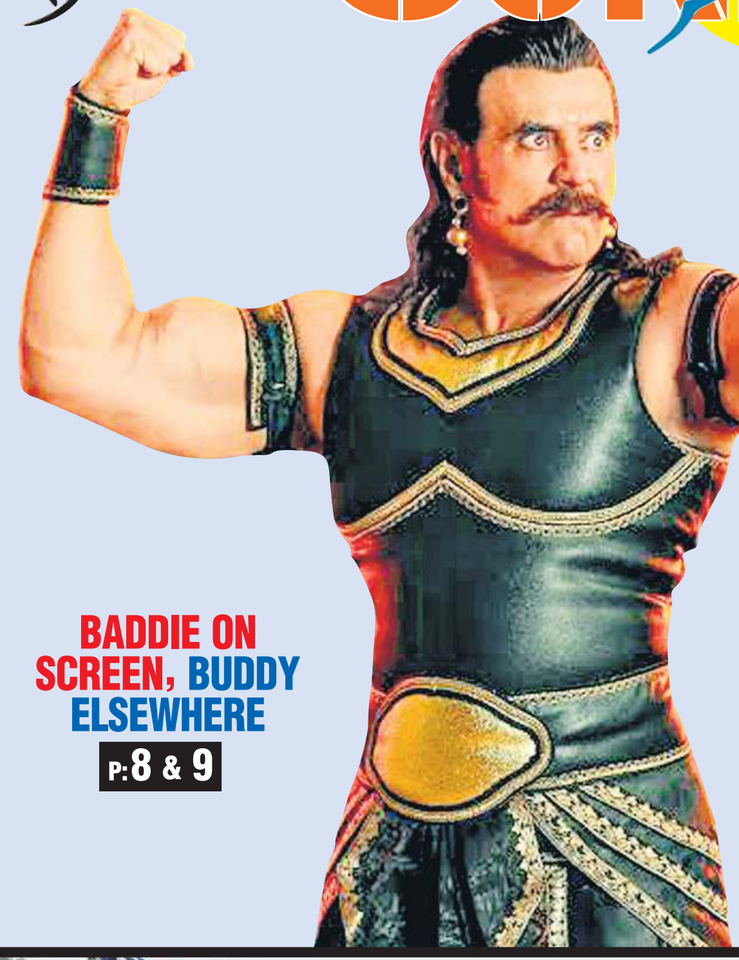


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SUNDAY pioneer

SUNDAY, JUNE 30, 2024



BADDIE ON SCREEN, BUDDY ELSEWHERE

P:8 & 9



SONA MOHAPATRA STANDS IN AWE OF EXTREME FEMINIST ANTHEMS

P:5



RISKING LIVES FOR LIKES

'Viral' fever of stunts for social media sensation

P:3 & 4

'CRICKETING' YOUR WAY TO RESTFUL SLEEP

P:6



PERSON

JULIAN ASSANGE

Julian Assange, who was freed from a London prison through a plea agreement, has returned to his home country of Australia. At Canberra Airport, there were tearful scenes as the founder of Wikileaks hugged his father and kissed his wife, with his attorneys present and clearly moved. Assange and US officials have been engaged in a legal dispute for the past 14 years because they believe Assange leaked confidential documents that could have endangered lives.



VIDEO

DUBAI TYCOON LAYS STACKS OF MONEY FOR HIS GF TO WALK ON

A businessman from Dubai set up stacks of cash for his girlfriend to tread on in a recent video. Sergei Kosenko, also known as Mr. Thank You on Instagram, posted a video of himself assisting his girlfriend in disembarking from a helicopter on the social media network. In the video, the man could be seen guiding his fiancée while she walked on a pile of cash that was spread out like a makeshift carpet.



SONG

CHINNA CHINNA KANGAL

Celebrating Thalapathy Vijay's 50th birthday, the second single from his *Greatest of All Time* album, *Chinna Chinna Kangal*, was released. The late playback vocalist Bhavatharini's AI-generated voice may be heard on the unique track, paying a tribute. On June 22, *GOAT*s' lyrical video for *Chinna Chinna Kangal* was released.



MOVIE

INDIAN 2

The trailer for *Indian 2,* starring Kamal Haasan, has now been released. The Shankar-directed movie is a follow-up to the 1996 movie Indian, in which Kamal portrayed Senapathy, a liberation fighter battling systemic corruption. 28 years later, in *Indian 2*, Kamal is back in the lead role!



PICTURE

PINK DOLPHIN

Pictures of pink dolphins are trending on social media, due to which a different debate has started on social media about real and fake dolphins. It is being told that recently, pink dolphins were seen on the Carolina coast of America, which are rarely seen. In such a situation, their capture by the camera is definitely a big deal, so it is only natural to be surprised. In fact, dolphins are considered to be the most intelligent creatures in the world after humans. As intelligent as they are, they are also rare.



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LET US FIRST SAMPLE THE FOLLOWING INCIDENTS:

- On June 18, 2024, in Maharashtra, a woman died after she reversed her car off a cliff and fell 300 feet into a gorge. The incident was captured on camera by the woman's friend who had been making a video of her learning how to drive!
- On June 20, 2024, in Pune, a teenage girl was seen hanging from the edge of a building while another boy held onto her hand from the top. The girl dangled precariously from the tall building reportedly to test 'grip strength' for an Instagram reel.
- On June 24, in Gujarat, two men drove their SUVs into deep water at Mundra seaside in Gujarat's Kutch to perform stunts for Instagram reels. They found themselves in trouble as the high tide almost submerged both vehicles, leaving them stuck in the water.
- In January 2024, a 22-year-old man from Hyderabad lost his life while being filmed on a railway track. He was struck by an oncoming train while his friends recorded the horrific scene in the process of attempting to capture the dramatic effect of the train rushing past him.
- In February 2024, a teenager from Mumbai died after jumping off a cliff into a river as part of a social media challenge.
- In March 2024, a young man in Bengaluru was killed while performing a high-speed wheelie on a busy road for a YouTube video. Having lost control over the bike, he collided with a vehicle and lost his life.
- In April 2024, a college student from Delhi drowned while live-streaming his performance in a swimming challenge in a local river. He had underestimated the current at a particular stretch and was swept away. The live streaming of the challenge gone awry sparked outrage.

For our cover story this week, ***The Pioneer***'s **Tanisha Saxena** looks at the 'grave' implications and consequences of the alarming trend of lay people performing dangerous stunts for viral attention and appreciation on social media platforms, with tell-tale inputs from some of the recent tragic incidents in various parts of India.

RISKING LIVES FOR LIKES



'VIRAL' FEVER OF STUNTS FOR SOCIAL MEDIA SENSATION





As social media platforms hosting videos dominate digital lives of many people, particularly the younger generation, the blind pursuit of viral fame has prompted reckless and foolhardy behavior among youth. Let us examine the psychological drivers, legal frameworks, and measures that are necessary to curb this social-media induced epidemic.

In today's digital age, social media platforms like Instagram, YouTube (TikTok has been banned) have become central to the daily lives of many people, particularly youngsters. These platforms do offer opportunities for instant fame, recognition beyond geographic borders, and immense financial gain through content creation and hosting. However, this has also led to a disturbing trend: amateurs and lay persons engaging in dangerous stunts and life-threatening activities to create exciting content and post them on social media platforms hoping it would become viral.

The pursuit of viral fame

The desire to become an online sensation drives many to extreme measures. Stunts that were once the domain of professional daredevils are now sought to be performed by lay people seeking their moment of fame. This dangerous trend shows how far people are willing to go for likes, shares, and followers.

Psychological drivers

Several psychological factors contribute to this phenomenon, as Dr Sujatha Rajamani, Consultant Psychiatrist at KIMS Hospital, lists out:

1. Validation and social approval: The dopamine rush from likes, comments, and shares acts as a powerful motivator. For many, online validation becomes a primary source of self-worth.

2. Peer pressure and trends: Popular challenges and trends on social media create a bandwagon effect, encouraging individuals to participate in risky activities to stay relevant.

3. Fear of missing out (FOMO): The fear of being left behind in the digital race pushes people to constantly seek novel and extreme ways to attract attention.

Aarathi Selvan, a clinical psychologist with around 10 years of experience and founder-director of Kundanbagh, Hyderabad-based Pause for Perspective, states, "Social media is a very accessible medium to build relationships, communities, and collectives. It is also a place where doom scrolling and constant reel feeds are consumed, which can really impact one's sense of self and safety. No matter the type of information you are consuming, a sense of 'not doing enough' can show up. In the absence of connection with things in the everyday lives of people, it has the potential to take people into very entertainingly crafted spirals, making us feel discontented about our own lives and our own selves."

Social media taps our need for ease, aliveness, community, safety, offers a quick fix to those, and keeps at it in an endless loop. It also offers a distraction from discomfort we may experience in our daily lives and temporarily alleviates it. "Collective support and combined efforts to step away mindfully, while ensuring support when media is stepped away from, is one of the most sustainable ways to balance the negative influences," she adds.

Continued on Page 4







Continued from Page 3

In a revealing study titled 'Does Smartphone Addiction, Social Media Addiction, and/or Internet Game Addiction Affect Adolescents' Interpersonal Interactions?' published by Yang et al. in the MDPI Open Access Journal, researchers highlight a concerning trend: the pervasive use of multifunctional smart phones has led to increased screen time at the expense of face-to-face interactions among adolescents and young adults. This shift has resulted in significant social disconnectedness, with many young individuals forming superficial 'reel' friendships, instead of meaningful real-life connections.

Complementing these findings, a paper in the International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health discusses the 'fear of missing out' (FOMO) as a critical factor driving adolescents towards creating and consuming captivating reels. This constant anxiety about lagging behind trends fuels their engagement with social media, often with negative repercussions.

The 2023 US Surgeon General's Advisory on Social Media and Youth Mental Health provides additional context, highlighting the complex impact of social media on young people's mental health. The advisory notes that the effects are multifaceted, influenced by factors such as total screen time, content type, social interactions, sleep patterns, and physical activity. It also underscores that social media's impact varies widely among adolescents, depending on individual vulnerabilities and socio-economic backgrounds.

FROM TIKTOK BAN TO RISKY REELS: India's viral stunt epidemic

In June 2020, India made a significant move by banning TikTok, along with 58 other Chinese apps, citing concerns over national security and data privacy. This decision came amidst rising geopolitical tensions between India and China, particularly following a deadly clash in the Galwan Valley in Ladakh. The Indian government stated that these apps were "prejudicial to sovereignty and integrity of India, defence of India, the security of the state, and public order" and accused them of engaging in activities that threatened the privacy of Indian citizens.

