with buddies

My way of celebrating friendship includes spontaneous adventures, enjoying spicy snacks, impromptu conversations, and laughter that leave us in stitches. I consider Jagat, my closest companion of two decades, a part of my family.



With mother



With sister



With co-actors of Dasam

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

- It was an emotional wedding. Even the cake was in tiers.
- The difference between in-laws and outlaws? Outlaws are wanted.
- Why did the picture end up in jail? It was framed!
- Why did the duck go to rehab? Because he was a quack addict!



GOING GRAND

Sir, The cover story from the previous week titled 'Colossal Creations' emphasises the transformation of Ganesh Chaturthi as a clear illustration of India's rich culture, its capacity to adapt, and its commitment to preserving customs while embracing modernity. It is now unquestionably established as a significant and grand religious observance in India. Although the festival's grandeur is often gauged by the size of the idols, it is imperative to acknowledge the intricate artistry, dedication, and cultural importance that underlie these towering works of art. Following in the footsteps of Hyderabad and Mumbai, Bhubaneswar has been fashioning enormous idols for a decade, and these creations are venerated in various parts of the city. Furthermore, their methods of immersing the idols are distinctly unique and entirely eco-friendly, which is laudable.

RITIKA SINGH, ROURKELA

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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WORLD TOURISM DAY – SEPTEMBER 27

Heritage & Hospitality

While tourism is an important contributor to India's economy, heritage hotels built in old palaces provide visitors a brush with the country's rich cultural and architectural legacy



KALAHANDI PALACE

MADHUSMITA SAHU, OP

Palaces, with their grandeur and historical significance, have long been the focal points of tourist attractions around the world. While they serve as reminders of a bygone era, they also hold the potential to be catalysts for sustainable development, particularly in the realms of community crafts and local food production.

Ahead of World Tourism Day, members of a few royal families shared with **Sunday POST** how the heritage buildings play a significant role in the promotion of tourism as well as giving a boost to local crafts and food that lead to sustainable growth.

KALAHANDI PALACE

HH Maharaja Anant Pratap Deo of Kalahandi Palace in Bhawanipatna said, "Since the decision to open our homes, which we consider our palaces, to guests, we have embraced the opportunity to not only provide them with a luxurious experience

but also to showcase the unique aspects of our region. Our palaces, first and foremost, embody self-sufficiency and sustainability, reflecting our commitment to these values. Moreover, it has always been our heartfelt mission to preserve and celebrate our heritage in every conceivable manner."

Food is an important aspect of the hospitality sector that gets the utmost attention at the palace.

"In the realm of gastronomy, our journey towards authenticity begins in our kitchens. Here, we adhere to a strict policy of using only the freshest, locally sourced fruits, vegetables, and grains. Regularly, trusted vendors deliver the bounty of our region to ensure that our guests enjoy the pinnacle of culinary excellence. Our chefs, who have been an integral part of our family for generations, are the custodians of our most cherished and delectable secret recipes, passed down through the ages. Their culinary expertise is the embodiment of our cultural legacy," added Deo.

Narrating the aesthetic part, he mentioned, "When we embarked on the interior design of our palace, we invited local artists to adorn our walls

with traditional motifs. These artists, hailing from our Kalahandi region, brought to life the rich tapestry of our cultural heritage, adding an extra layer of authenticity to our palace's ambiance."

The Maharaja further quipped, "Kalahandi is renowned for its Chichiguda sarees, a unique and precious creation of this region. To introduce our guests to the artistry of these weavers, we take them to the heart of the handloom village. This not only exposes the weavers' craftsmanship to a wider audience but also enables our guests to engage in enlightening conversations about the distinctive features of the local products. It is a journey into the soul of our region's artistic expression."

Not just in food and fabrics, the royals also promote other

forms of local crafts in their business.

"In our dedication to local traditions, we have fostered partnerships with local potters. The earthen pots they craft are the vessels of choice for almost all our culinary endeavours, whether it is in our Maa Manikeshwari temple or within the palace itself. This commitment to using traditional cookware not only preserves age-old practices but also adds a unique flavour to our dishes," Deo says.

