



● Skyline Luge Rotorua



● Helicopters Nelson

Adventure sports are alluring for anyone who wishes to try something new, to push their personal boundaries and discover a newer version of themselves. Although every country has some adventure sport to offer, options in New Zealand provide unbeatable adventure experiences, making it the king of the adventure world. We bring to you five must-try adventure sports in New Zealand that are sure to pump up the adrenaline level.



● Aqua 360



● iFLY - Indoor Skydiving Queenstown



● Rotorua Ziplines

SUNDAY

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 4, 2022

pioneer

'Bollywood debut with Akshay was salient for me'

P:5

The fraying of India's social fabric
Diverse threats to the citadel of diversity

P:3&4



Dussehra

**Gidugu Rudraraju
Dyed-in-the-wool
Congressman**



P:8&9



PERSON

PELE

Brazil legend Pele has been admitted to hospital but his daughter has confirmed there was no "emergency" involved. Earlier on Wednesday, *ESPN Brasil* reported Pele had been taken to Sao Paulo's Hospital Albert Einstein with general swelling. But Pele's daughter Kely Nascimento posted on Instagram that there was no new dire prediction. Pele had a tumour removed from his colon in September 2021 and has since had regular treatment at the hospital.



VIDEO

NORA FATEHI WINS HEARTS AT FIFA FANFEST

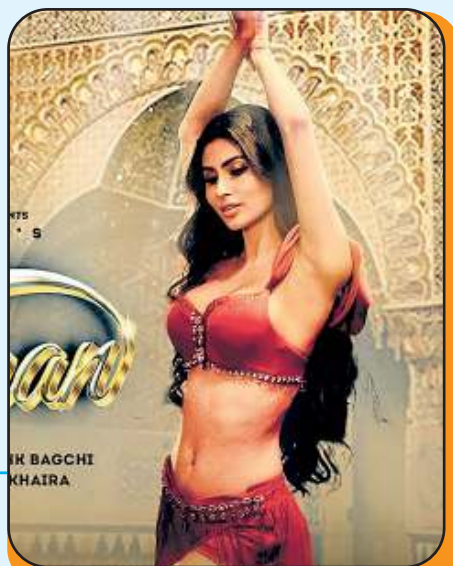
Known for her killer dance moves, Nora Fatehi recently performed at the FIFA World Cup 2022 with her team. Pics and videos have now gone viral where Nora can be seen setting the stadium on fire with her electrifying performance. Nora too shared a few glimpses of it on her Insta stories where fans can be seen cheering for her. Earlier, videos from the recently held match between Portugal and Brazil at the FIFA World Cup 2022 also went viral where Nora was seen enjoying the match. She was also shocked when her song Light The Sky got played and she then started grooving to the song.



SONG

FAKEERAN

Mouni Roy is ready to set the screens on fire with her music video titled *Fakeeran*, after impressing the audience with her remarkable antagonistic role of Junoon, in the fantasy adventure *Brahmastra: Part One - Shiva*. Produced by T-Series, the cheerful and lively song has been sung by Zahrah S Khan with Tanishk Bagchi composing the music and writing the lyrics.



MOVIE

BLACK PANTHER: WAKANDA FOREVER

A poignant tribute that satisfyingly moves the franchise forward, *Black Panther: Wakanda Forever* marks an ambitious and emotionally rewarding triumph for the MCU. *Avengers: Endgame* brought an end to the Infinity Saga, and many viewers wondered whether the MCU could ever be the same again. Robert Downey, Jr. and Chris Evans had both bowed out; in-universe, Tony Stark sacrificed his life to stop Thanos and Steve Rogers traveled to the past to finally live out his Happily Ever After with Peggy Carter.



PICTURE

LARGEST ACTIVE VOLCANO ERUPTS

On Sunday, November 27, the largest active volcano in the world, Mauna Loa, which is in Hawaii, erupted. According to the official website of the U.S Geological Survey (USGS) the eruption occurred at 11:30 pm. After the eruption, the region was quickly covered in a red sky and ashes. Since the volcano erupted, many people near the area have shared pictures of the ashy red sky and shared their thoughts on social media.



sunday pioneer

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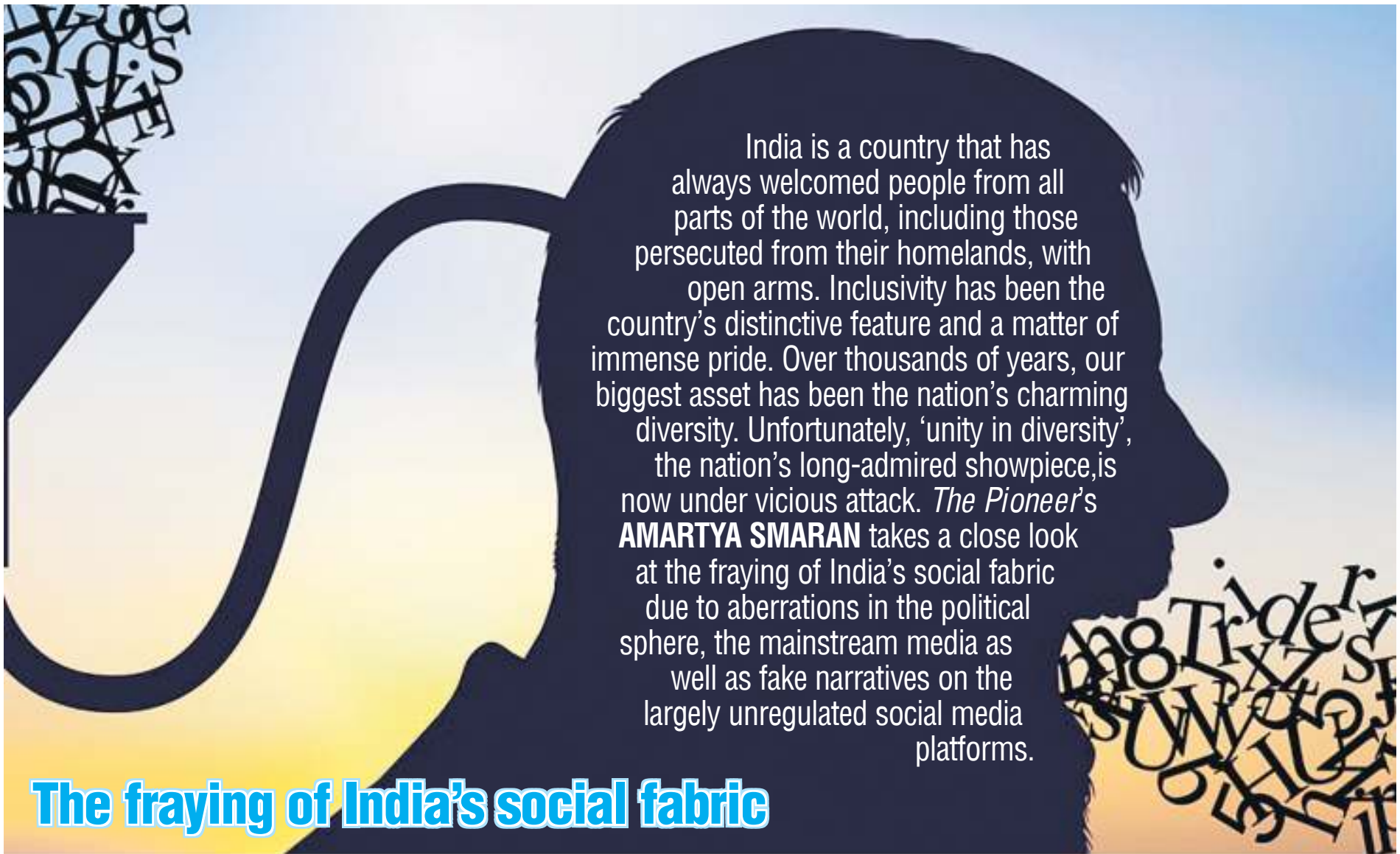
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India is a country that has always welcomed people from all parts of the world, including those persecuted from their homelands, with open arms. Inclusivity has been the country's distinctive feature and a matter of immense pride. Over thousands of years, our biggest asset has been the nation's charming diversity. Unfortunately, 'unity in diversity', the nation's long-admired showpiece, is now under vicious attack. *The Pioneer's* **AMARTYA SMARAN** takes a close look at the fraying of India's social fabric due to aberrations in the political sphere, the mainstream media as well as fake narratives on the largely unregulated social media platforms.