Raj Pawar, a cyber expert in Hyderabad, asserts, "The ban left a void in the social media landscape, particularly for short-form video content, which had become immensely popular through TikTok. Instagram quickly seized the opportunity to fill this gap by introducing Reels, a similar feature that allows users to create and share 15- to 60-second videos set to music or other audio clips. Reels rapidly gained traction, providing a platform for content creators and influencers who had previously thrived on TikTok."

However, the rapid rise of Instagram reels has not been without its issues. While it has given users a new outlet for creativity and self-expression, it has also led to concerning behaviors, particularly among younger users who are often driven by the desire for viral fame. This desire has sometimes led to risky and dangerous stunts being performed for the sake of views and likes.

Pawar highlights, "Several incidents have been reported where individuals have endangered their lives while creating content for Reels. These include performing dangerous physical stunts, trespassing prohibited or hazardous areas, and engaging in reckless behavior on roads or near railway tracks. The quest for attention and virality can sometimes overshadow the importance of safety and common sense, leading to tragic accidents.

The phenomenon reflects a broader trend in social media, where the pressure to produce sensational and eye-catching content can lead to harmful behaviors. The anonymity and rapid feedback loop provided by platforms like Instagram can amplify risky behavior, as users often feel compelled to outdo each other to gain visibility and followers."

In response to these risks, there have been calls for greater regulation and stricter content moderation on social media platforms. Some suggest that platforms should implement more robust mechanisms to detect and remove dangerous content and promote safer alternatives for content creation. Additionally, there is a push for better education and awareness programs to inform users, particularly young ones, about the potential dangers of reckless behavior online.

Legal framework and responsibility for risky social media content in India

"Law enforcement, such as in Hyderabad near Madhapur, has intensified patrols and imposed strict regulations to curb dangerous activities like racing and bike stunts. The police have even resorted to arrests and vehicle seizures to enforce safety measures," says Shravan Patel, a High Court lawyer in Hyderabad.

Ashwin Reddy, a lawyer practicing in Telangana Court, shares the applicable acts:

1. Information Technology Act, 2000: The primary legislation governing online content in India. Under Section 67, publishing or transmitting obscene material in electronic form is punishable. While risky or dangerous content isn't explicitly covered, it can fall under harmful content regulation.

2. Indian Penal Code (IPC), 1860: Sections of the IPC can apply to dangerous activities, including:

- Section 304A: Death by negligence, which can be invoked if a person dies while making a reel due to someone's negligence.
- Section 279: Rash driving or riding on a public way, applicable if stunts involve vehicles.
- Section 336, 337, and 338: Acts endangering life or personal safety of others.

3. Motor Vehicles Act, 1988: If dangerous stunts involve vehicles, this act can be used to prosecute offenders for reckless driving.

4. Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Act, 2015: If minors are involved in creating dangerous content, this act can come into play to ensure their protection and penalise guardians.

"Controlling risky content on social media faces several significant challenges. Firstly, the proliferation of content, with vast volumes of user-generated material, makes monitoring and regulation difficult. Secondly, jurisdictional issues arise as social media platforms operate globally, complicating enforcement across different legal systems. Additionally, the anonymity and pseudonymity that users can maintain online make it challenging to track and penalize offenders," explains Shravan.

Technological limitations further exacerbate the issue, as automated systems designed to detect risky behaviour are not foolproof and can often be bypassed. Moreover, a lack of awareness among users, particularly youth, about the legal consequences and risks associated with dangerous activities on social media adds to the problem.

In the case of death or injury resulting from such risky content, responsibility can be attributed to various parties. Primarily, individuals engaging in the risky activity bear responsibility, especially if they are adults presumed to be making informed decisions. For minors, parents or guardians may be held accountable under negligence laws. Social media platforms themselves have a duty of care to monitor and remove harmful content as mandated by the IT Rules, 2021. However, directly holding these platforms liable for individual actions remains challenging. Content creators and influencers who encourage dangerous behavior can be held liable for abetment or instigation under relevant sections of the Indian Penal Code related to abetment and criminal conspiracy. Lastly, law enforcement agencies are responsible for investigating and prosecuting cases of death or injury due to risky social media content.

Addressing the issue of risky behavior in social media content creation in India necessitates a multifaceted approach.

Social media marketing expert Vinod Sharma says, "Key measures include conducting awareness campaigns about the dangers and legal implications of such behavior, enforcing stricter content moderation policies by social media companies using advanced AI, and fostering collaboration between platforms and law enforcement agencies to track and penalize offenders. Additionally, encouraging community reporting for quicker action and promoting robust parental control features to monitor and restrict minors' activities are essential. Effective reduction of these incidents requires a combination of legislation, enforcement, platform responsibility, and public awareness."

Content creators speak out

Several content creators have come forward to share their perspectives on safety measures. Vikku Stunts, a popular Instagram page by Vikash, who performs bike stunts, emphasizes the importance of planning and taking precautions. "Whenever I attempt any challenging content, I ensure that all necessary safety measures are in place. This includes rehearsing in a controlled environment, and having medical support on standby. The thrill of creating engaging content should never come at the cost of one's life," he asserts.

Content creators must prioritize safety to prevent tragic incidents. Avneet Khurana, a YouTuber, points out, "Firstly, they should thoroughly assess the risks associated with their planned activities and implement appropriate safety measures. This includes using protective gear, conducting stunts in controlled environments, and having emergency protocols in place. Secondly, creators should avoid encouraging or performing illegal activities, such as trespassing or reckless driving, which could endanger themselves and others. Additionally, it's important to provide clear disclaimers and discourage viewers from attempting to replicate dangerous stunts. By fostering a culture of responsibility and caution, content creators can continue to entertain their audiences without compromising safety."

All told, the performers contributing to the creation of such dangerous content should know the difference between courage and foolhardiness.

Sona Mohapatra stands in awe of extreme feminist anthems

SHIKHA DUGGAL

Senti Akhiyaan, the latest song by the dynamic musical duo of composer Ram Sampath and singer Sona Mohapatra, mesmerised the audience lately. Singer Sona Mohapatra talks to *The Pioneer* about the song's origin and how it engenders a sense of emancipation. She also discusses the current state of the mainstream music industry.



Together again, the dynamic duo of composer Ram Sampath and singer Sona Mohapatra brings listeners enthralling new song *Senti Akhiyaan*. The song, which was inspired by the poetry of teenage poet Roshanaara Qureshi, explores the idea that the eyes are a window into the soul and has Sona's trademark of raw emotion and fire. Sona Mohapatra, a singer, composer and lyricist, was born on June 17, 1976, in Cuttack. The playback vocalist gets right into the exclusive interview with ***The Pioneer***!

Admired for her deep voice and catchy tunes, the *Bedardi Raja* fame stated, "I don't believe that in order to make a point with our songs, vocalists must always be preachy! There's a sense of liberation expressed in my most recent track, titled *Senti Akhiyaan*. I also adore extreme feminist anthems. I wanted to combine reggaeton beats and Indian melodies with *Senti Akhiyaan* because, as an artist, I have been releasing a lot of intense music. It was more akin to my song opening a gateway for love and liberation. Even though it has a "Hinglish vibe," the fundamental message is that you cannot cheat."

In actuality, Ram Sampath discovered Roshanaara, the poetess behind latest track, on Instagram. The musical duo Ram and Sona hopes to collaborate with a lot more up-and-coming musicians in the near future. There are incredibly great new artists involved in this project as well. They have their own in-house record labels and come from a musical family, therefore they are highly educated, says Sona. She spent two restless nights finishing *Senti Akhiyaan*! Ram has always advised her to embrace her identity as an artist as, in Ram's opinion, she stands out from the other musicians.

"We used new technology to create this Frida Kahlo-inspired music video when I realised Ram's intentions! It proved to be a do-it-yourself project. While it might not be to everyone's taste, as an artist, I experiment with different methods, mostly for my own inner fulfillment. I had a great deal of respect for Frida because of hardships she faced. Look at the times after her death—she's turned into an icon! She was just as well-known as her spouse. She had previously remained in his shadow, but after her breakthrough, which, as history tells us, included a turbulent marriage. However, she later became known as "the Frida Kahlo." *Senti Akhiyaan*, as a ballad is therefore composed in a way that gives the impression that they are extremely powerful," *Mujhe Kya Bechega Rupaiya* fame added.

After reading some of the comments on her Instagram saying 'what had happened to Sona', 'asking why she was singing these gibberish lyrics', 'questioning if she has changed into someone else'- "Hey, no, is how I would respond to those remarks! I'm just painting myself in fresh hues. I don't want to constantly be in my comfort zone. I want to learn something new with each new release of mine. A short time ago, I also released *Barsai Badaria*. Composed by Ram, it is an eternal love ballad sung by rebel rock star Mirabai. *Senti Akhiyaan* is nothing like this! My favourite portion of this Hindustani semi-classical piece is the 'Sargam' in the second *antara*, which simulates the pitter-patter of rain. It features great sitar player Purbayan Chatterjee and virtuoso guitarist Sanjoy Das. It seems like returning to the main meal after a delightful appetizer and both are, in my opinion, as significant. It's Mirabai's poetry, yet it's really seductive."

Jiya Laage Na fame also strongly believes that India is still not to the point where people are prepared to pay for music. They still desire free music streaming. They believe that since they pay for the internet, the music will be available for free. Even though being a musician requires a lot of work, they are nonetheless driven to provide fresh, innovative music for listeners. This is how she is making a comeback to the music industry; she enjoys doing it much and there are no financial rewards. "Roshanaara and I instantly connected because of the "rebelliousness." Together, we released an anthem! In order to improve the energy in the song, I enjoy having spiritual connections with my collaborators. Musicians never get old; at times, I feel like I'm twelve and I forget about other people. The best thing about being a musician, in my opinion, is that there are no social norms that restrict us. Even as a public figure, I am not expected to act in a specific way! Roshanaara and I had a strong sisterhood, which helped to facilitate our collaboration on *Senti Akhiyaan*," simultaneously, Sona remembers. However, she never takes anything for granted because she is married to Ram Sampath, a well-known music producer and composer in the country. However, the pair enjoys discovering new talent to introduce!

Senti Akhiyaan's beats have a distinctly Latin American feel to them and the harmonium that permeates all of her tracks makes them distinctly 'Sona-esque'. She dislikes becoming wholly westernised, whether in terms of her appearance or mentality. She was deeply intrigued by Frida's strong celebration of her identity. She had a great rapport with her self-driven, independent persona. All in all, Sona prefers not to instantly copy or dress up in sequins like every other artist just because it is trending.