The Deos have also taken a few measures to popularise the art and culture of the region.

"One of our proudest cultural assets is the Ghumra dance, a traditional art form that holds a special place in the hearts of culture lovers. Our guests eagerly anticipate the cultural evenings where they can witness this mesmerising performance. Guiding our guests through the vibrant tapestry of our heritage fills us with immense pride, and we recognise that such an endeavour would be impossible without the unwavering support and cooperation of our community. Together, we celebrate and share the essence of our region, ensuring that our guests leave with cherished memories of an authentic and enriching experience," concludes the Maharaja.



HH Maharaja Anant Pratap Deo
HH Maharani Rituja Kumari Devi



BELGADIA PALACE

Princesses Mrinalika and Akshita BhanjDeo, the directors of the Belgadia Palace at Baripada in Mayurbhanj district, sharing their views on how local food and crafts are nurtured for sustainable tourism, said, "Preservation and raising awareness about the native plant life, along with the practice of edible landscaping, are central to our mission. We are dedicated to restoring and nurturing indigenous and select exotic plant species while eliminating invasive species that pose a threat to century-old plants. Our property boasts an array of botanical treasures, including the Golden Asafoetida, Clove Plants, a century-old bamboo plantation, as well as a diverse collection of mangoes, such as the Alphonso variety, along with



Mrinalika and Akshita BhanjDeo

other fruit-bearing trees like Sitaphal, Ramphal, Lychee, Papayas, and Bananas."

Akshita carried on: "In our commitment to environmental sustainability, we prioritise waste segregation and composting, utilise Energy Star appliances for heating and cooling, and operate a towel/linen reuse programme that significantly reduces water consumption by over 40%. Furthermore, our property is illuminated with energy-efficient LED lighting, equipped with low-flush toilets, and follows green laundry practices, promoting sustainable sanitation and water management. We also employ sustainable building materials, recycling waste materials like tree and foliage debris from Cyclone Fani into compost and repurposing fallen branches to craft tables, chairs, and boundary walls, minimising waste generation."

Listing a few more measures, she said, "Within our guest rooms, we

provide refillable haircare and skincare dispensers, exclusively use glass bottles, ceramic mugs, and refillable refreshment containers throughout the palace grounds, and have banned single-use plastic items."

The BhanjaDeos have also embraced nutrition farming and implemented integrated pest and nutrition management techniques through organic practices, including Amrut Jal and other ZBNF farming methods.

"We operate three composting sites and employ sustainable waste management practices. Our commitment to eco-friendliness extends to the use of sabai grass and environmentally friendly materials in the house, serving as dustbins, bags, and even doormats," claim the royals.

This encompasses supporting sustainable crafts such as dokra and black stone carving and promoting folk arts like Pattachitra in decorative elements around the palace.

"We prioritise recycled and upcycled furniture and interiors, and we actively engage and train local youth to ensure that the economic benefits of tourism benefit the local community directly," says Mrinalika.

"We employ natural cleaners, disinfectants, and insect repellent sprays to maintain a clean and healthy environment. At our core, we collaborate with local communities, including



Women making baskets from Sabai grass



Tourists enjoying at Baripada Haat

Project Chhauni, Sabai Grass Communities (SHG), the Leper Colony, and Dokra Handicraft Villages, to promote business opportunities and provide alternative livelihoods through eco-tourism. By facilitating direct market access for these communities without intermediaries, we ensure that 100% of the profits return to them, contributing to their sustainable development," they conclude.



Belgadia Palace

JHARGRAM PALACE

Jhargram Palace, still inhabited by West Bengal's Malla Deb royal family, stands as an architectural fusion of European and Islamic styles. The descendants of the Rajput clan from Rajasthan, who are credited with blending heritage with hospitality, have governed Jhargram since the 15th century. The palace's ground floor has been transformed into a heritage accommodation recognised by the Ministry of Tourism, Government of India.