The fraying of India's social fabric

Diverse threats to the citadel of diversity

Over the years, political leaders belonging to all stripes have used the policy of 'divide and rule' to their advantage, regardless of the consequences. They have demonically turned some of our strengths to weaknesses. The idea of having an open dialogue is no longer appealing. Pray, why? Courtesy TRPs (Television Rating Point). The sight of seeing two individuals peacefully putting across each other's points of view sounds rather boring to most of them. What works? Get a few supposedly qualified individuals on the panel, give them an identity; left, right, centre and so on. Although the first few minutes go smoothly, in no time, the slanging match begins. This is deemed to provide gyanto to the public and sadly this has become a benchmark for debates.

We have taken TRPs as an example, though there are a lot many issues that remain unaddressed. With the advent of the internet and social media platforms, the propensity to spread misinformation has increased manifold. For instance, it has become easy to constantly target members belonging to the

minority communities so as to appease the majority community through various means, including new media dissemination techniques. Nupur Sharma, formerly BJP spokesperson, was rebuked by the Supreme Court for making controversial statements on national television, enraging an entire community. In its statement, the top court said, "...her loose tongue has set the entire country on fire." To cite another example, in August 2022, the authorities arrested BJP MLA T Raja Singh for making offensive comments against Prophet Muhammed. As a result, BJP suspended the leader with immediate effect.

India, with the largest number of Facebook (330 million) and Instagram (230 million) users, is seeing the spread of misinformation and disinformation like wildfire. The internet too has groups divided into left, right and more; this inevitably closes all doors to have an open discussion sans group-oriented agendas. Now, almost every top publication has a dedicated desk to verify claims being made on the internet. Television channels, which are best equipped to empower citi-

zens with legitimate and authentic information, have been indulging in petty gimmicks, making matters worse.

With respect to the World Press Freedom Index, India is currently ranked 150th among 180 countries and territories. This gives us an idea of how much the authorities care when it comes to freedom of the press. Unfortunately, many journalists in India bear the brunt of sedition charges for merely reporting truth that powers that be find bitter.

There is also this unnecessary pressure to take sides. We've been conditioned to it right from our childhood, be it in the name of religion, community, caste, or culture. Most of us have been told what to think, feel, and believe, starting from parents at home to teachers at school and finally politicians imposing their ideas on us. We are being gradually robbed of our ability to think independently.

A mind that has been stunted by an authority will never dare to question. As is known, India is left without a strong Opposition since the ruling party came to

power in 2014. The efforts of the opposition parties are being stifled by a disgusting counter narrative. Of course, in politics one has to play dirty, but this doesn't mean mindlessly labelling an individual for questioning. After all, questioning creates space for an open dialogue, right? If an individual fights for his/her basic rights, a few leaders from the ruling party label them as extremists, pseudo seculars, radicals and anti-nationals. In that case, should the toddlers who fight with their parents for chocolates be called extremists? In the current times, there is not a single party that is completely free from a scandal. Throughout contemporary times, one scandal or the other has come into the limelight with respect to various parties or their leaders.

The Pioneer approached Professor P.L. Vishweshwar Rao, a respected social activist, to dig deeper into the topic. "The entire electoral democratic process today is on the basis of religion and unfortunately, religion has become the opium of the masses..."

Continued on Page 4...

Continued from Page 3...

You are not giving a development agenda and you want votes based on religion. Is the ruling party raising developmental issues? Are they saying we will preserve constitutional values? The institutions of the country are going to be compromised as a result of this rule. We're going through a critical phase of democratic life where the institutions are in crisis. However, there is hope as there is enough vote bank available for other parties to make room for themselves. We are living in a world of misinformation, disinformation, and propaganda, but ultimately there are sources that are striving hard to present the truth. The youth must have an understanding about society, constitutional values, secularism, socialism, and democracy," says Rao.

The word 'extremist' has a derogatory connotation attached to it. According to many dictionaries, a person who advocates extreme beliefs or ideas unreasonably is known as an extremist. Therefore, how does merely questioning policies and governance make one an extremist? Remember, they are not attacking one's belief system, but asking the government some valid or maybe not-so-valid questions. Now, you target them, call them 'anti national', 'radicals' of the left, ask them to leave for the neighbouring countries, and provoke hardcore sentiments to engender violence? Who is an extremist now?

Prof Vishweshwar Rao points out why it is imperative to understand the context within which such terms (extremist, radicals, pseudo seculars, etc) are used. "Wherever there is suppression, people will naturally revolt and rebel. The state would like to give their own definition for the people who revolt; urban naxal, extremist, radical, etc. We have to understand the context of why these movements are growing. The state is violating our rights by not respecting the Constitution of the land. If the state doesn't give me the right to exercise my Fundamental Rights, I will certainly have to fight for it. Does that make me an extremist? Dalits, Muslims and minorities are lynched; why is all this happening? When these definitions are given, one should look at why one is becoming an

extremist? For example, the farmers' strike went on for a year and some of them called them extremists! Some of them said those farmers were destabilising India. Who has coined them? All this coinage was by the police, The National Investigation Agency, the Home Ministry of Amit Shah and some of the social media as well."

Here, the long-standing social activist cites some examples and questions the ruling party for dictating and imposing policies on citizens.

"Implement what is written in the Constitution. We are a plural country and we have something called minority rights and privileges. We have got to look at this in a larger context. Now they are talking about Uniform Civil Court! How can there be a Uniform Civil Court? Marriage laws are not the same for everyone, is it? Alright! You have done away with Triple- Talaq, but why do you want to have a Uniform Civil Court? Can there be uniformity in a country like India, where there are multilingual, multireligious, and multicaust sects? The idea of India is secularism, plurality, and religious tolerance. In Tamil Nadu, they want to impose Hindi and people are already opposing it. Does that make them extremists? In the 21st century can anyone have an education in Hindi? Won't you be ruining generations to come? Any kind of imposition will result in rebel-



lion."

Journalism Professor Shyane Reynolds under scores the importance of having an open discussion about the issues that matter. "Open dialogue and discussion should be encouraged in a way that one doesn't end up arguing and fighting ... so that one finds consensus. It's always the differences that are being pushed by the mainstream media because they know that controversies spread easily. What I've seen on the mainstream media is one person shouting at the other person. What's lacking is the ability to listen to the other person and an urge to push our views on to the other person. The humility to say, "Why are they saying things so differently from what I am saying?" is completely missing. We need to figure out why such a huge gap exists in the way we think and react and try to bridge the gap," observes Shyane.

On the condition of anonymity, a professor from the city, who is an expert on the country's politics, agreed to share his honest opinion regarding the polarisation that is taking place in the country. In conversation with *The Pioneer*, Prabhu (name changed), said, "Open dialogue can take place only in a society where people are willing to listen to one another, to discuss and deliberate, and arrive at a mutually agreeable decision. With some give and take. However, of late, especially

with the rise of the authoritarian brand of politics, and the cult of personality that has been cultivated around leaders like Trump, it is very difficult. The level of polarisation is immense, with people moving towards the far right or far left, away from the centre. Social media platforms with their tendency to encourage trolling, fake news, conspiracy theories, have contributed to this. One also needs to keep in mind that most of our political communication is taking place on social media. So, the space for open dialogue. Similarly, the rise of anchors like Arnab Goswami who have reduced television debates to histrionics have created a situation where sane, reasoned discussions are impossible to carry out."

Adding further, he explained, "India is no exception to this trend; especially India's right wing, which has adopted the strategy of deeming anyone who disagrees with any policy of the government as seditious or anti-Indian. Even balanced advice regarding major economic policies is no exception (look at what happened during demonetization). This indicates a lack of basic competence and/or understanding when it comes to governance. When people lack competence or an understanding of how things like the economy or govt work, or do not have any meaningful political solutions to offer, they indulge in identity-based politics or culture wars which are very good at polarising the electorate. The success of religion or identity-based politics is actually proof of the internal weakness of such polities."