She goes on to explain, "I define my own bar for glamour, which we can hear. My body type won't make me appear glamorous in a dress! A *kadha*, a *baaju-bandh*, or a *bindi* can also make me appear magnificent. My goal is to use music to honour my heritage. The fact that Frida was of Mexican descent and never dressed like anyone else also struck a chord with me. That truly speaks to me—even though her eyebrows were linked, she didn't seem to mind. She did not spend her tme moulding them into the women of her era. That strikes me as having creative integrity. *Senti Akhiyaan*, a celebration of free spirits, also incorporates percussion. This isn't just any old love song."

For Sona, hearing someone refer to it as non-film music is strange. She must let it go by laughing. What? Lata Mangeshkar sang simple songs all her life. Pop musicians with sophisticated training can also exist; one such musician is Shreya Goshal. Or, the Wadali brothers, the shining example! Here, the general populace is the real hero. When some *Kacha Badaam* trends occur, you're only confusing true music enthusiasts, who hold music in the highest regard. To your ears, that may not be music, but it might be entrainment. Sona was shocked to see he was signed to a record label! She does not relate to popular music. Make something original; no one wants to hear a mixed version of *Chaand Baaliyan*," she remarked.

"Pop music has brought us joy and happiness. Though I am aware of Spotify's top 100 list, I can also observe that users of the same platform are also listening to music that isn't related to movies. On the same platform, there are audiences who are prepared to pay for music! All music and art require an audience. Since free music is the worst enemy, it also has to do with live music culture, which many of us enjoy. For us musicians, these internet streaming services have been a blessing. Every kind of voice has a place. These are great times since we don't have to wait for those commercial breaks to succeed anymore. I also adore how the media presents independent musicians in a positive limelight," *Satyamev Jayate* fame gives some more of her thoughts on a parting note.

'Cricketing' your way to restful sleep



Do you frequently find yourself massaging your feet on the bed in order to relax and fall asleep? We call this kind of activity "cricketing." But to find out if it's really beneficial for one, *The Pioneer* speaks with a pulmonologist, a yoga master and a sleep specialist to gain insights and provide you with a thorough examination of cricketing.

TEJAL SINHA

A drooping day at work coming to an end, many find themselves doing something rather inexplicable. Without even realising, one may find themselves rubbing their feet together to fall asleep easier. According to what people discuss on the internet, this is a topic that has raised some questions.

So, let's discuss it this week for our weekly segment of Health Talk.

It's cricketing!

The act of rhythmically rubbing your feet together, often unconsciously, while trying to fall asleep is known as cricketing or "cricket feet." This behaviour is named after the chirping sound crickets make when they rub their legs together. "While cricketing might seem harmless, it highlights a more significant issue: sleep disturbances caused by discomfort," enunciates Anand Nichani, sleep expert and MD, Magniflex India. "The good news is that sleep disturbances caused by discomfort can be addressed. Many people experience sleep disturbances caused by discomfort. This can stem from various factors, such as an unsupportive mattress, improper pillows, or an unsuitable sleeping environment."

By using technologically advanced sleep products designed to provide proper pressure point relief and spinal alignment, you can create a more comfortable sleep environment. This can lead to a significant improvement in your overall sleep quality.

Cricketing for relaxation

Dr. Pavan Yadav, Lead Consultant, Interventional Pulmonology and Lung Transplantation at Aster RV Hospital, shares that cricketing is preferred by some individuals for relaxation and sleep due to the following reasons:

Soothing sensation: The repetitive motion of rubbing feet can create a soothing, calming effect, which can help in winding down before sleep.

Stress relief: The act may serve as a form of self-soothing, reducing stress and anxiety, which are common barriers to falling asleep.

Sensory stimulation: For some people, the tactile sensation of their feet rubbing together can be comforting and can help to shift focus away from other distractions or worries, making it easier to relax.

Cricketing may help some individuals fall asleep faster by:

Inducing relaxation: The rhythmic motion can help signal to the brain that it's time to relax and prepare for sleep.

Routine formation: If cricketing is part of a pre-sleep routine, it can serve as a cue to the body that it's time to sleep, reinforcing a consistent sleep-wake cycle.

However, scientific evidence on the direct impact of cricketing on sleep latency (the time it takes to fall asleep) is limited. Individual experiences vary, and what works for one person may not work for another.

Possible reasons for rubbing feet together before bed

Habit: It may simply be a habitual behaviour formed over time, possibly since childhood.

Comfort seeking: Rubbing feet together can provide physical comfort and warmth, which may be conducive to sleep.

Psychological comfort: The repetitive motion may serve as a form of psychological comfort, similar to how some people might rock back and forth or fidget.

Restless Leg Syndrome (RLS): In some cases, this behaviour might be associated with Restless Leg Syndrome, a condition characterised by an uncontrollable urge to move the legs, often accompanied by uncomfortable sensations.

Cricketing, Anand says, is generally harmless unless it causes:

- Pain or discomfort in the feet
- Disrupts your sleep (your partner might find it distracting).

With the right sleeping environment, this enhanced comfort can significantly reduce uneasiness before sleep, allowing you to relax and fall asleep faster.

Hazards of cricketing

Generally, cricketing is harmless. However, Hansa Yogendera, Director of The Yoga Institute suggests a few considerations are:

- Cricketing may cause skin irritation, leading to redness, soreness, or even blisters.
- It can disturb your partner, especially if the cricketing is vigorous or if the bed is sensitive to movement.
- While cricketing itself is not harmful, it can sometimes be a sign of an underlying condition such as Restless Leg Syndrome.

Does cricketing actually help?

There's no guarantee that cricketing will make you fall asleep faster. However, Nichani shares, "If it helps you relax, it could indirectly contribute to quicker sleep onset. But make sure to sleep on a comfortable pillow and mattress made of patented memoform and massaging technology that is proven to relax you and can aid in lulling you to sleep."

Meanwhile, Hansa further adds, "While cricketing may help some people, for others it may be ineffective. Rather than relying solely on habits like cricketing, you can consider creating a robust yogic sleep routine."

Here's a 10-minute, five-step yogic routine by Dr. Hansraj that will help you sleep better.

- First, wash your hands and feet with water and rub them dry.
- Then sit on your bed and gently massage your hands, feet and face with some almond oil.
- Next, sit cross-legged on your bed, slowly bend forward and touch your forehead to the mattress. Breathe calmly in baby pose for a few minutes. Bring a gentle smile to your face and say, "I am free. I don't have to do anything. I can now rest and relax." Smile and breathe deeper. See all your worries leak away. You're your body and mind in your mind's eye.
- Smile as you feel light and free. Slowly straighten your back.
- Then place one hand on your heart and the other on your abdomen and breathe deeply. Slowly lie down and continue this deep, relaxing belly breath and drift off into deep sleep.

While cricketing may not work for everyone, for those who do find it beneficial, it can serve as an effective tool in their sleep routine. For others, you can always try the many yogasanas and pranayamas that can lead you to blissful sleep.

'EXPERIENTIAL' RESTOS BRINGING NEW LIFE TO HYDERABAD











SHRADDHA NEWARE

In Hyderabad, experiential dining is expanding quickly. More and more individuals are choosing to eat at themed restaurants, brunches and distinctive dining establishments. Themed dining is dominating people's weekends and thoughts due to the influence of social media, which tempts people to step outside of their comfort zone for an unforgettable night out!

Research indicates that contemporary restaurants are making a lot of money by focusing on offering distinctive and interesting experiences that go beyond dining. A restaurant that has embraced a certain style and infused it into its menu, design, decor and cuisine is known as a theme-based restaurant. A theme-based restaurant operates around a theme, unlike regular eateries. For instance, Greek architecture will be incorporated into the infrastructure of a restaurant that serves Greek food. The goal of themed cafés is to immerse patrons in an immersive experience that will leave a lasting impact, going beyond the traditional idea of simply serving food. The ambience of a restaurant is taken into account in themed cafés, which feature eye-catching décor, recognisable accessories and thematic designs.

In this week's FYI, let's explore the fascinating realm of experience dining and discover why it's so well-liked. With contributions from significant figures and industry professionals, we will learn more about this expanding trend!

Experienced dining restaurants frequently focus on a single idea as their major draw. The older population is also eager to try out these once-in-a-lifetime dining events, even if the younger, more adventurous group is more drawn to exciting and unique experiences. These eateries fall under the category of full-service eateries, which offer a three-course meal while dining there. An overview of a report released by Mordor Intelligence indicates that the size of the India full-service restaurant market is projected to be 34.03 billion USD in 2024 and increase at a compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of 11.67% to reach 59.09 billion USD by 2029. Dining experiences with a special theme have drawn interest from individuals looking for more than just a meal. For nearly twenty years, Vijay Kumar, Director of Food & Beverage at Taj Krishna Hyderabad and a well-known hotelier from Hyd as well, has worked in the food and beverage sector. He tells us that people in Hyd are willing to try new foods, stating that people there are constantly on the lookout for interesting new developments. "Whether it's serving up regional cuisine, foreign cuisine, or fusion food done with a unique spin," he continues, "Especially after lockdown, spending months indoors, people are looking forward to trying out new restaurants, cafes and outdoor experiences."

Owning a few experiential eating establishments in Hyderabad, such as Tansen, which combines modern and Mughal elements, Ohri's Group Owner Amar Ohri discusses the value of theming with us, saying that it "helps create memories, transport customers to a whole different world and enhances the dining experience. We have always held the belief that food, hospitality and ambience all combine to produce a really remarkable and unforgettable dining experience." The restaurant takes its cues from the great musician Tansen, whose outstanding works and inventive energy have immortalised a time and made a lasting impression on Indian classical music. "A further layer of make-believe is added by thematic narrative to improve the visitor experience. You enjoy the cuisine, the service and the setting. The deeper the eating theatre, the more genuine the ambience approach."

"By immersing diners in a creatively crafted environment, incorporating specific themes, we provide an opportunity to escape routine," says Sadgun Patha, Managing Director, Platform 65, who founded the train-themed restaurant in Hyderabad. "Entering a world of atmosphere and design not only improves the eating experience but also leaves a lasting impression." He continues, "The trend particularly appeals to young people in Hyd who are eager to explore engaging culinary adventures, offering customers a chance to enjoy memorable dining experiences beyond traditional restaurants. We want to create an immersive experience for our visitors by keeping our theme consistent across the restaurant—including in the music, uniforms and general ambiance." He claims that festivals are the busiest times of year for the train-themed eatery. "Festivals bring families together, often leading to an increase in dining out as people seek memorable culinary experiences in a festive atmosphere."