Sharing the objective Vikramaditya Malla Deb, the prince of the Jhargram Raj Palace, says, "Our vision revolves around revitalising our architectural heritage and connecting it with sustainable tourism. It entails the restoration and reimagining of palaces and bungalows, promoting a travel experience independent of star-rated accommodations. Our primary goal is to create employment opportunities for Jhargram's skilled craftsmen and artisans within the tourism sector. We collaborate with various

artisans and performers, including folk dancers who specialise in Raibeshe, Jhumur, Tusu, Ranpa, Dangery, and Bhuang dancers, singers skilled in Vaishnav kirtan and Jhumur songs, and artisans proficient in crafting Sal leaf plates, Sabai rope products, bamboo baskets, stonework, and pottery."

The promoters have also partnered with traditional black stone craftsmen and local village women skilled in crafting sal and sabai products.

"We assist them in selling their creations to our guests through our on-site sales point in the palace, and we provide them with a platform to exhibit their items during the winter tourist carnivals held in December. Our culinary approach prioritises locally-sourced,



Vikramaditya Malla Deb

farm-to-table offerings, aligning with the locavore concept," shares Malla Deb.

He claims that they have collaborations with organic vegetable growers, poultry raisers, black Bengal goat breeders, fisheries, and licensed poppy seed farmers, as our menu celebrates the native flavours of the Jungle Mahals region.

"We rolled out services which are curated experience-oriented local tours around art, architecture, culture, local life, food, and nature. Advocating local social responsibility for restoration of historic sites, as well as organic farming and local tree planting," he further says.

The uvraaj ends with a message on sustainable tourism by adding, "As we celebrate World Tourism Day, we focus on borrowing from the 'Gandhian idea' of sourcing locally. As people these days are in search of the authentic rural experi-



Black stone artcrafts

ence we ensure that farm to table and locally sourced products are sold and served at every dining occasion."



Jhargram Honey



Jhargram Palace

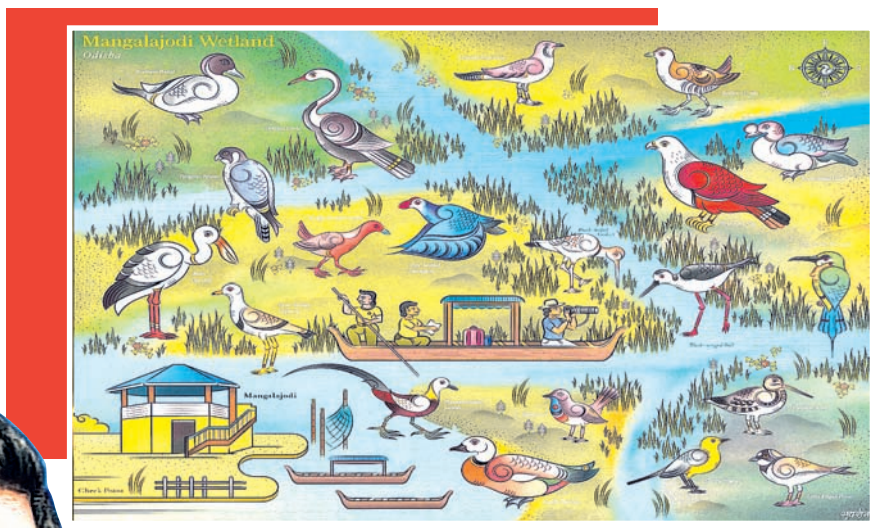
SUDARSHAN SHAW, A BHUBANESWAR-BASED GRAPHIC DESIGNER, SHOWCASES HOW ART FORMS SUCH AS PATTACHITRA, KALAMKARI, SORAI AND AIPAN TURN THE SPOTLIGHT ON DWINDLING WILDLIFE IN TAMIL NADU, KERALA, KARNATAKA, MAHARASHTRA, RAJASTHAN, WEST BENGAL, CHHATTISGARH, GUJARAT AND ANDHRA PRADESH

Folk art for conservation



What started as someone's personal project during COVID-19 lockdown has turned into a successful tool for many state forest departments to educate the world about the wildlife of the region. Bhubaneswar-based graphic designer, Sudarshan Shaw, a 2016 NIFT graduate in communication design, quit his regular design job in Delhi just before the pandemic struck to explore his passion, 'conservation through folk art'.