In conclusion, to govern is to take into consideration the concerns of people. In a country that is as diverse as India, it is an uphill task to achieve absolute uniformity. Yet, it is plausible to stop dividing people in the name of caste, creed, religion and culture.

As one of our contributors to the article expressed, it is important to encourage open dialogue and discussion to understand one another's problems. It is the need of the hour to analyse the game that some of the greedy politicians play in order to gain power. All they want is to 'divide and rule'. It is time to raise our voices together as Indians and tell them: 'Unite and prosper'.



'Bollywood debut with Akshay was salient for me'

Actress Sargun Mehta, who is scaling great heights with her career choices, spoke to *The Pioneer's* **SHIKHA DUGGAL** about her plans and more in our next segment of celeb talk.

Years ago, Sargun Mehta started as a television host — one started to see the real Sargun every day. A bubbly and straightforward woman, who is also quite emotional made it so big in the Punjabi film industry now, that many of others are surely intimidated by her reigning success over there. That triumph made her bag a recent debut in Bollywood starring opposite Akshay Kumar too, couldn't have dreamt better for the new beginnings in B-town. In a candid chat, she spoke about her career plans and more in our next segment of celeb talk apprehended by Sargun Mehta.

"The leap to Punjabi films was a natural progression. When I was doing the popular show *Balika Vadhu*, it felt like a calling and the same calling happened again when the first time I watched a Punjabi film in the theatre. I took the leap, my gut asked me to and landed there in the lap of Punjabi industry, and look how they embraced me," she said.

So many years in showbiz, as a trained artist, she's getting to know the many perceptions also. Like very recently, she felt, that sometimes one is taken lightly. There are some 'men' in the industry who thought Sargun didn't know anything and they were taking her for a ride, lest they knew that she knew a little more! She had done her research and therefore took them up by surprise. And that's how she won.

Showing us the other edge of Punjabi films, sometimes body shaming, the infamous obsession for fair skin, makes the central theme for them which Sargun Mehta as an actress seriously reprimands. But in her own way, well which is how? "I agree sometimes our films, unconsciously, give a message regarding body shaming but we are not here to 'humiliate'. That dialogue delivery is there to make the cine-goers understand that you are hurting someone's sentiments!

One has to come out strong. At least, we are touching the subject openly to spread awareness. As a person, who herself has gone through insecurities initially in the industry, will only urge my readers to not see them through someone else's eyes."

OTT debut with Akshay Kumar starrer *Cuttputlli* was very noteworthy for her — it was an inexhaustible moment, Sargun pinpointed. She narrated, "I chose to roll very carefully as it was narrated to me. Initially, it was supposed to release in theatres but it came on OTT which was received really well by the audiences! The scenes where I am seeing dominating Akshay, had no anxiety because I was already aware of his professionalism. He will not hold any angst for a scene. He also made sure that we all have dinner together, the entire cast so that there's like a good bond."

So, now for such humongous stardom that she is receiving every day; she recalled, "I first felt like a star when I was valued for my titular role in *Phulwa* and my first Punjabi film *Angrej*. I am passionate about acting and all of a sudden founding cheers into producing too! So, name and fame are byproducts of it. I don't take success or my fame to the head, that's just me."

She also recalled another moment in her life when the first year of doing theatre was absolute torture for her, and she felt like she can't do so much work. "Because, it not only teaches you how to act, they actually go down to the basics. But I swept the auditorium. They never used to have anybody else for that. They used to say, 'If this is the place where we are rehearsing, you have got to sweep it, clean it.'"

Continuing her increasing interest in producing led her to write two of the most popular television shows of late named *Swaran Ghar* and *Udaariyan*, she

shared, "My first instinct was to tell stories, and not act. The plot of those two serials is surprisingly written by me. Why? That's my way of sharing what I feel about the current society. During my childhood, I have made use of cooking up stories to my best interests and it has come in so handy today that my shows were ranking on the top in TRP charts consecutively. The show *Swaran Ghar*, for example, was clearly relatable at more levels than one, and parents found it to be their reality, while children did feel guilty about their behaviour when watching it. Good reviews were pouring in for both the shows, so all's good in the hood."

The actress concluded that she didn't blindly choose Bollywood as she wanted to be sure of the work that she took up. She was very sure that she didn't want to just be around there and do two songs without giving importance to the story of the film. She doesn't think it will be very exciting for her to do that! Her idea was: "If someone wants to watch a certain type of my work, they can see it in Punjabi too. But if I am doing some work apart from Punjabi films or songs, I should be doing something different and new. Having said that, I think as the Punjabi industry also evolves, so does the acceptance of the people will. What's happening right now is that we are playing with our flavour, with the culture that we have. And we are attaching more and more audiences to us every day. There's going to be a point when people will accept new genres. In fact, even when I did *Qismat*, everybody said that it wouldn't work in Punjab because it was not a typical comedy film that Punjab was very used to. That film became one of the biggest blockbusters and then there was its second film. So, when you give people content with a lot of meat and something that they can enjoy also, it doesn't matter what genre it is."



Is it time to go back to using cloth during periods?

For over two decades now, sanitary pads have been one of the most used and preferred period products. They have been replaced by other environment-friendly alternatives like menstrual cups, reusable pads, tampons, and period underwear, among others. However, a majority of women still use sanitary napkins across the world.

According to research published by the National Center for Biotechnology (NCBI), the results revealed a wide variation in the use of sanitary napkins across socio-economic and demographic factors. The use of sanitary napkins was significantly higher among girls with 8–9 (53.2%) and 10 or more (75.4%) years of schooling compared to those who had no formal education (26.4%). The use of sanitary napkins was higher among adolescent girls who did not work (54.7%) than among those who did work (40.8%). Adolescent girls reporting frequent exposure to mass media (OR = 2.10), belonging to the richest wealth quintile (OR = 3.76), and whose mothers had 10 or more years of education (OR = 2.29) had a higher propensity to use sanitary napkins than their counterparts. We found no significant role for community-level education of mothers on adolescent menstrual hygiene practices.

Meanwhile, another study stated that women in the reproductive age group should be provided with appropriate information about menstruation, and they should be told about the advantages of using sanitary napkins. Health sector functionaries should play a proactive role in the delivery of such information.

However, several studies highlighted the perils of these single-use products and cautioned that they not only harm the body but also the environment as they contain plastic.

Adding to the list of these studies is this new study by a Delhi-based NGO called Toxics Link. The study recently claimed that most sanitary napkins sold across India contain cancer-causing contaminants and even cause infertility in some women. The new study has been a cause of worry for thousands of women and girls around the world who have been relying on sanitary pads for years.

The study conducted by the NGO that's part of the International Pollutants Elimination Network tested ten brands of pads (including organic and inorganic) available across India and found traces of phthalates and volatile organic compounds (VOCs) in all the samples. Both contaminants have the ability to form cancerous cells. Toxics Link found the presence of

certain phthalates that are restricted according to European regulations.

We further connected with gynaecologists and also a period activist, who opines about what primitive measures can be taken now and an alternative for using sanitary pads.

Dr. N Sapna Lulla, Lead Consultant, Obstetrics and Gynecology, Aster CMI Hospital Bangalore, shared, "The sanitary napkins or pads use various absorbing materials. Plasticizers are indeed commonly found in these products as well as cosmetics. This is done through touch or contact, or it is inhaled in situations where it inhibits cell activity and can cause cancer. This has been proven. So henceforth, this is the manner in which these pads can be a cause of cancer.