At 160 feet, Cloud Dining, a franchise of adventure-themed restaurants, serves a full meal. "It aims to provide a unique and thrilling dining experience by combining exquisite cuisine with the excitement of dining at a significant height," says Pankaj Dhingra, Managing Director, in a quick chat with us about their concept. "This idea is to offer a unique viewpoint that distinguishes it from traditional eating experiences while also fostering special encounters." The managing director also claims that their research, which is based on restaurants, shows that there is an increasing demand for experience dining—repeat customers make up 22% of their clientele.

A restaurant with a Goan theme called Fisherman's Wharf specialises in bringing a Goan feel to Hyderabad. A representative for the restaurant chain named Veleni Pereira talks with us about their philosophy of experience-driven eating, saying, "Experiences are what make a meal truly special, even though good food can be found anywhere. No matter what place they are, we want to take them to the energetic beaches of Goa."

Local themed restaurants are becoming as popular as more opulent and upscale dining establishments. Despite their differences, each restaurant offers a distinctive dining experience. The diverse population in urban areas has a wide range of alternatives. We hear from Vijay Kumar, regarding Hyderabad's culinary scene. "I think Hyderabad is the ideal market for fine dining establishments as well as neighbourhood eateries. There are people in the city who enjoy eating specialty foods, including kebabs, maras, mandi and one-pot biryanis. Conversely, some guests have sophisticated tastes and are seeking a high-end experience; they will pay for a premium meal that lives up to their expectations."

The cuisine and ambience work together to highlight a certain theme, giving the whole experience a wow effect. Planning, organising and considering what will appeal to the diners are necessary for this. We also spoke with Shiv Nirula, Managing Director of Kriaan Enterprises, an interior designer known for creating such experiential dining restos across the city, to find out more about the process of designing a themed restaurant. Setting the tone for a new themed restaurant, in his opinion, begins with delving deeply into the cultural, historical, mythological, or imaginative aspects of the topic. Next, choosing the colour palette and décor requires careful consideration of both the theme's thematic authenticity and visual appeal. "By focusing on the narrative and ensuring each element individually and wholly contributes to the story, we set a solid foundation for the restaurant's tone," the innovation and project consultant explains the technique. "The procedure entails client cooperation, mood boards, material selection and theme analysis." In addition, he states, "Creating the desired vibe involves blending visual, auditory and sensory elements such as lighting, sound design, texture of the material and spatial layout." He claims that when every sense is in balance, one can have an immersive experience.

Experiential dining is a unique concept, but it also faces a number of difficulties. It can be challenging to engage repeat customers and stay relevant in an ever-changing environment. The industry is very competitive because it is highly fragmented rather than consolidated.

Arpan Kakde, Director of Food and Beverage at The Westin Pune Koregaon Park, discusses some of these difficulties with us. "While the trend of combining food with fun through unique ambiances has many benefits, it does come with its challenges and potential drawbacks," he adds. "One significant criticism is that, while theme and setting are important aspects of any eating experience, they can occasionally take precedence over the caliber of the food and service."

"Themed dining experiences can feel gimmicky at times if they are not executed with authenticity and attention to detail," he continues. "Today's guests are perceptive and can see the difference between a forced or flimsy theme and one that has been carefully considered."

Hyderabad has seen the emergence of a few distinctive themed eateries in recent years. To pique people's curiosity from the moment they come in, each one has been artistically designed. Still, there are a handful of eateries in Hyderabad that are just must-go-tos.

- One of the oldest and most well-known themed restaurants in the city is Ohri's Gufaa. The restaurant's interior decor, with its rough walls and dim lighting, is evocative of cave interiors and the stone age.
- Sahib Sindh Sultan, or Journey 1853, is the name of the eatery. You're transported back to 1853. At the rail-themed restaurant Journey 1853, you may enjoy a distinctive dining experience in a restored pre-independence train coach.
- A team of blue and white robots staffs the Robo Kitchen, ready to serve patrons at the push of a button. To make an order, a patron simply needs to utilise the electronic device provided by the restaurant and automated food delivery robots will take care of the rest.
- Beach House is a restaurant with an exciting beach motif that Hyderabad's beach enthusiasts can't wait to dine at. This beach-themed restaurant is worth checking out if you're in Hyderabad, enjoy the beach, or are looking for something different to eat.

THEMED BRUNCHES

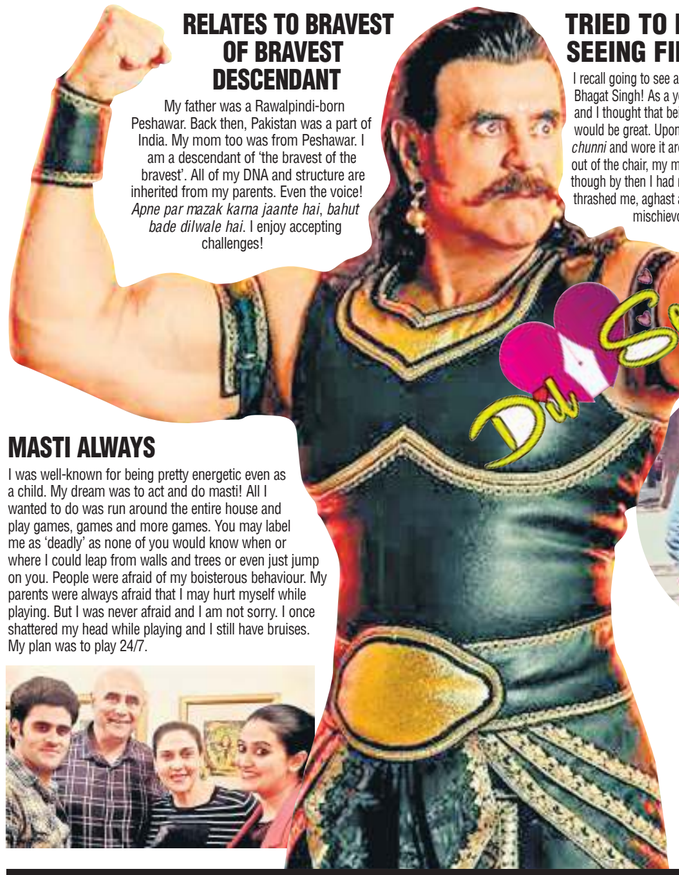
While it used to be customary to unwind on Sundays, having brunch with loved ones is becoming more and more popular. Sunday brunch events provide a spike in visitation for many hotels. Speaking with us about themed Sunday brunches is Robin Sahay, Manager of Food and Beverages at the Sheraton Hyderabad Hotel. He says, "These brunches are thoughtfully curated to provide both culinary delight and entertainment for guests of all ages. The diversity and inventiveness are highlighted by themes such as Grand Summer Brunch, Tropical Brunch and Surf & Turf." He adds, "Intense activities like cupcake-making offer entertaining and participatory fun, guaranteeing that younger guests are equally delighted, while "Sip and Paint" allows adults to relax and unleash their creative side."

BADDIE ON SCREEN, BUDDY ELSEWHERE

In real life, an actor may come across as the striking contrast of how they are stereotyped in films. That is precisely the case with Puneet Issar, a hard-boiled on-screen baddie who has won the hearts of people from all walks of life while wearing multiple hats as actor, writer, director, producer and more. All in all, he has made a lasting impression with his superb performances in daily soap operas and movies in a variety of languages. His career in entertainment started in 1983 when he played a villain in Manmohan Desai's film *Coolie*. However, he gained nationwide popularity for his role as *Duryodhan* in BR Chopra's television series *Mahabharat*. Subsequently, Issar starred in a number of well-known movies such as *Ready*, *Son of Sardaar*, *Chandra Mukhi*, *Prem Shakti*, *Ram Jaane*, *Border*, *Refugee*, *Krrish*, *Bachna Ae Haseeno* and *The Kashmir Files*. His debut feature film as a director was *Garv*, a police drama starring Salman Khan, for which he co-wrote the screenplay with his spouse Deepali. His acting prowess has been appreciated much down south as well because of the versatile and challenging roles he played in films such as *Yoddha* (Malayalam), *I Love India* (Tamil), *Samrat* (Kannada), *Master*, *Allari Pidugu*, *Narasimhudu*, *Chandrahas* and *Gautama Buddha* (Telugu), to mention a few. In fact, the only image that comes to mind when we hear the name Duryodhan is the visage of Puneet Issar. It is nearly hard to imagine anyone else playing the part than him. In a conversation with ***The Pioneer***'s **Shikha Duggal**, Puneet Issar goes down the memory lane to shed light on his life of *masti* from childhood, how bravery runs in his family making him mimic Bhagat Singh as a youngster, painful moments of unwittingly injuring Big B on the sets of *Coolie* and more.

RELATES TO BRAVEST OF BRAVEST DESCENDANT

My father was a Rawalpindi-born Peshawar. Back then, Pakistan was a part of India. My mom too was from Peshawar. I am a descendant of 'the bravest of the bravest'. All of my DNA and structure are inherited from my parents. Even the voice! *Apne par mazak karna jaante hai, bahut bade dilwale hai*. I enjoy accepting challenges!



MASTI ALWAYS

I was well-known for being pretty energetic even as a child. My dream was to act and do masti! All I wanted to do was run around the entire house and play games, games and more games. You may label me as 'deadly' as none of you would know when or where I could leap from walls and trees or even just jump on you. People were afraid of my boisterous behaviour. My parents were always afraid that I may hurt myself while playing. But I was never afraid and I am not sorry. I once shattered my head while playing and I still have bruises. My plan was to play 24/7.



TRIED TO HANG HIMSELF AFTER SEEING FILM ON BHAGAT SINGH

I recall going to see an action movie in which actor Manoj Kumar played Bhagat Singh! As a youngster, I was deeply influenced by the film and I thought that being hanged and dying for my country would be great. Upon returning home, I took my mother's *chunni* and wore it around my neck. As I was about to leap out of the chair, my mother intervened and stopped me, though by then I had nearly choked myself. She thrashed me, aghast at how incredibly mischievous I was!



PUNJABI BLOOD

I have Punjabi blood flowing in me. I am accustomed to living in wide spaces and *khets*. I have *Punjabiyat* in everything, from eating to fighting. I adore speaking in my mother tongue. At one point of time, my dream was to enlist in the army. Films somehow had a deeper impact on me. I became involved in martial arts and ended up being an excellent athlete as well.