Shaw said Covid break offered him an opportunity to plunge into it headlong. "Conservation through folk art was my graduation project and I always knew that there was more to it than what I presented. After I returned to Bhubaneswar, I started freelancing while simultaneously digging deeper into folk arts of various regions," says Shaw. He adds that the local art is the 'language of the land' that crucial stakeholders of conservation projects, the tribals and locals, can read. Folk art



in India is an age-old visual language that is native to India and hence best represents and resonates with the masses, opines the artist. Shaw's very first attempt, a biodiversity map of Odisha, which used motifs and colours typical to Pattachitra to put together a colourful map of the different species of wildlife in Orissa, forest-dwellers and age-old beliefs, was an instant hit among the netizens.

Elaborating more on the work he recalls, "It was a combination of motifs and descriptions, in which colours, figures and stories are born out of our very own soil and culture. Soon, in 2021, I was approached by the Andhra Pradesh forest department to explore such a map in a visual language unique to them." Of course, Kalamkari became the obvious choice when it comes to create awareness in AP, and Shaw chose the Srikalahasti style after much deliberation. It is a visual language unique to Andhra with its own interpretation of birds, animals, nature and everyday lives of people. So, it is apt to use that art form to generate awareness about local biodiversity among the folks of the state, quips Shaw.

Again, the success of the map paved the way for many more. These include elephant corridors in Tamil Nadu, Kerala and Karnataka, tiger corridors of central India, biodiversity maps of Rajasthan, West Bengal, Chhattisgarh and Gujarat.

The latest is The Magical Melghats, launched by Maharashtra forest department in April to mark the 50 years of Melghat tiger reserve.

Right now, Shaw is working on a map for Kanha National Park in Madhya Pradesh as well as a coffee table book exploring the biodiversity of Ladakh, which will re-imagine the techniques used in Thangka art of that region.

While most of them are commissioned by either government departments or wildlife NGOs, some are also projects born out of meeting people with common goals.

For instance, for the hand-painted biodiversity map of Rajasthan, Shaw said he collaborated

with a young local folk artist Rashmi Ranjan. "It took us months to find a representation unique to Rajasthan. Finally, we settled for traditional tussar silk as base and colours prepared from natural pigments. But the colours for 50-odd species and forest habitats still posed a problem, as switching when it didn't work – a possibility when you do digitally – is not an option when painting straight on the tussar silk. This is where local knowledge helped immensely," reveals Shaw.

Over time, Shaw said he developed his own visual language, inspired by folk arts, which he calls 'Folk Indica', to create maps and posters meant to educate people. Folk Indica acknowledges and celebrates the local folk arts.

"The contemporary twist I gave to them helps in taking this age-old vocabulary to more people," he said.

Shaw also began interpreting key moments and dwindling species individually to bring more focused attention to wildlife conservation. Worth mentioning is his ode to the tiger named fish – legendary Machhli of Ranthambore National Park in Rajasthan. In June, an unlikely battle between her and another apex predator, a mugger crocodile much larger than herself was caught on camera and added more heft to the legends surrounding this Ranthambore rani. It is this moment Shaw chose to highlight.

"That day, the giant mugger was suffocated to death under the clutches of two tigresses. One, the smaller yet brave Machhli and the other, a much more ferocious and larger than the mugger, but who we could all see in the video, jumped in later, inspired by Machhli's courage. This was an event so rare, if not for images and videos, we may never believe this happened for real," recounts Shaw.

Sometimes, Shaw's 'conservation through folk art' is not just about wild animals. When he digs out vanishing folk arts like that of Sorai and Khovar in Jharkhand or the traditional Aipan, a ritualistic folk art native to the Kumaon region of Uttarakhand, in a way, he is reviving the interest in these art forms too.