If not sanitary pads, you might consider menstrual cups or tampons as alternatives. But what if you're not comfortable using them? Dr. Sapna said, "I would say going back to the age-old method of using cloth. You're spending so much on these pads, and they are also not good for the environment. You are exposing yourself more to the probability of having yourself exposed to these sanitary napkins, even though acetone, dichloromethane, and chloroform are in them. All of these factors can affect the texture of the skin, cause allergic reactions, and have hormonal effects. In such situations, using clothes as we used to do before is the best alternative. Yes, hygiene needs to be kept in mind, as well as the fact that many of us might not be comfortable with it. Using organic pads is also acceptable because it can help to prevent these types of reactions. Furthermore, men-

strual cups can be more environmentally friendly and practical."

Seconding Dr. Sapna, Dr. Poornima Kinila, Consultant-Obstetrics, Gynecology, and Infertility, Aster RV Hospital shares, "On the clock one, we can use period pants. Then you have biodegradable or organic menstrual products, which can also be used. Menstrual cups can also be an alternative; however, not everyone will be comfortable using them. In such cases, using cloth can be a better alternative. But even in that, there might be questions that arise, like how frequently they have to change because of the heaviness of the flow, and what kind of cloth can be used? Girls and women need to be educated on this. If education is made widespread about the serious disorders that might be caused, this would help decrease fertility, PCOS, or even cancer-related issues."

On the other hand, we spoke to Saloni Bhutra, founder of the Paddling Foundation and a period activist, who believes that the recent research is a single research study as of now and that the research has not been officially published. In fact, "why weren't the brand names openly mentioned?" It has simply scared millions of people watching the news. Now many upper- and middle-class Americans have the option to switch instantly. But that's not the case with the rural areas, which can create panic among them because of a lack of funds and how expensive organic products are.

Sharing about what alternative she would prefer to educate people with, she said, "In the first year of our NGO itself, we started distributing and raising awareness about cloth pads. The reason is that even if regular sanitary pads don't

Ever since a recent study revealed that some sanitary pads contain some cancerous elements, it has caused a lot of distress among many girls and women out there. *The Pioneer's* TEJAL SINHA contacted gynaecologists and also connected with a period activist to understand how sanitary napkins or pads can lead to cancer and what could be the best alternative.

contain elements that cause cancer, they might nonetheless lead to rashes and infections. We began encouraging people to use cloth pads. If you ask me, even I would suggest using cloth pads instead of a simple cloth. Not all cloth is a healthy material. Some cannot be trusted to be used on your body. So you can use cloth pads, which are solely manufactured for this purpose. When it comes to menstrual cups, they are not meant for everyone. Even when people say they are manufacturing organic pads, they are not revealing the products used in them."

"There is a lack of awareness because most cloth pads are made by small businesses or nongovernmental organisations that cannot afford to advertise. Even if they do, there's very little time given, and you cannot explain the whole thing, which can be misleading. When we're on the ground, I know from personal experience that many people haven't even seen cloth pads. They know about the age-old clothes to be used, but they do not know about cloth pads that are existing or don't even know what menstrual cups are," signed off Saloni, adding that no matter what menstrual product one uses, be it sanitary pads, cloths, or menstrual cups, no one has the right to shame them for it. It's about their comfort, not forcing them to use a certain product.

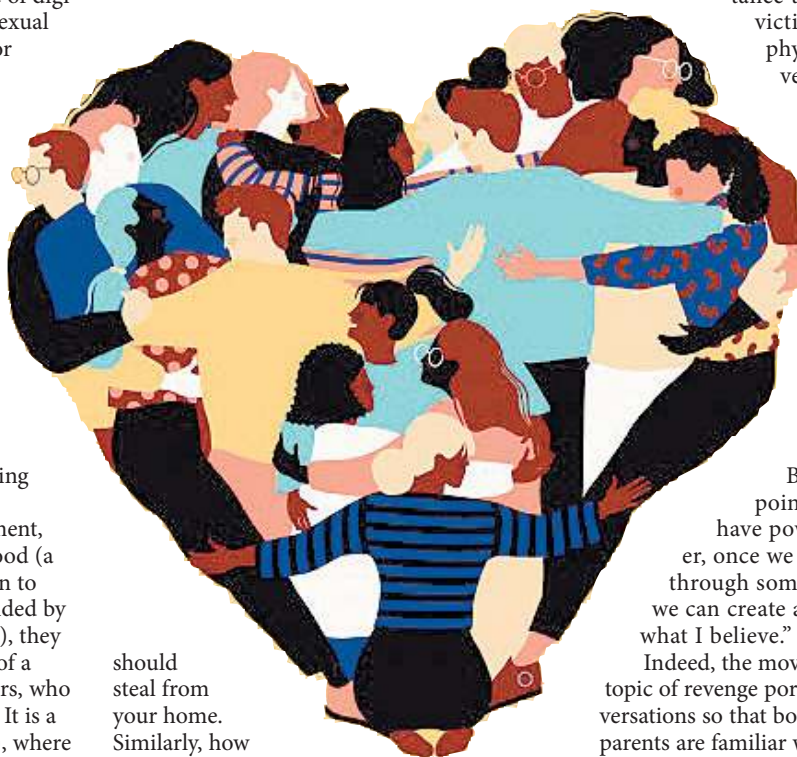


No shame movement: A step towards creating a safe space

Revenge porn is defined as a type of digital abuse in which private and sexual material in the form of photos or videos is shared without the consent of those pictured. Shockingly, there are no such official statistics on revenge pornography in India, simply because it has not been declared a crime yet. With the rise of social media and the ease of anonymity that it provides, non-consensual sharing has become the norm.

In a bid to help the people facing the issue of revenge porn, entrepreneurs Abhishek Singh and Neeti Goel initiated the 'No Shame Movement'. Victim shaming and guilt psychology prevent women from seeking legal help and that's exactly where this movement steps in. Under this movement, which is an initiative by United By Blood (a not-for-profit civil society on a mission to promote inclusive empowerment founded by IAS and entrepreneur Abhishek Singh), they provide legal assistance with the help of a dedicated team of young female lawyers, who will address the grievance of students. It is a toll-free helpline number (851009007), where women can seek help from 10 am to 6 pm. The team aims to help the victim in filing a police complaint in cases the victims feel that the situation demands that a complaint should be filed. They will also educate and give appropriate advice.

The Pioneer spoke with founder IAS Abhishek Singh, and he has a lot of things to share. He said, "It all started with the MMS scandal at Chandigarh University, after reports of private videos of some female students at the hostel being uploaded on a social media website platform went viral. I was a guest speaker at the university a day before the incident happened. A lot of students started tagging me and asking for help. That's how the 'no shame movement' came into existence. Since its inception, many people have called to know about the legal provisions, and we have also kept the callers anonymous so that they can easily share it. We want to spread the idea that the victim is not accused. In most cases, the women themselves have shared the pictures with the men, and that's where the guilt factor comes into play. The women feel reluctant to complain about it. We must prepare society to understand that it is not the fault of women. In fact, there's an example I always give to make people understand the concept. For example, you go out without locking your home, and when you come back, you see a robbery has occurred. So, who is to blame? The issue is that the majority of us believe it is our fault, which is the guilt factor. In an ideal society, no one



should steal from your home. Similarly, how can we blame these women? The person who violates privacy and does such offensive things without consent is in the wrong. That's all our motif is with this movement."

While there are hardly any data, according to reports from the National Crime Records Bureau, the amount of offensive information disseminated online increased by 108% between 2019 and 2021 alone. In fact, as per the Ministry of Child and Women Development, only 1 in 100 battered women ever report the abuse they suffer. We connected with Dr. Pooja V. Anand, Associate Professor, Department of Psychology, Daulat Ram College, University of Delhi, and convener of the Women's Development Cell. Applauding the movement, she said, "I believe the 'no shame movement' is a significant step in creating awareness about an extremely important issue. Incidents of non-consensual image sharing often go unpunished due to the shame and stigma attached to them. Hence, the first thing to focus on is that there should be no victim blaming; rather, these cases should be brought to light, and the accused should be punished. At the individual level, this can be done by not doubting oneself and taking the right course of action, and at the systemic level, this can be done by making it safe for the victim to come forward and talk about it without the fear of being judged."