GOT INTO FIGHTS IN COLLEGE

My roots are in Punjab, though I was born and raised in Mumbai. I completed my acting course and won a gold medal. I then went on to work for nearly three years as a speech and diction lecturer in an acting studio. I used to receive grace marks because I was such an excellent student, but *masti zyada*. (He laughs) Because of my martial arts training, I was also heavily involved in fighting during those inter-college brawls. Today, my wife is the rock of my life. She has helped me to relax a lot, though I had constantly been in the mood of a goon (laughd again). In our house, she is the most rational person. I suppose that I am somewhat mellowed now due to her.



SANAM BEWAFA IS TIMELESS

The movie *Sanam Bewafa* is timeless. What really turned the movie into a smash blockbuster was Salman Khan's charisma and Mahesh-Kishor's soundtrack. In addition, the plot had an emotional resonance with the audience and some excellent dialogues. Larger-than-life characters and some excellent performances were also present and everything came together perfectly. People were curious about Puneet Issar's performance in the movie after I played Duryodhan in it. I remember the movie quite well. There was a joyful companionship both on and off the set with Salman. We had a really strong formula. We used to train and work out together. He used to hang around the set when he was filming and I would hang out with him during my scenes. In that movie, I had a dance number and I still remember Salman saying, "Punz, great job." When we would come on screen, people would throw pennies at the screen and whistle and dance to the music. This was something we used to witness when we went to Gaiety Galaxy.

CALLED 'DUSHT'

Chopra *saab* believed that my 6'3" frame and extreme fitness made me the ideal choice for the character of Bheem. I wanted to play Duryodhan because I had read *Mahabharat*. He accepted my casting as Duryodhan, but with the caveat that I would have to play Bheem if they could not locate a man who was physically larger than me. I suggested 6'8" gold medallist Praveen Kumar for the character of Bheem and I was finally able to relax when he was cast. In front of Chopra *saab*, I had recited the Jayadrath Vadh and my persuasive speech had won them over. Duryoydhan's character development was well-developed. People disliked me and called me 'dusht (evil)', but I regarded it as praise. Off-set, I had numerous instances of folks refusing to call me because they thought I was 'dusht'.





STILL KNOWN AS DURYODHAN

Twenty-eight years ago, I was the young prince, Duryodhan. I am still known by people as Duryodhan. I was fascinated when I learned about the play the previous year. After play, I hope to be remembered as Raavan. The audience gets to choose between Ram and Raavan at the play's conclusion. Folklore is the legacy of the victims' written history. The drama is written in verse throughout. I studied them all over the course of eight months. In prose, you can express something different in the same context even if you miss a sentence. However, because it was all poetry, it was extremely difficult to recall the lines.

BLACK & BLUE BODY WHILE SHOOTING

My encounter with Praveen Kumar was difficult. He was not an actor; instead, he won two gold medals in the Asian Games discus throw competition. When I would utter the line '*aur balpurvak* (with more strength)', Praveen would beat me up with even more strength. In addition, the mace back then was far heavier than the foam mace that is used nowadays. After the shot, my whole body used to become blue and black. The last battle was filmed over the course of 18 days. My entire body was covered with bruises. However, as they say, "you can't make an omelette if you don't crack an egg." After we signed in 1986, the casting process lasted for a further two years. I began reading about Duryodhan in scriptures when I was first chosen for the part. I had to give up kung fu, karate in order to put on weight so that I can play Duryodhan, even though I had six-pack abs. To catch up with Praveen Kumar, I put on 22 kg in two years and reached 108 kg. It looks irreplaceable even now because there was so much thought and preparation, and it made a huge difference.





10,000 TV EPISODES, 500 FILMS AND COUNTING

I have collaborated with some of the best producers in the industry, most notably Raj Kapoor. I cherished viewing movies directed by Vijay Anand, Satyajit Ray and Manmohan Desai. Incidentally, Manmohan Desai, whom I used to endearingly refer to as 'Manji', was the one who, ironically, gave me a chance in *Coolie* alongside Amitabh Bachchan! He thrust me into the spotlight. I unintentionally hurt Bachchan during that encounter and the rest is history. I went through a difficult time too. I gained attention once more when I played a major role in the *Mahabharat* series and I went on to star in 500 movies. I have also worked in movies made in the south. I had a Telugu film cast with Chiranjeevi, a Tamil superhit with Rajnikanth and Malayalam flicks with Mohanlal. With Chiranjeevi, I worked on nearly three blockbusters! I have 10,000 television episodes to my name. Thus, 42 years have been spent in this industry. I began in 1982 and am still going strong in 2024.





THINGS WENT AWRY IN DEBUT FILM

I can still clearly recall the *Coolie* episode. It was an action scene that we were filming in Bemgaluru way back in 1982. Bachchan was meant to throw several punches at me and I was supposed to return the favour. We practiced a little bit. Our seven or so rehearsals went quite well. But Amitji would always pause at the table during the rehearsals. When the real take occurred, Amitji was far tenser. As instructed, I (mock) hit him and tossed him onto the table. However, Amitji leaped, turned around and tumbled off the table. *Mujhe lag gayi hai*, Amitji said. There was guilt at first. After all, this was my first movie. Bachchan then remarked reassuringly, 'Calm down, these things happen while shooting'. It was only a practice fight. Then he rose and walked away. After that, we kept shooting. We became anxious when he failed to show up for the shooting the following day. At the time of the accident, we were unaware of how bad it was. The situation concerning Bachchan was only becoming worse. The procedure required 72 hours. He is an amazing man. After visiting Bachchan at Breach Candy Hospital, my spouse gave blood for him. I was terrified and believed I was to blame for everything that had occurred. I was paranoid since the press had written a lot of negative things about me. Bachchan was almost divine. He told me, 'Puneet, relax, I experienced it too'. It happened by mistake. You meant no harm. The media treated me as though I were some sort of Nathuram Godse. However, Jayaji and his whole family were all very kind to us. I was thrilled for Manmohan Desai and Amitabh Bachchan since *Coolie* was a huge hit. However, it was not beneficial to me on the professional front for some time. I was almost a social pariah. I became a monster larger than life because of the press. Despite my fourth-degree black belt in martial arts, all of these advantages turned into disadvantages for me. For three or four years, I was unemployed. After that accident, I fought for six years before others began to come forward to collaborate with me. I was cast as Duryodhan in the *Mahabharata* television series by B R Chopra.

CAN'T STOP, WON'T STOP

At fifty-six, I became a contestant of *Bigg Boss*. I had a lengthy season there! I was also a finalist. Upon leaving that house, I promptly reenrolled in theatre classes. I performed in a lot of plays after that. Even so, I co-wrote, co-directed and co-produced those plays. I have been touring the world with these plays. I love to explore every new narrative that I can adapt into a play for an audience; so, I won't stop. I am even going to write an OTT script!

LOOKING BACK ON FILMING OF *VANSHAJ*

I was excited about the filming of *Vanshaj* because it was a really well-made show with excellent dialogues. This is not your average, everyday television show. I was meant to battle for the dynasty that I adore! I now consider the cast to be almost like family since I enjoy it when my fellow actors are willing to have conversations. If we all decide to disagree, that is acceptable. There is always a really upbeat vibe about it.

WHEN HE SHOT WITHOUT VFXS

In order to obtain hundreds of meters of fabric without any obvious seams or variations in texture or colour, BR Chopra had gotten in touch with a mill. Nowadays, VFX is used for everything. We encountered numerous challenges. It was a mission to assemble genuine horses and elephants and get them to form a line. These days, portraying a large army involves shooting against a green background. It was difficult to run with 50-60 elephants in chariots while we were shooting. It used to take a long time for a single shot. Just the final scene took 15-25 days to shoot. We had to take concrete steps. In the past, there was no cable work, thus we had to jump without the assistance of a stunt double. There were a lot of injuries and many people had their eyes hurt by flying arrows, as I recall.

ALTERING SALMAN KHAN'S PERSONA

One other proud event was working with Salman Khan to direct *Garv*. I went up to him with a prepared script! He has spent the last 40 years as a friend. Salman, I'd want to adjust your 'image' a little bit, I informed him rather honestly as he had a constant taste for comedies and romance films! I was the first to work with him on an action movie. In our industry, playing a police officer completely altered his reputation. I created three additional films after *Garv*. I produced a film advocating for the rights of Sikhs in the United States. It went on to become a very popular movie.



NOT GUILTY OF BEING PAPPED

My job is to work for the flashlights. It is not a source of shame. Paparazzi is unquestionably significant to our business. Why not pay attention? However, as an experienced performer, I have discovered that this spotlight is fleeting.

LOVE FLOODING IN ACROSS GLOBE

When I was in New Zealand a while back, some Indian fans there began referring to me by my character name in a whole other nation. They were gushing about me and saying, "We love you!" Not limited to New Zealand; San Francisco included. That is a series' power.

PUNEET ISSAR VS NASEERUDDIN SHAH

Naseeruddin Shah is a loose gun and the biggest moron there is. I think he is a fantastic performer. His remarks are completely inappropriate. He has got verbal diarrhea. Rajesh Khanna has also been ridiculed by him. Someone ought to go tell him that the box office takings of Khanna's movies that failed has surpassed his lifetime earnings as well. *The Kashmir Files* has been highly received by the public and has performed admirably on its own. You must concede the audience's judgment. And why did he work on *Jalwa* and other similar movies if he detests going to commercial theatres so much? The voice of the people is God's voice.