Forests are now boiled down to wood that fuel the short-sighted vision of development. With vanishing forests, traditional art, wisdom and ways of forest communities too perish. This takes a toll on their sense of identity and community. "This I feel we immediately need to address. And this, in a small way, is what I am doing with my art," concluded Shaw.





Kareena at 43

Manushi returns to her Miss World days

Manushi Chhillar, the quintessential fashion icon and former Miss World, recently embarked on a sentimental journey as she revisited the very first destination she ventured to after being crowned Miss World. The picturesque city of Hong Kong served as the backdrop for the launch of her remarkable journey as a global beauty queen, and Manushi shared her nostalgic memories of this momentous period through a chic social media post.

In her Instagram post, the Samrat Prithviraj actress expressed her heartfelt connection to Hong Kong, where her remarkable journey towards becoming Miss World began. With a stunning image of herself against the city's iconic skyline, she reminisced about her early days as a beauty queen and the opportunities that unfolded since. Sharing the image, Manushi wrote in the caption, "Here after ages, a place that holds so many fond memories. The first country I travelled to right after winning Miss World. I still remember landing and seeing everyone reading the newspaper with my (shocked) face on the front page."

Manushi's triumphant debut at London Fashion Week 2023 showcased her prowess in the world of fashion.

Her talents also extend far beyond the runway. She has several upcoming projects. The Great Indian Family, opposite Vicky Kaushal, Operation Valentine, and Tehran are just a few of the ventures.

AGENCIES

'It's a great time to be in movies'

Kareena Kapoor Khan who celebrated her 43rd birthday last week reacted to being tagged as a 'hot padosan' in Jaane Jaan saying it's a compliment.

In a conversation with Film Companion, the 3 idiots actress said, "It's a great time, I have two children, I'm a proud wife, proud homemaker, and mother. I also love my glamorous side, which I know my fans connect to. And they've been so loyal. It doesn't matter that I've been married and have two children. Age is just a number. I'm turning 43. It's a great time to be in the movies. And 'hot padosan'? I think it's a great compliment."

"Sometimes people say, 'No, no, you should'. I'm like, 'Some days I'm going to look tired, because I'm human, and my fans should know that.' We're not always going to be 20, and thank god for that; I don't want to be 20. I'm having the time of my life, and I'm still the 'hot padosan,'" said Bebo.

Directed by Sujoy Ghosh, Jaane Jaan also stars Jaideep Ahlawat, and Vijay Varma in key roles. AGENCIES



Varun not scared of getting typecast

Actor Varun Sharma, who is set to return with his iconic character of Choocha in the upcoming third instalment of the Fukrey franchise, Fukrey 3, is not afraid of getting typecast.

The Chhichhore actor said: "Any actor who is kickstarting his career in films wants to be accepted and loved by the audience. I am blessed it happened with Choocha and then again with Sexa. I love to make people laugh. Bringing a smile to another human being's face is such a rare thing in today's times. If an artiste gets a chance to spread laughter and happiness through the biggest medium that we have in the country, which is cinema, then that's a huge opportunity."

He further mentioned: "Comedy is one genre that I will continue to work in. I have never been afraid of getting typecast. The most important thing for every actor is to get cast on a regular basis in memorable characters and amazing films. I really want to explore different genres but not just for the heck of it. The yes for a film has to come from the heart."

IAN S

RAJVEER'S TAKE ON NEPOTISM

Actor Rajveer Deol, younger son of Sunny Deol, who is all set to make his Bollywood debut with the film Dono said the debate of nepotism has motivated him to be a better actor and a person.

Talking about his reaction on the hot topic of nepotism, he said: "I won't lie that I haven't thought about this topic. I feel the debate of nepotism has motivated me to be a better actor and a person. The advantage of being a star kid is only that you get a meeting scheduled. Post that, there is no guarantee of getting the work. I gave three auditions before I got the role in the film Dono."

Talking about his prep for the role, the actor said: "We did a lot of workshops before we started shooting for the film. We did a lot of prep to translate our chemistry on the screen. It was not easy in the beginning but yes I was very focused and Paloma and I were very supportive of each other."