Recently, actresses Sara Ali Khan and Rakul Preet Singh joined IAS officer turned actor Abhishek Singh in providing assis-

tance to young girls who fall victim to revenge pornography. In an exclusive conversation with us, Sara Ali Khan told us,

"Anyone shouldn't be ashamed and shouldn't be guilty of something that is not their fault. I agree with that 100 per cent. Men must be spoken to, and men must be treated, or they will face social and legal discrimination.

But I think as a starting point, as a woman, we also have power. If we come together, once we have at least gone through something or even before, we can create a safe space. This is what I believe."

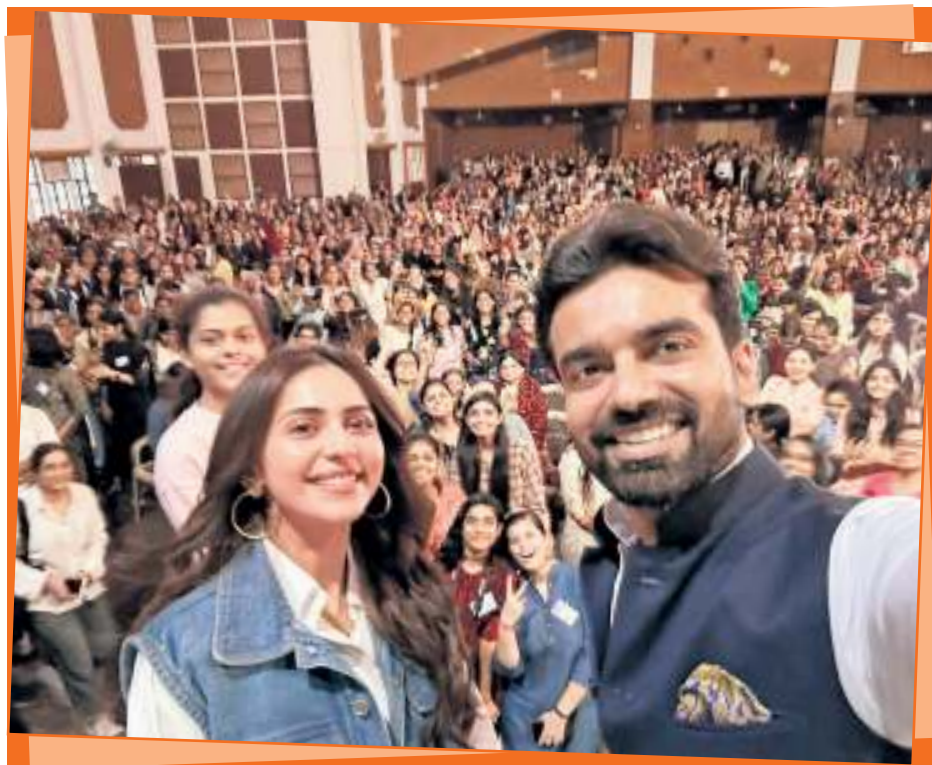
Indeed, the movement aims to bring the topic of revenge porn into living room conversations so that both young girls and their parents are familiar with the idea and aware of their legal rights. "There should be absolutely no scope for someone to blackmail a girl with the non-consensual use of their private images," added Bharatendu Verma, a founding member of United By Blood.

Further, we connected with Rakul Preet

The movement aims to bring the topic of revenge porn into living room conversations so that both young girls and their parents are familiar with the idea and aware of their legal rights.
TANISHA SAXENA spoke to experts to bring to our readers an expose on the movement.

Singh to understand her perspective, and she asserted, "I am actually wondering how people do not feel ashamed of what's happening. The first and foremost thought that a woman has is of what society will think and how her parents will react. But one has to try to take this very thought of being guilty out of the mind. Gradually, we have to remove this stigma. So, once the women are able to take that shame out of their heads, that's when they'll be able to make the right decision. Yes, it's difficult, but the only way out."

Concluding this entire discourse, we have Ankita Jain, a counselling and sports psychologist based in Hyderabad, who has been working for two decades with clinical populations, community work, and teaching. She also supports national athletes and teams. She summed up, "Two people in a relationship have equal responsibility. Why blame just one side? The mindset that the women are alone and won't get support gives them the courage to attack and manipulate. What if society supported women?"





Gidugu Veera Venkata Rudraraju, who has just taken over as the president of the Andhra Pradesh Congress Committee, is a dyed-in-the-wool Congressman. No wonder, despite the party's current countrywide reverses, he foresees its return to power in the state.

A confidant of undivided AP's former CM YS Rajasekhara Reddy, Rudraraju has held key posts and served as the Chairman of the AP Medical Infrastructure Corporation.

Within the party, he has held the post of AICC Secretary and discharged duties as in-charge of the party's Orissa unit.

In a conversation with **NAVEENA GHANATE** of *The Pioneer*, Rudraraju gives us a peek into his childhood, working with YSR, his elevation as PCC President, and the road ahead.



ALWAYS WANTED TO BE A POLITICIAN

I am native of Amalapuram in the erstwhile East Godavari district and currently my mother Nagamani stays there. As a child, I was naughty among four siblings. We are three brothers and a sister. One of my elder brother Soma Shekar is into software and is settled in America. The other brother Satyanarayana is serving Bank of Baroda as DGM. My sister Sunkranam Lakshmi lives in Narsipatnam. I am the youngest. I did my graduation in Osmania University. My father Surya Rao has been a traditional Congressman and strong follower of the party's ideology. He was a government employee and had nothing to do with politics. I am the first one in my family in politics and it is because my father influenced me. My father and brother encouraged me a lot. I told them that, after doing law, I want to practice and be in politics. That was my ambition. My brother wanted me to come to America to do MCA, but I resisted and continued to focus on my ambitions.



ARRANGED MARRIAGE AND TWO KIDS

My wife was an arranged marriage to Saraswathi. My wife has done M Sc in Mathematics and is a homemaker. For education, my kids and family stay in Hyderabad. I have two kids - my daughter Lakshmi Mansi is doing Engineering in CBIT, while son Surya Kruteesh is in 10th class. I am not a strict father. At home, they are very positive and supportive of my role in politics. During the YSR regime, I was a full-time politician. When my first kid was born in a hospital near Lakdikapul, YSR came and spent more than 1.5 hour with my family. There were certain compromises that the family had to make. Ultimately family support is always there.



ACTIVE IN NSUI

I was an active leader of NSUI (National Students Union of India), student wing of the Congress party. There are a lot of memories that I have cherished from my NSUI days. For instance, we used to travel by train and once we had a fight with the military personnel over boxes. In another instance, there was Tamil Nadu versus Andhra NSUI fights at stadiums where we were told to rest. From there, I went on to hold key posts in the Youth Congress. When Y S Rajasekhara Reddy was the PCC president, I was the campaign committee member. My family has been supportive of my political career. Even when I lost MLC post, my parents never asked me to stop. It's okay to lose in politics. In 2018, I became a member of AICC.



PADAYATRA DIDN'T HAVE STRUCTURE

I was part and largely organised YSR's famous padayatra. Unlike these days, there was no GPS or anything, so I had to go and check out everything before he came. YSR Padayatra was in peak summer. We didn't even have water bottles to give to someone or guest who came. This big structure of catering and organisation wasn't developed. Yet, the wonderful padayatra had public involvement. Any padayatra will have a positive impact on the public. Because they pass from our area, they own you; they feel that they are your own man. I have seen Rahul Gandhi's padayatra, it is recorded in public. I never focused on Sharmila and Jagan's as I work for the Congress party.



MOMENTS WITH YSR

I was in East Godavari when the Chief Minister came to visit a wedding. Post the wedding, CM was taking helicopter, I was there for the send-off. The CM put his hand on my shoulder and said: "What mister, why are you here, what's the job. Come along" and he took me in his helicopter. There was a bus yatra prior to the 2004 of Congress. In Konaseema, Ainavilli Ganesh temple, I met YSR, and he asked about my father who was then not keeping well. Ainavilli is a sentiment and so I requested YSR to come and visit the temple. He said: "You say this temple, another temple, let it be. I will come to the hospital to see your dad." But I forced him to come to the temple and he came. Later, he was at a meeting in Amalapuram and there was no way out as the crowd was too huge. His car didn't come by then, he took the district president's car and came to the hospital and visited my dad. He saw the case-sheet and asked me to shift my father to a different hospital. It is family bonding. Any human who meets YSR will never forget him. He was like a karyakarta. He would take it with very positive attention, especially information inflow and outflow. I had a great opportunity to work with a legendary politician.