ADAPTING TO CHANGING TIMES



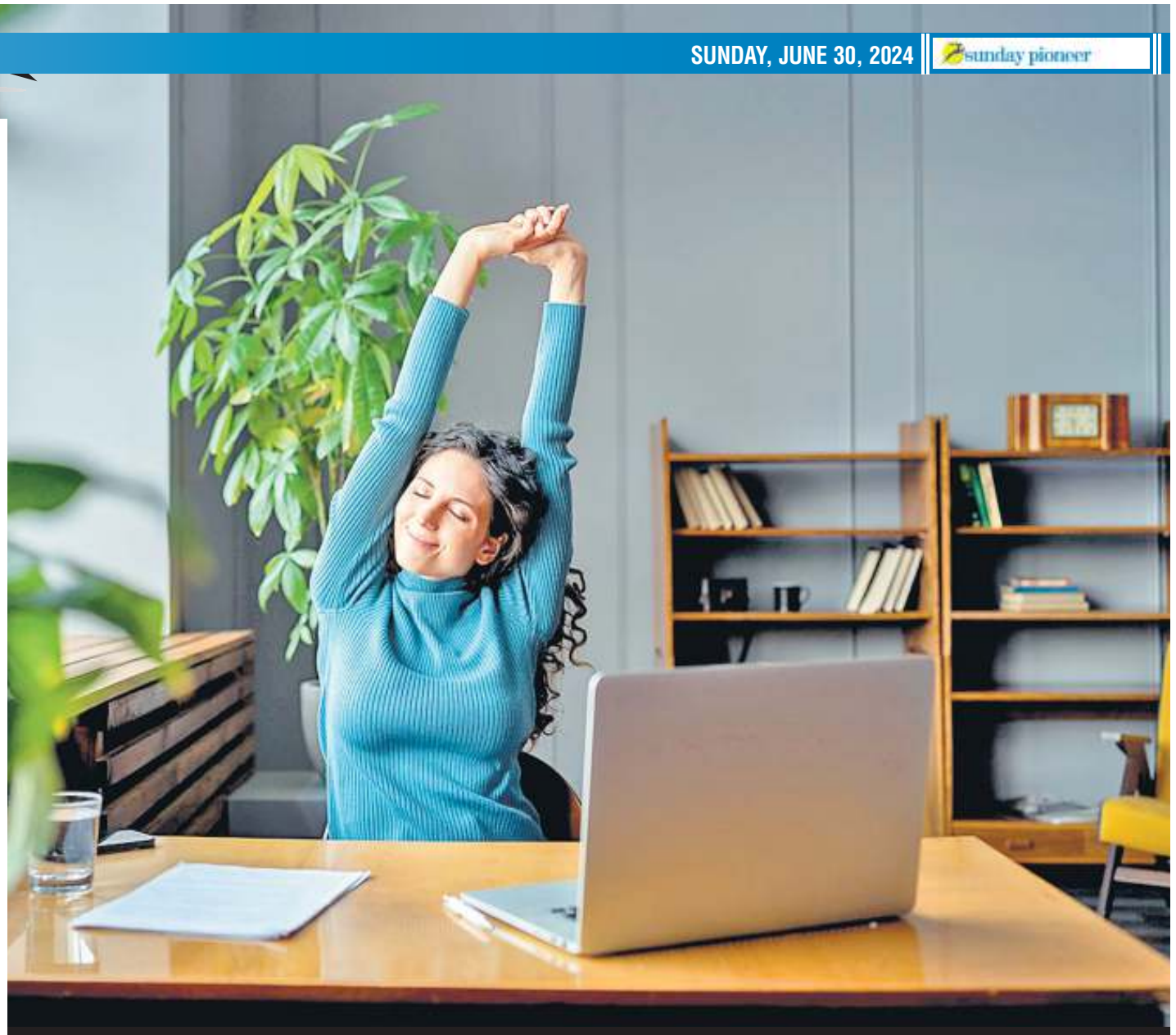
I had to adapt to the changing times. Never did I adhere to my image. I broke it all the time. For this reason, the other *Mahabharat* performers appear to be *woh wahi pe reh gaye hain, ussi jagah pe hain, 30 saal purane jagah pe hain*. But I kept changing my reputation. That is the reason I am still employed. In addition to playing villains in numerous movies, I also performed as an army guy named *Zinda Dil* in the 1997 film *Border*. During my career, I switched my modes. In 2015, I made my stage debut in *Raavna ki Ramayan*. Going on a reality show was a significant shift for me. I also created and oversaw a play that tells the story of *Mahabharat* from Duryodhan's point of view. I enjoy taking on new tasks and venturing into uncharted territory. It is necessary to adjust and adjust to the newest generation and methods. The craft of acting remains constant, though the methods employed vary. These days, people want performers to act in a really natural way. Jingoism and extra dialogue pauses are unnecessary. It now concerns the way we typically converse in a conversation. I had to make these adjustments and tweaks and I succeeded.

HOBBIES

I love lifting weights and practicing martial arts. I am not deterred by my age! My fans will be shocked to hear that I also truly enjoy drawing. I find that even cooking at home is quite restorative. I even enjoy attending movie premieres.

RAPID FIRE

The latest thing you discovered about yourself: That I can reinvent myself at any age
Fav movie: *Border*
Fav memory: Receiving a letter from the Prime Minister of India for my serial, personal heartfelt letter to me. I will cherish it forever
Fav country: India, especially Mumbai
Directors who inspire him: Only Sanjay Leela Bhansali



How are CEOs cultivating a workplace focused on employee mental wellbeing?

For too long, the corporate world has overlooked the importance of mental well-being in the workplace. The old mentality was that employees should leave their personal problems at home and just power through their work duties, no matter what mental health challenges they might be facing. It has become obvious now that an unhappy, stressed person will not be able to even complete his work in an efficient and timely manner. Thus, forward-thinking companies are now embracing a more holistic approach where mental health is not only supported but actively cultivated as a core part of their culture and benefits.

High costs of ignoring mental health

Workers and businesses alike are facing a notable rise in mental health issues such as depression, anxiety, and substance use disorder among employees. According to a 2023 Business Group on Health survey, in 2022, 44% of employers observed a surge in these concerns, but that number jumped to 77% in 2023, with 16% of employers expecting a further increase in the future. Neglecting workplace mental health initiatives presents significant business risks. According to the World Health Organization, depression and anxiety alone cost the global workforce approximately $1 trillion each year in lost productivity.

A survey conducted across 4 lac people mentioned that in India, more than half of the respondents (50.7 percent) in the age group of 18–24 years were distressed and struggling mentally. This number stood at 42.9 percent in the age group of 25–34 years, 28.7 percent for those between 35 and 44 years, and 17.6 percent in the age group of 45–54 years.

But apart from the numbers, it is also a question for us as a society: are we doing enough to handle the mental health side-effects of the cultural and economic shift our country and society are going through?

Multifaceted approach to supporting mental wellness

Opening the dialogue: The first step for the CEO and management team is to open up an honest dialogue about mental health in the workplace and work to destigmatize the issue. Many CEOs are doing this by sharing their own experiences with mental health, offering training to help managers identify potential mental health struggles in employees, and hosting company-wide sessions focused on mental health education, yoga and meditation. The goal is to create an environment where employees feel safe to be open and vulnerable about their mental well-being without fear of repercussions and are also motivated enough to take corrective steps in the right direction.

Prioritising work-life balance: Excessive working hours, a lack of boundaries, and the inability to unplug are major contributors to burnout, anxiety, and depression. As such, CEOs are establishing policies and norms aimed at giving employees a true work-life balance. This includes offering hybrid office work days, ensuring official communication happens mostly during working hours and going on company outings to experience nature and leisure. By giving employees back control of their personal time, the hope is that they can recharge and find more equilibrium.

Expanding mental health resources: Beyond just fostering dialogue and promoting balance, many CEOs are bolstering their companies' mental health resources and support. Common offerings now include providing all employees access to meditation and yoga tools, including apps, videos and training sessions; partial or full reimbursements for mental health boosting programs like meditation and yoga courses; or counseling sessions. By making mental health resources readily available and affordable, CEOs remove barriers to employees getting the help and support they need. Some companies do take additional detailed steps for employee well-being, such as counseling sessions and additional leaves on a case-by-case basis where employees might be facing severe mental health issues or are facing negative situations in their surroundings or family.

Nurturing friendships within team members: This is the most overlooked aspect of mental well-being at a company. It is a natural human tendency to feel happy and satisfied when they are working and having lunch or tea with their friends, not just workmates. The notion that you cannot have friends at the workplace needs serious questioning, and a friendly environment to communicate freely is what makes people stick longer with a company. The CEO's responsibility is to ensure that any hierarchy in the company doesn't result in oppression and that there are enough work and non-work initiatives that require small teams to work together, while also helping them to foster long-term friendships.

Leading through vulnerability: In companies taking mental wellness seriously, the CEO is setting the example by exhibiting vulnerability. Executives and managers are openly discussing their personal experiences and steps on negating mental health issues, emphasising the importance of being responsible for caring for oneself and team members and making it clear that prioritising mental health is not just allowed but expected. The message is that success does not have to come at the expense of personal well-being. Rather, taking care of one's mental health is viewed as essential to bringing one's best self to work each day.

An ongoing cultural shift

However, company leaders acknowledge that establishing a culture of mental wellness is an ongoing journey, not a simple check-box initiative. "Changing deeply-rooted mindsets takes consistent effort over time. While progress still needs to be made across most industries, the rising focus on employee mental health signals an important shift in how companies view their role in supporting their people's overall well-being. Successful businesses are realizing that prioritising mental wellness is not just the right thing to do but a strategic imperative for long-term growth and sustainability.

INDULGE IN MANGO DELIGHTS!

The delectable taste of mangoes is one of the most looked forward to summertime pleasures. Godrej offers some easy mango-infused recipes that anyone can create at home in the microwave oven to make the most of this seasonal fruit. Savour the delicious moistness of mango cake or the happy snacking sensation of Mango Cookies. Savour the fragrant *Mango Halwa* or indulge in the creamy richness of *Mango Kheer* for a flavour of tradition. Infuse your kitchen with the essence of mangoes and enhance your summertime cooking adventures with your loved ones.



MANGO CAKE

INGREDIENTS

- 1/2 cup Melted Butter
- 1/2 cup Powder Sugar
- 2 Eggs (Optional)
- 1 cup Mango Pulp
- 1½ cup Sieved Maida
- ½ tsp Baking Powder
- ½ tsp Baking Soda
- ½ cup Milk

METHOD OF PREPARATION:

Step 1: Take a mixing bowl, add butter, powdered sugar, mango pulp, eggs (optional), and whisk all these ingredients well. Now add milk, and again mix it well. Then add the sieved flour mixture to it and mix gently till it becomes a creamy smooth batter without any lumps.

Step 2: Now transfer the batter to the lightly greased cake tin. And tap it twice to remove air bubbles if a place the cake tin on the low grill rack outside the microwave oven.

Step 3: Preheat the oven at 180 □C for 4 minutes in the microwave convection mode.

Step 4: Now keep the cake tin placed on a low grill rack inside the pre-heated microwave oven and let it bake for another 25 minutes or until a toothpick inserted in the middle of the cake comes out clean. If it is still sticky, then bake for 3-5 minutes more.

Step 4: Let the cake cool down in the cake tin for 5-10 mins. Your soft and delicious mango cake is ready!

Preparation Time: 10 Minutes

Cooking Time: 30 Minutes

MANGO COOKIES

INGREDIENTS

- 1 ½ cupMaida
- ½ cupPowderSugar
- ½ cupButter
- 1 cupMango Pulp
- 2 tsp Besan
- ½ tsp Baking Powder

METHOD OF PREPARATION:

Step 1: Take a mixing bowl, add butter, sugar & mango pulp and mix it well till it becomes a creamy and fluffy texture.