IAN S



WORLD MARITIME DAY – SEPTEMBER 28



Blue beckons

Though sailors have to deal with loads of challenges during long voyage, witnessing raw nature in its glory from the deck of the ship is a spectacle of lifetime, says navigation watcher Roshan Nayak



Sagarjit with his friends on a vessel

MADHUSMITA SAHU, OP

Nothing beats standing on the edge of an ocean. Our senses are heightened as each wave crashes in one after the other. But what about those who spend months away from their families and homes, not on the beach, but in the middle of the ocean? Is everything looking up for them?

The celebration of World Maritime Day on 28 September is a poignant reminder of the essential role that mariners play in the expansion of global trade, transportation, and sustainability. These committed men and women travel the world's waters, safeguarding the free flow of trade and linking distant lands. On this day, we honour the merchant navy seafarers' tenacity, perseverance, and important contributions by highlighting their experiences and perspectives on life at sea

With a couple of days to go before we celebrate the occasion, here's what a few merchant navy mariners have to say to **Sunday POST** on the thrills they experience and challenges they confront on their voyage.

'Ocean is my second home'

Roshan Nayak, a navigating officer under training in the ship, shares his stories: "I've been at sea for the last two years, and the ocean feels like my second home. There's an undeniable allure to the open water and the thrill of exploring new horizons. But it's not without its challenges. Loneliness, rough weather, and the relentless demands of the job can take a toll. Still, I can't imagine doing anything else."



Merchant navy mariners play an essential role in global trade and the movement of goods. Talking on this point, he continues: "We're the backbone of international commerce. Without us, the world would grind to a halt. From the clothes we wear to the food we eat, almost everything arrives on ships. It's a responsibility we take seriously."

Life at sea isn't always smooth sailing. Mariners often encounter treacherous weather conditions, including storms, heavy seas, and extreme cold or heat. Recounting his experience he says, "There's a unique beauty in witnessing nature's raw power from the deck of a ship. But storms can be terrifying. It's during these times that the

maraderie among the crew members shines brightest. We rely on each other for support and safety."

On keeping the oceans clean, he says "The maritime industry has made significant strides in reducing its carbon footprint. We're actively involved in adopting cleaner technologies and adhering to strict environmental regulations. As mariners, we understand the importance of preserving the oceans for future generations."

Despite the hardships and sacrifices, the call of the sea is irresistible for many mariners. He sums it up: "The thrill of exploration, the satisfaction of a job well done, and the deep respect for the oceans keep us going. It's a challenging profession, but it's also immensely rewarding."

'At times one needs to toil for 35 hours'

Sagarjit Mishra from Bhubaneswar never envisioned entering this profession. But as his name (Sagarjit means the one who has won over the sea) suggests, he seems to be destined to operate in the ocean. Talking about what he generally does in the deep sea, Sagarjit says, "My daily tasks vary significantly. At times, I am tasked with assignments in deep sea and sometimes in port. On UMS class ships, my typical work hours span from 8.00 am to 6.00 pm. When at port, the schedule shifts to a 6-hour on, 6-hour off rotation. Currently serving as a third engineer I adhere to 12-hour shifts, alternating between 12.00 am to 6.00 am and 12.00 pm to 6 pm. However, during emergencies or demanding tasks, we work continuously for up to 35 hours."



Asked about the challenges, he elaborates, "The profession poses numerous challenges. There is no onboard doctor, requiring them to take responsibility for their health. In emergencies, sleep becomes a luxury, especially during rough seas when sleeping becomes difficult and items onboard shift unpredictably. Maintaining proper nutrition and good behavior is essential. Additionally, they undergo frequent inspections when arriving at ports, such as PSC (Port State Control) and vetting."

Poor social connectivity is what that haunts the mariners badly. "Access to the internet is limited onboard, making it challenging to stay socially connected. Sometimes, they must wait for two to three days to communicate with their loved ones. Homesickness is a prevalent sentiment, exacerbated by the standard 6-month contracts, which entail prolonged periods of separation from family. Nonetheless, it's their duty, and they persevere," Sagarjit shares.



Roshan and his crew mates

Janklin