SUDDEN DEATH OF YSR

On the day YSR died, I was in Tirupati waiting at the helipad for him to come. He had started in Hyderabad and had to come to the nearest point. I was there to attend a wedding. Once the helicopter took off, it took a lot of time. I called CM's secretary Sharma about the delay. We were worried and began the search. I came back to the Secretariat. His death was unfortunate, and I felt sad for a very long time. Now it's just exchanges with the YS family. I met only Vijayamma garu, but hardly anything political.

YSR WANTED RAHUL GANDHI TO BE PM

I wanted to be in Congress, like many YSR loyalists, after his demise. Even the Number 1,2,3 of YSR are in the Congress including Dr KVP Ramchander Rao, who is loyalist. We are in Congress and core loyalists of the Gandhi-Nehru family. Everybody has supported me. Come what may, I will be working with the ideology of the Congress. In the last meeting of YSR in Gandhi Bhavan, he told us that Rahul Gandhi should become Prime Minister. He didn't tell us to make Jagan CM. We are of the YSR line and with due respect to YSR, we will fight against anyone. However, I was with YSR's kids as long as they were in Congress. I was part of Odarpu yatra in East Godavari. I am a workaholic and a partyman.

CONGRESS IS IN DIFFICULT SITUATION IN AP

The Congress wanted young leadership of 50-55 and so made me state party president. The fact is that Congress is not in a good position in Andhra Pradesh. But look at Punjab, where the Congress revived. There is no village in the country without the Congress party, hand symbol, and karyakarta. People might be upset for the time being, but they will be with us. Congress is in a difficult situation in Andhra Pradesh. This is a big task. PCC post is not a role, but responsibility. I have grown with the organization, and I am well aware of how it functions. However, with Bharat Jodo Yatra, Congress is in good situation. The Congress party is not about power and having power is not something new for the Congress. For Congress, power is not paramount.

MY CASTE IS CONGRESS

My caste is not going to have any impact because the Congress doesn't have caste, creed or colour. My caste in Congress. It is not the ultimate point for success. Party is supreme and I am here to prove. In Congress, everyone gets a chance. Caste is by chance, but in politics there will be all equations. But how did P V Narasimha Rao become Prime Minister? Party wanted to give chance to a worker and that's how I am where I am today. May be, there will be a change and if I am good, people will like me. Party is my caste and party is my first priority



CONGRESS WILL MAKE A COMEBACK

Chiranjeevi is sympathetic to the Congress. He even met Rahul Gandhi. We are hopeful that he will come back. We are ready to work under his leadership. In 2024, the Congress will make a comeback. In seats where we have an advantage, we will field strong people. We will also try to attract people with aspirations and may want to join. Special Category Status is in Andhra Pradesh Reorganisation Act, but it has not been implemented. Once Rahul becomes PM, his first sign will be on SCS file.

QUICK BYTES

- Fav colour: White
- Food: Vegetarian
- Fav songs: Old songs when there is a bit of stress
- Fav sports: During childhood cricket
- Fav place: Konaseema
- Fav quote: IndirammaRajyamIntintaSoubagyam
- New-age politicians: Rahul Gandhi
- Fav god: Venkateshwara Swamy



Enabling and equipping students for the workplace of the future



It's no secret that the Covid-19 pandemic has caused a tectonic shift in the way we live our lives. Most notably it has impacted where, when and how we work. With future workplaces all set to go under a drastic transformation, it's imperative that students are prepared to face the future.

The global workplace is rapidly and continuously evolving. The future demands tech-enabled workforces to support diverse and flexible teams. The influence of technology is apparent and it stands to reason that technologies such as AI, ML, and automation will become an integral part of future job profiles. According to research conducted by the World Economic Forum, 65% of primary school students will take up those jobs in the future that does not yet exist. This implies a huge gap between current and future work scenarios and calls for comprehensive reforms in our current education system.

Here are some important steps that our educational Institutes can take to prepare better for a vibrant future:

- Develop industry-relevant skills: The consultations between industry and academia have highlighted the need for developing industry-relevant skills among students.

University Grants Commission (UGC) has taken many initiatives and directed educational institutions to train students on design thinking, artificial intelligence, project management, web development, and data analysis among others. Further, it has been recommended that students should get basic training in programming languages, web development, and technical writing as these qualities will help students to quickly adapt and stay relevant even amidst fast-changing business requirements.

- Encourage creative innovation: With more consumer data, automation capabilities, and AI getting integrated into the work practices, the operant resources are going to occupy the centre stage. The creative abilities of employees will drive future innovation and in fact, the companies with exceptionally creative human resources will lead their respective industries in the times to come. Students must be encouraged to foster creativity and take self-initiative right from the beginning of their formal education. Teachers should encourage aspirants to think out of the box and come up with novel solutions related to emerging areas such as renewable energy, green farming, and smart cities.
- Digital exposure: Exposure to virtual tech-

nologies is increasingly becoming a prerequisite for success in the industry. Many organisations have fully embraced the hybrid work model while others have made a complete switch to work-from-home. Even organisations in the manufacturing and service domains are using advanced digital technologies to deliver better products and superior customer experiences. This enhanced digital integration mandates that students are digitally literate so that they won't be left behind in their careers once they join the corporate world. Further, training on digital technologies must also include psychological and health perspectives to ensure that the harmful impacts of prolonged exposure to screens and devices can be minimized.

- Strengthen soft skills: We must prepare students for life and not just jobs or careers. Hence soft skills will remain as relevant in the future as they are today. Irrespective of the field of career, students who have excelled in their soft skills are more likely to achieve their professional goals. Schools and colleges can play an important role here and by helping students develop these skills right from the beginning, the educational institutes can make the students future-fit. Special attention must be given to helping students improve their commu-

nication, interaction, and negotiation skills as these are particularly relevant in corporate careers. Further, students should be encouraged to excel in collaboration, teamwork, integrity, and work ethics so that they can carve a place for themselves in the corporate world successfully.

- Risk taking: Taking risks is the ability that every student must develop and hone for achieving success in corporate careers. However, it is equally important to teach students the right way to think, decide, and undertake risks. Rather than rushing headlong into decision-making, students should be taught how to use a methodical approach to risk-taking. The faculty members must help students understand that before making a crucial decision, it is important to weigh in all factors, analyse prevailing circumstances, and choose the most optimum alternative to venture into unknown territories.



(The writer, Rajesh Panda, is the founder & MD of Corporate Gurukul)

'It's time to change HR strategies for women employees'

As it has historically been dominated by men, the Indian technology industry has a long history of discrimination against women. However, as new technologies have emerged, there has been a significant change in how women behave, with IT now becoming one of the most popular job paths. According to recent data from the Ministry of Education, the percentage of women enrolling in B.Tech and other IT degrees climbed dramatically between 2016 and 2021, rising from 8% to 19.72%. There is still a significant gender gap in the Indian tech sector, which calls for urgent action to advance inclusivity, diversity, and increased profitability.

Women typically give up on their careers by the time they are in their mid-thirties in order to meet societal and cultural responsibilities. Although there are virtually as many women entering the IT business as there are males, their proportion in the industry definitely declines as they move up to senior positions. According to the statistics, women make up close to 51% of entry-level hires, 25% of management jobs, and less than 1% of C-suite positions. As a result, there is a significant gender diversity gap in the business, which is still dominated by men.

Talent managers put forth a lot of effort to combat biases in the industry, running awareness campaigns or educating the workforce. To entirely remove it from the spectrum, though, a few additional steps must still be made on the ground.