Step 2: Add maida, followed by besan & baking powder to this mixture and make a dough out of it.

Step 3: Make medium-sized balls & arrange them on a crusty plate, place the plate on the high grill rack and keep it in the microwave oven.

Step 4: Select convection mode in the microwave oven at 170□C temperature, set time for 8 minutes, and press start. If the quantity is more, bake it for 3-4 more minutes.

Step 5: Take it out from the microwave oven, set it to cool, and serve.

Preparation Time: 10 Minutes

Cooking Time: 12 Minutes





MANGO HALWA

INGREDIENTS

- 1 cup Suji – Roasted
- 1 cupMilk
- 1 cupMango Puree
- 1 cup Sugar
- ½ cupGhee
- ½ tspCardamom Powder
- 6 Cashews Chopped
- 6 Almonds Chopped
- 6 Raisins Few
- Water as Required

METHOD OF PREPARATION:

Step 1: Take a microwave oven safe bowl, add suji, sugar, milk, water and mix well.

Step 2: Select macro mode on high power, set time for 4 minutes and press start to cook.

Step 3: When the microwave oven beeps, remove and add ghee, mango puree, cardamom, cashew, almonds, and raisins. Mix it well and cook again for 3 minutes.

Step 4: Take it out, place it in a serving bowl and you can relish it while it's hot.

Preparation Time: 10 Minutes

Cooking Time: 8 Minutes

MANGO KHEER

INGREDIENTS

- 1 cupSeviya (Roasted)
- 4 cupsMilk
- ½ cupSugar
- 1 cupMango Puree
- 1 cupCondensed Milk
- 1½ tbsp Raisins
- 1½ tbspCashew Nut Pieces (Roasted)
- 1½ tbspAlmonds (Roasted)
- A Pinch ofPowdered Elaichi (Cardamom)

METHOD OF PREPARATION:

Step 1: Take a microwave oven-safe bowl, add roasted seviya, milk, sugar and mix it well.

Step 2: Place the bowl on the turntable in the microwave oven. Select Macro mode on high power (P-100), set time for 6 minutes and press start to boil the milk and seviya.

Step 3: When the oven beeps, remove the bowl and add to it the mango puree, condensed milk, raisins, cashew, almonds, cardamom powder and mix it well.

Step 4: Cook again for 4 minutes. Once done you can serve it hot.

Preparation Time: 8 Minutes

Cooking Time: 10 Minutes





PTK-8000 4K VIDEO BAR FOR VIDEO CONFERENCING

Aiming to revolutionise video conferencing, SOLITAIRE announces the launch of the PTK-8000 4K Video Bar. This product is the first of its kind in India to feature advanced AI-enabled human gesture control within the 4K video bar category. Designed specifically for the Indian and South Asian markets, it offers an exceptional blend of value and affordability.

SET ME UP HYDRATING SETTING SPRAY

Type Beauty Inc. recently launched three different variants with the properties of hydrating, brightening, and mattifying. All of them are lightweight mists that can be used to prep your bare skin and set your makeup for up to 12 hours. Also contains Korean sunscreen filters that provide SPF 35 sun protection. This setting spray is infused with micro pearls, which leave the skin looking dewy and juicy all day long.

MRP: RS 799





MERGING THE TIMELESS ALLURE OF DIAMONDS AND GOLD

Darshanaa Sanjanaa Jewellers merges the timeless allure of diamonds and gold with a refreshing touch of innovation. Whether you are looking for a statement necklace, a pair of elegant earrings, or a stunning bracelet, their innovative showcase offers a diverse range of choices that cater to every taste and occasion.



COOLBERG

Raise a glass to your dad with Coolberg, a non-alcoholic drink in a variety of intriguing flavours such as cranberry, ginger, lemon, peach, strawberry and mint, all made with natural, preservative-free ingredients. Whether he prefers fruity flavours or the zing of ginger and lemon, it has something to suit everyone's taste preference.

Price: INR 534 for a pack of 6 bottles

ESSENTIAL OILS

During menstruation, superwomen experience severe period cramps and mood swings. And such menstrual symptoms can hamper their productivity and disrupt their mental peace, however, using essential oils can give you a sigh of relief and lighten the mood. Such essential oils are infused with various ingredients, such as lavender, jojoba, ginger, rosemary, peppermint and so on.

Price: INR 900 for 2 pcs





MDE480 WIRELESS NECKBAND WITH DUAL PAIRING

The MDE480 wireless neckband is perfect for enjoying audio entertainment on the go without costing a fortune. Its ENC function delivers crystal-clear vocals and powerful sound, immersing the user in their music, podcast, game, or conversation. The user can seamlessly switch between devices using the dual pairing feature while also enjoying uninterrupted listening because of its impressive standby time of 1600 hours and talk time of 18 hours.



GIVE YOUR BABY VIRGIN COCONUT OIL-BASED PRODUCTS

Parachute Advansed baby massage oil, enriched with virgin coconut oil, which contains nutrients found in mother's milk, has been tested and found to be safe and clinically proven to help your baby achieve better height and weight gain. A massage with nourishing oil thus offers more benefits than simple touch therapy, enhancing skin barrier function and thermoregulation while positively impacting growth, bone strength, muscle development and neurodevelopment.

CRICUT JOY MACHINE

Introducing the Cricut Joy Machine, your compact and portable DIY companion for unleashing your creativity anytime, anywhere. This innovative cutting machine is designed for beginners and DIY enthusiasts. With the ability to cut over 50 materials with ease, including cardstock, vinyl decals, and iron-on, it offers precise and intricate cuts for a variety of crafting projects. Whether you're personalising, organising, or customising, this smart cutter delivers exceptional results every time.



VEG4U

Shamita Shetty embraces indulgence for Veg4U. She has been announced as the brand ambassador for Veg4U, a revolutionary plant-based brand on a mission to bridge the gap between convenience and well-being. Veg4U offers a range of delicious and nutritious products, ensuring that every bite is a delight for the palate and a nourishment for the body.





Financing solutions for healthcare industry

One of the biggest challenges faced by the healthcare industry in India, especially, has been balancing the costs of cutting-edge medical infrastructure, advanced facilities, infrastructure and healthcare services with the financial realities of the majority of patients. According to a recent WHO report, more than 55 million people are pushed back into poverty every year because of catastrophic health expenses, which affect 17% of households in India. Additionally, only 10% of the population has medical insurance, leaving financial protection against medical expenses largely inadequate for most people. This burden is especially harsh for individuals living below the poverty line in rural areas, who frequently cannot access necessary healthcare services because of financial limitations.

The main challenges faced by the healthcare sector are the high out-of-pocket expenditure incurred by patients, the burgeoning uninsured population that will go bankrupt in a second if a medical emergency befalls, as well as the strain on healthcare providers to manage rising costs while maintaining quality care. We have seen time and again that traditional financing options fail to meet the specific demands of a complex industry like healthcare.

These conventional methods often lack the flexibility needed to address the unique financial challenges within the sector. Hence, there is a pressing need for tailor-made, custom financing solutions that can alleviate the financial burdens on patients, promote affordability and accessibility, without compromising on the level of care received, and without causing significant losses to the healthcare provider.

There are opportunities to enhance health financing in India. One such opportunity lies in leveraging technology to enhance healthcare delivery and lower costs using fintech. The growth of fintech in the healthcare industry is fuelled by technological progress and changing regulatory environments. With the global market for healthcare financing solutions expected to hit $249.65 billion by 2030, vertical financing is becoming a key trend within this segment, addressing the rising need for accessible and affordable healthcare financing. What is vertical lending?

Vertical financing, a specialty of Fintech 2.0, provides healthcare providers and patients with financial solutions designed specifically for their needs. Vertical financing goes beyond simply providing money. It integrates seamlessly with core healthcare processes. Imagine a system that optimises inventory management for pharmacies or streamlines billing for hospitals. Fintech 2.0 solutions can do just that, empowering healthcare providers to run their businesses more efficiently.

Vertical financing leverages healthcare data to make smarter choices. This data helps lenders assess risk, prevent fraud, and offer customised loan products. By using healthcare-specific data and AI models, lenders can gain a deeper understanding of potential risks and make informed decisions. This not only reduces the cost of capital but also minimises defaults.

The combination of AI, blockchain and advanced analytics in Fintech 2.0 creates a dynamic financing approach. Digital interfaces and personalised lending options make healthcare financing more inclusive and convenient. Technology enables instant loan approvals and disbursements, ensuring patients have immediate access to funds for unexpected medical expenses. Forget the traditional model with endless paperwork and multiple departments. Vertical financing brings patients, hospitals, and lenders together under one roof, creating a smooth and collaborative healthcare journey.

Several technological advancements have facilitated the rise of vertical finance in healthcare. The digitisation of financial services, for instance, has streamlined processes, making it easier for patients and providers to access and manage loans. Know Your Customer (KYC) protocols, enhanced through technology, ensure secure and efficient verification processes. Additionally, the increasing accessibility of PAN cards and bank accounts has broadened the financial inclusion of the population, enabling more individuals to participate in the formal financial system and benefit from vertical lending solutions.Industry reports suggest the global vertical healthcare lending market is expected to reach a staggering USD 322.2 billion by 2027, growing at a compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of 22.4%. This explosive growth signifies the immense demand for tailored financial solutions in healthcare. Recognising this opportunity, a multitude of Indian companies are entering the fray. From established financial institutions developing specialised healthcare lending arms to fintech startups with a laser focus on specific patient needs, the market is teeming with innovation. While global figures paint a promising picture, the Indian vertical healthcare lending market is also experiencing significant growth. Although concrete figures are yet to be established, industry estimates suggest it could reach a value of USD 10–15 billion by 2025.

Embedded finance, where financial services are seamlessly integrated into existing platforms, is further democratising access to healthcare financing. Imagine scheduling a doctor's appointment and receiving an instant financing option for the visit directly within the booking app. This eliminates the need for separate loan applications and simplifies the process for patients.

The future scope of vertical financing is nothing short of transformative. The ultimate vision is to create a system where every citizen, regardless of income or background, has access to essential healthcare services. Vertical financing, with its ability to offer personalised and affordable loan options, can bridge the financial gap for many who might otherwise struggle to afford treatment. Imagine a seamless healthcare journey where financing seamlessly integrates with appointments, billing, and claims processing. Technology will play a crucial role in streamlining these processes and ensuring a stress-free financial experience for patients.

By making healthcare more accessible, vertical financing contributes to a healthier nation. Early diagnosis and treatment become more achievable, leading to better health outcomes for the population as a whole. A healthy nation translates to a more productive workforce and a stronger economy.