Leveraging the certification and upskilling programs

Despite being competent candidates, women making comebacks in their careers are always forced to start afresh. Even if they are joining after a sabbatical, women need to start from scratch which becomes a barrier in the path of their career. To combat such situations, women must enroll themselves in strong certification or upskilling programs that hone their skills and strengthens their portfolio. It complements to their experience and puts them on the radar of recruiters in top organizations. As a result, women can keep up the pace with their counterparts and no longer have to prove their expertise or settle for less in the tech industry again.

Exposure to new technologies and automation

New technologies are disrupting the digi-

tal landscape considering their incredible potential to pull off conventional tasks in the workplace. To win the race of gender diversity, women must be adept at using the technologies that companies are utilizing to expedite their business journey. Getting exposure to technologies like AI, ML, Blockchain, IoT and others can help women gain more clarity on their career path. It will pose as a vital step in breaking the barriers in career progressions and job appraisals. This will open more opportunities to women in their own technical roles and responsibilities, thereby becoming future-proof.

Acquiring a new skill set on technology tools

In the present scenario, technological transformation is the key to business sustainability that is backed by deep analytics. Women in the tech sector must have hands-on with relevant tools to make sense of existing data sets and visualising them. By acquiring expertise in advanced technology tools, women can become industry ready with no more mansplaining. In a gender-sundry business environment, it is always the skill set that wins over the gender

divide in the industry. Women should strive to equip themselves with changing needs of the technology sector to secure their professional journey not only in their existing organization but also in the industry.

Bottom line:

Although the corporate world has changed significantly for women over the past 20 years, removing both physical and psychological barriers can give modern women new responsibilities to alter the current technology sector landscape. Organizations are steadily closing gender-based pay inequities as new skills and abilities are incorporated into the larger picture. Strong technological know-how and skill sets are enabling women to take the lead in advancing inclusion. Women are therefore embracing their efforts to change the problems that have long been against them.



(The writer, Yogita Tulsiani, is the MD & co-founder of iXceed Solutions (Global Tech-Recruiter Provider).)

MAKE OATS PART OF YOUR EVERYDAY MENU



Courtesy: Chef Kunal Kapur

Breakfast: Oats *rawa* dosa

(Preparation time: 5 mins | cook time: 5 mins)

What you need:

- Saffola oats: 1/2 cup
- Rawa: 1/2 cup
- Rice flour: 1/2 cup
- Green chilli: 1 tsp
- Cashew nuts: 5-6 (Chopped)
- Salt to taste
- Curry leaves: 5-6 (Chopped)
- Fresh coriander: 1 tbsp (Chopped)
- Sesame seeds: 1/2 tsp
- Cumin seeds: 1/2 tsp
- Oil: 2 tsp

How to make:

- Dry roast oats until they are slightly browned.
- Cool and grind to make a powder.
- Add powdered oats, rawa, rice flour, green chili, cashew nuts, salt, curry leaves, coriander, sesame seeds and cumin seeds in a bowl.
- Add water and make a batter of pouring consistency.
- Heat a non-stick pan. Pour 2 ladles of batter on the hot pan.
- Drizzle a few drops of Oil on top.
- Cook until crisp and golden brown.
- Serve hot with Masala chai



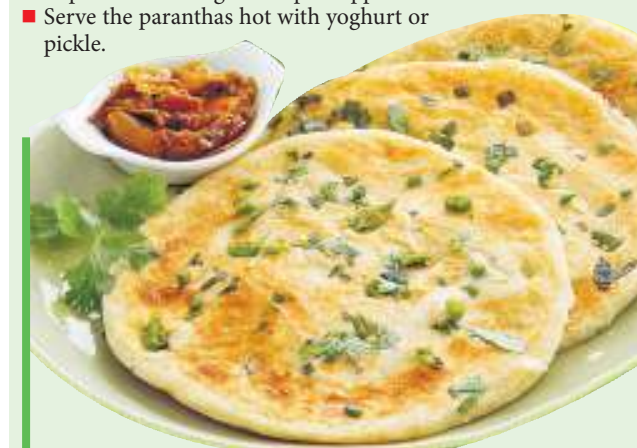
Lunch: Spring onion oats paratha

What you need

- Saffola oats, powdered: 1 cup
- Atta (whole wheat flour): 1 cup
- Water: 2 cups
- Oil: 3 tsp
- Cumin seeds: 1 tsp
- Spring onion whites, chopped: 1 cup
- Ginger-green chili paste: 1 tsp
- Garlic, finely chopped: 1 tsp
- Spring onion greens, chopped: 1 cup
- Salt: 1 tsp

How to make:

- Knead powdered oats and wheat flour into a soft dough using enough water. Divide the dough into 8 equal portions and keep aside.
- For the filling, heat 1/2 tsp oil in a broad non-stick pan. Add cumin seeds and sauté on medium flame for a few seconds.
- Add spring onion whites, ginger-green chili paste, and garlic. Sauté on medium flame for 2 minutes.
- Add spring onion greens and salt. Mix well and cook on medium flame for 3 minutes, stirring occasionally. Keep the filling aside.
- Flour the rolling area and roll out each portion of the dough into small roundels.
- Spoon some of the filling in the center of each roundel. Bring the edges together in the center and seal on top. Then roll them into 4-inch discs.
- Take care to ensure the filling doesn't spill out.
- Heat a tawa. Use 1/4 tsp oil to smear the parathas on both sides. Flip and cook till golden spots appear on both sides.
- Serve the paranthas hot with yoghurt or pickle.



Dinner: Oats onion *kulcha*

(Preparation time: 5 mins | cook time: 5 mins)

What you need:

- Saffola oats, finely powdered: 1 cup
- Maida (all-purpose flour): 1 cup
- Baking powder: 1/2 tsp
- Baking soda: 1/2 tsp
- Yoghurt: 1/2 cup
- Salt: 1 1/2 tsp
- Ghee: 1 tbsp
- Onion, finely chopped: 1 cup
- Green chilies, finely chopped: 3
- Ajwain (carom) seeds: 1 tsp
- Ginger, grated: 1/2 tsp
- Cumin seeds: 1 tsp
- Atta (whole wheat flour): 1/2 cup



How to make:

- Mix powdered oats with maida, baking powder, baking soda, yogurt, 1 tsp salt and ghee. Knead into soft dough. Sprinkle water only if the dough is stiff despite the yoghurt. Set aside for at least 1-2 hours.
- For the stuffing, mix onion, green chilies, ajwain, ginger, cumin seeds and 1/2 tsp salt. Keep it aside.
- Divide the dough into 8 equal-sized balls. Roll each one out into a small disk using atta for dusting, like rotis.
- Place a little portion of the stuffing mixture in the center of each disk. Bring all the sides up and enclose the filling tightly. Gently roll again, using flour to dust, onto a 4-inch disc.
- Heat the home tandoor and place the kulcha in it till there are pink spots on the flatbreads. This takes 2-3 minutes. (You can cook covered on your regular tawa as well.)
- Serve hot with butter on top and chole, or a curry of your choice. You may also add yoghurt, pickle, onions and chili on the side.

pTron launches statement earbuds with the most unique transparent charging case

pTron, the rapidly growing and leading maker of affordable digital lifestyle and audio accessories brand in India, announced the launch of its most uniquely designed true wireless earbuds featuring sleek earbuds packed in an iconic transparent design charging case.

Design and comfort

Beautiful to look at and incredibly awe-striking, the charging case features a led display that helps let you know the battery level of the case. With a sleek dual-color design, the earbuds aim at creating an experience that's as good in the visual department as it is at handling audio. Ergonomically designed and tilted 45 degrees, the earbuds fit snugly into your ear to deliver immersive, balanced audio directly into your head.

Audio and calls

Made to offer the most immersive sound experience the earbuds feature powerful 10mm drivers that offer balanced bass, mid and treble performance. Behind the scenes, an advanced chipset that offers 50ms low latency ensures an exceptional

movie viewing experience.

Calibrated for entertainment and work, the earbuds can be paired with a laptop as well as a smartphone so you can go about your day from either device, whether it's watching training videos or listening to music while you work, answering calls, or even attending online meetings.