(The author, Gaurav Gupta, is the co-founder and CEO of CarePay.)

MOST POWERFUL NUMBERS IN NUMEROLOGY

In numerology, there isn't a single number that is universally considered the most powerful. Different numbers hold different meanings and significance based on the context and individual beliefs.

1. Number 1: This number is associated with leadership, independence and new beginnings. It is often seen as a powerful and strong number in numerology.

2. Number 7: The number 7 is considered mystical and spiritual in many cultures. It is associated with wisdom, intuition and introspection.

3. Number 11: Known as a master number, 11 is associated with spiritual enlightenment, intuition and creativity. It is considered a powerful number that carries a high vibration.

4. Number 22: Another master number, 22 is associated with the ability to turn dreams into reality through hard work and practicality. It is often seen as a powerful number for manifesting goals and ambitions.

5. Number 33: This is the highest master number and is often referred to as the "Master Teacher." Number 33 is associated with compassion, healing and spiritual guidance.

These are just a few examples of numbers often considered powerful in numerology. However, the power and significance of numbers can vary depending on the context and the beliefs of the individual practising numerology.

On the other hand, some believe that the number 22 is the most powerful in numerology due to its potential for manifesting positive change. This belief is based on several factors, including the symbolism of the number 22, its relationship to the Tarot card "The Fool," and its role as a master number.

The number 22 is associated with mastery, manifestation, and creation. It is believed to represent the highest level of accomplishment and the ability to manifest goals and desires in the physical world. This symbolism is reflected in the Tarot card "The Fool," which is traditionally associated with the number 0 (representing infinite potential) but is also sometimes associated with the number 22. In this context, the number 22 represents the Fool's journey of self-discovery and transformation as he embarks on a path of creative expression and manifestation.

In numerology, the number 22 is also considered a master number, along with 11 and 33. Master numbers are believed to possess special significance and power, representing a higher level of consciousness and spiritual awareness. The number 22 is often associated with the concept of the "Master Builder," representing the ability to create structures and systems that can change the world. This could be anything from a physical building to a new social or political system, or even a spiritual or philosophical framework.

One reason why the number 22 is considered so powerful is its relationship to the four elements: earth, air, fire, and water. These elements are often associated with the four suits of the Tarot: pentacles, swords, wands, and cups. The number 22 is believed to represent the integration of these elements, as it is the sum of the first four numbers (1+2+3+4=10, and 1+0=1). This integration is thought to give the number 22 a unique power and ability to manifest change in the physical world.

In addition to its symbolism and numerological significance, the number 22 is also associated with various famous people and events throughout history. For example, the 22 Major Arcana cards of the Tarot are seen as a symbolic representation of the hero's journey, as depicted in the works of Joseph Campbell and other mythologists. Similarly, the 22 letters of the Hebrew alphabet are believed to represent the building blocks of creation, while the 22 paths on the Kabbalistic Tree of Life represent the various stages of spiritual development and attainment.

Ultimately, the power of the number 22 in numerology is a matter of belief and interpretation. While some see it as a potent force for positive change, others view it as simply another number with no special significance. Regardless of one's beliefs, the enduring fascination and mystery surrounding the number 22 inspire and captivate the human imagination.



(The author Dr Gunja Mehta Ahuja, is a psychic reader on coto.)

YOUR WEEK AHEAD

clickastro

ARIES

Avoid relationship drama and conflicts with siblings; relax and enjoy the fruits of your labour. Stay humble and flexible. Be practical when helping your children.

TAURUS

Your humour attracts others. Be gentle under pressure and avoid overreacting. Humility and patience will aid progress. Socialising will bring romantic moments.

GEMINI

You'll meet someone attractive; be persistent. Projects will succeed with unexpected financial help. Avoid criticism with children. Stay charming and adaptable.

CANCER

Hard work pays off, but you need to stay vigilant. Patience and commitment will bring success. Balance caution in relationships. Overcome past desires.

LEO

You may develop serious commitments. Overcome eccentricities with hard work. Family support will help you through dilemmas. Forgiving others boosts respect.

VIRGO

Your humour attracts others. Seek therapy for self-expression. Be humble to progress. Patience brings rewards. Socialise and address health for energy and joy.

LIBRA

Your venture will face delays, but success will come. Overcome confidence dips by using your imaginative mind. Provide encouragement, but rely less on others.

SCORPIO

Ease eccentricities through meditation. Loosen up to achieve progress. There may be work challenges; stay cautious. Your insights can lead to breakthroughs.

SAGITTARIUS

Minor setbacks won't stop your progress. Siblings will support you. Meet influential people to overcome your flaws. Spend time with kids and pursue new hobbies.

AQUARIUS

Hard work brings deserved benefits. Communicate openly to manage relationships. Find joy through introspection. Stay calm in emotional situations.

CAPRICORN

Deepen a relationship by avoiding blunders. Manage your critical nature. Your peculiarities will become your strength. Balance personal ethics with other feelings.

PISCES

Support your loved ones. Embrace your caring side. Stay cautious at work and revisit old projects. Balance work goals with family life. Explore your artistic talents.

GLOBE TROT

6-foot-tall wax statue of Abraham Lincoln melts in intense heat

The intense summer heat caused a six-foot-tall replica of Abraham Lincoln in Washington, DC, to start melting, causing serious damage to it. The statue, which has been in place at an elementary school in Northwest Washington since February, first had its head melt, then its leg and foot turned into blobs and separated from the torso. The BBC report said that the heat caused even the chair under the statue to sink to the ground.



Three-hour hike turned into more than weeklong ordeal



After setting out on what he thought would be a quick trip, a guy got lost in the mountains of California and spent more than a week there. He told a local television station that he survived his adventure by consuming wild berries and drinking creek water. Lukas McClish told KSBW in an interview, "I thought I was doing a three-hour hike" on his way to work, so he "didn't bring anything" other than a headlamp and folding scissors.

Florida family sues NASA after space junk crashes into their home

An American family is suing NASA for more than $80,000 after a tiny piece of debris crashed from orbit and broke through the roof of their Florida home. Law firm Cranfill Sumner stated in a statement that NASA's approach may establish a precedent for handling future claims because the issue of space trash has grown in parallel with a growth in spatial traffic. Alejandro Otero's home in Naples, Florida, was struck by an object weighing only 700 grams on March 8, which resulted in a hole in the roof.





Rainbow adventures

June may seem like any other month, with plenty of fun things to do. But let's not forget to recognise it as Pride Month to support the LGBTQ+ community. Pride Month holds special significance for the LGBTQ+ community as they travel for the pride parade, offering a platform to celebrate identity and resilience. While travelling is considered a transformative experience, it also offers opportunities to explore new cultures, taste exotic cuisines and connect with the community. However, for the LGBTQ community, travelling can also present unique challenges.

A recent study by Booking.com reveals that 92% of Indian LGBTQ+ travellers have experienced discrimination when travelling, with some form of discriminatory behaviour from both their fellow travellers and locals at their chosen destinations. While major cities offer LGBTQ-friendly establishments, there are still destinations that may not be as progressive. When presented with the choice, 52% prefer to visit destinations where LGBTQ+ tourism is already well established, and 77% have booked a trip in the past 12 months to a destination seen as supportive of residents who identify as LGBTQ+. 47% would consider locations where their presence could contribute to broadening social awareness and acceptance. On the flip side, nearly 70% of Indian respondents cancelled a trip within the past year after seeing a destination as unsupportive of its LGBTQ+ residents.

Despite these hurdles, LGBTQ+ travellers are taking ownership of their lived reality. From thoughtful destination decision-making to prebooking plane seats and creating alter egos, LGBTQ+ travellers are taking more control of their trips than ever before to safely navigate through these challenges and find the best experiences. Beyond their own decisions, LGBTQ+ travellers recognise the progress within the travel industry, with 77% mentioning increased inclusivity has made them feel more comfortable when travelling.

While challenges persist, the resilience of LGBTQ+ travellers shines through in their determination to explore the world on their terms. The travel industry's strides towards inclusivity and support are crucial steps towards creating safer and more welcoming environments for LGBTQ+ travellers. In catering to LGBTQ+ travellers, the industry not only helps them to explore the world without fear but can also lead to greater understanding and aid the movement to liberate queer people.

Let us continue to champion diversity, promote understanding, and create spaces where all are free to be themselves, both during Pride Month and throughout the year.

Happy Pride month!

Hearing loss and social isolation in seniors

How can hearing loss contribute to social isolation in older adults?

Hearing loss is becoming one of the most common age-related ailments not only in India but other parts of the world. According to statistics, 5% of adults between 45-54 experience hearing loss. This figure doubles to 10% for those aged 55-64 and the rate increases to 22% and 55% for those aged 65-75 and above. Hearing loss comes with inherent issues for adults. The adults commonly face the challenge of decreasing interaction, where their inclination to converse with people declines significantly. Many of us find this happening in our families and attribute it to old age, but it's largely due to hearing loss. HearClear audiologists recommend the use of the right hearing aid for the treatment of hearing impairment.

How do hearing aids improve communication?

Hearing aids amplify sounds, making conversations clearer, with smooth interpretation and communication with people. Regular auditory stimulation, input can stimulate neural pathways, improving cognitive function and auditory processing skills. It reduces cognitive load and improves overall brain function, making communication easier. Furthermore, the device comes in handy for alleviating Tinnitus, an age-related hearing loss where people experience ringing. Bluetooth connectivity in hearing aids allows audio streaming from their smart phones. This improves their ability to hear phone calls and contributes to enhancing their overall communication and entertainment experiences.

What are some common concerns and how can these be addressed?

There are certain inhibitions surrounding hearing aids where people worry about the high cost, social judgment, appearance and comfort of the device. At the same time, they're also concerned about whether the aids will help them hear well.

Regular audiological assessment should be done every six months to monitor the loss and tailor the hearing aids according to the loss. By dealing with these worries, seniors can be motivated to use hearing aids for improved hearing and overall quality of life.

Studies have shown hearing aids can help seniors reconnect socially. What kinds of social activities might improve with better hearing?

With improved hearing, seniors can engage in conversations, leading to closer relationships with family and friends. Allowing them to participate actively in group activities significantly reduces feelings of isolation in them and enhances their quality of life. Additionally, improved communication during family gatherings and hobbies involving social interaction, such as music and dancing, contributes to greater social interaction and mental well-being. So, hearing aids can improve overall quality of life by reducing social isolation and enhancing their participation in various social activities.

(The author Vineet Narang, is the Founder & MD of HearClear.)