Connectivity and touch controls

The pTron Bassbuds Nyx comes with Bluetooth 5.1 for stable connectivity and

increased mobility. With responsive touch control, users can access various functions like Answer/Reject calls, volume control, and Play/Pause Music by tapping the touch panel. The earbuds independently connect and transmit to the paired device which allows for either the Left or Right

earbud to enter mono mode or stereo mode seamlessly.

Performance and battery

The Bassbuds Nyx offers up to 9 hours of use on a single charge while the case itself can provide a further 23, for up to 32 hours of listening enjoyment. With a Type C port and the quick charge feature, the earbuds can be completely charged in 1 hour approximately. The ergonomic and lightweight earbuds are also equipped with IPX4 technology making them sweat and water-resistant which keeps you going be it sweaty workouts or outdoor runs.

Price and availability

Priced at Ra 1,299, the uniquely designed Bassbuds Nyx is available on Amazon India from November 24.



Gifting options by Melorra

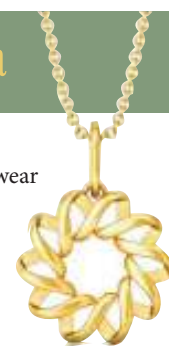
Spiral goes viral gold pendants

This spiral gold pendant is the right choice for girls to wear on Diwali Pooja and other festivities. Its design makes it different from other jewellery. It comes with BIS hall-mark and try on available as per consumer requirements.

Price: Rs 21,446

Like a lily gold earrings

This set of earrings is a suitable fit for any ethnic dress that can glam up the whole look. Light in weight and easy to pull with grace at any festivities. Rs 21,724



Creating piquant memories

When ZUCI Chocolates started its journey, it was a whirlwind that made Hyderabad check its tastes. This disruption is credited to Aparna Gorrepati, a master chocolatier and entrepreneur, and her partner Chaitanya Gorrepati, a CXO with over 25 years of experience in global business operations. Artisanal chocolates, decadent desserts and culinary craftsmanship, delivered with pure passion – ZUCI has always kept its promises, garnering innumerable accolades and loyal customers over the years. Featuring the best of global cuisine, with a bold Hyderabad twist to international flavours, The

Bougainvillea promises to create memories for and with Hyderabad. Offering continental classics to delectable desserts, this premium experience is for all including friends, families, professionals and brunch-heads looking for something different in the city. Located right above Zuci Chocolates, the bistro sprawls across two floors of luxurious space with a capacity for about 230 guests, including 2 private dining rooms. From extravagant indoors to sun-kissed rooftop seating, The Bougainvillea is going to be the next ultimate destination for all occasions, big or small, in Hyderabad.

Awshad launches its cannabis medicinal capsules

Cannabis wellness startup Awshad has announced the launch of their new product—a cannabis medicinal capsule line branded as 'Calmasule'. The objective behind this roll-out of the new product line is to help people experience the healing qualities of cannabis in the form of a capsule in order to enable them to alleviate pain, insomnia, stress and various other lifestyle ailments through an all-natural solution and thus aid their overall well-being. Awshad's new range of capsules have been made available under two variants: Calmasule and Calmasule Plus; the main difference between these two variants lies in the concentration/ratio of CBD and THC present in the product.



Don Beardo's Beard Growth Pro Kit

This kit helps you make your beard game strong. Don Beardo's Beard Growth Pro Kit includes products like (Beard & Hair Growth Oill, Beard Activator, Godfather Beard Wash & Growth Roll On) that stimulate inactive hair follicles, promote healthy and shiny beard growth and thereby start the right beard growth journey. Beard Growth Pro Kit is all you need to grow it right to get that envious beard with continued use.



Revitalise your skin with these sheet masks by CAREPOP

SPOT-LESS SERIES - PRO LAVENDER

Lavender is rich in antioxidants and lavender essential oil helps protect and promote the skin's natural barrier. A face mask can help draw out toxins and balance pH levels for the ultimate skin detox. The Lavender sheet mask repairs your skin barrier by providing deep hydration leaving your skin with a dewy touch.

Available on Amazon.
Price: Rs 249

Every individual craves healthy and radiant-looking skin, sometimes environmental issues and sedentary or unbalanced lifestyle habits affect our skin in a drastic way. In order to achieve a smooth-looking texture and healthy glow one must include these sheet masks in their weekly skincare regime.

CLEANSING SERIES - EXCLUSIVE SEAWEED

This ocean plant is enriched with amino acids, minerals, vitamins, antibacterial, and hydrating properties which leads to providing so many benefits to the skin. Seaweed virtually is enriched with every mineral found in the depth of the ocean. This sheet mask provides applicable hydration and adds radiance to the skin.

Available on Amazon.
Price: Rs 199

ANTI-AGING SERIES - PRO PLATINUM

Platinum reduces damage from UV rays, dark circles & puffy eyes. It Gives deep nourishment and also reduces pigmentation damage. This anti-aging sheet mask lessens fine lines & wrinkles, promotes collagen production, and improves skin elasticity.

Available on Amazon.
Price: Rs 249

MOISTURIZING SERIES - EXCLUSIVE HYALURONIC ACID

Hyaluronic acid works as a hydrator, creating a barrier for the skin, locking in moisture, and improving texture. Skin loses water and moisture as we age, so this ingredient will help restore hydration. Applicable for all skin types, however, this sheet mask is best suitable for skin prone to dryness.

Available on Amazon.
Price: Rs 199

BRIGHTENING SERIES - EXCLUSIVE RED GINSENG

Red Ginseng helps to boost the circulation of the skin's smallest blood vessels, in turn, ramping up the synthesis of collagen which treats fine lines and wrinkles. It acts as a shield against environmental pollutants which are easily absorbed through the skin, and accumulate in pores, and is also Suitable for sensitive skin. This sheet mask's active ingredient is red ginseng which is known for its rejuvenation properties.

Available on Amazon.
Price: Rs 199

EVEN TONING SERIES - EXCLUSIVE ACEROLA

Antioxidants protect against free radical damage. Prevents skin aging. Evens and brightens skin tone. These sheet masks boost collagen production and diminish the appearance of stubborn blemishes.

Available on Amazon.
Price: Rs 199

Choose the right builder

Selecting the right builder for your dream home is a critical step. The builder you choose will be in charge of your home and everything it has to offer. There are far too many builders on the market, but who is the most dependable of them all? To find the best builder who will provide the best quality in terms of quality of material, architecture, and service, one must be cautious and conduct a thorough market study. One must compare, analyse, and select a builder who is the best among his competitors and provides what you require.

Here are some simple, yet crucial, pointers to help you choose the best builder for your home.

Experience of the builder:

The industry experience of the builder you choose speaks volumes about his efficiency. If a builder has been in the market for a while and has consistently performed well, one can be confident that he provides both quality and service. An experienced builder will be well-versed in the industry, materials, and evolving architecture. You can be convinced

that someone with extensive experience will construct high-quality homes.

The one who meets your needs:

Each of us is looking for something unique in our ideal home. Different builders' projects may include a variety of styles, scales, and lifestyles. Or, one builder may offer a wide range of options — make sure you choose something that meets your needs and that the builder you choose offers a home within your budget as well as the amenities and lifestyle that you desire.

Quality checking:

A good builder adheres to timetables and is constantly monitoring the quality and progress of work. The work schedule should be transparent, and the buyer should have access to quality checking guidelines, regular updates on the progress of their home's construction, and so on. A builder who has a thorough inspection process and follows it will provide you with the highest-quality

homes.

Service and post-care:

It is critical to not only provide a well-planned home but also to provide good post-occupation service. The builder should maintain the homes and amenities in order to provide a relaxing experience for their customers. A builder who does not provide good

post-occupancy service does not qualify as a dependable option. Sometimes residents have problems maintaining their homes but do not receive the necessary assistance.

(The writer, Suren Goyal, is an RPS Group partner.)

India public cloud market to reach \$13 bn by 2026: Report

The overall India public cloud services market is expected to reach \$13 billion by 2026, growing at a compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of 23.1 per cent for the 2021-26 period, an IDC report said on Thursday.

The India public cloud services (PCS) market, including infrastructure-as-a-service (IaaS), platform-as-a-service (PaaS) solutions, and software-as-a-service (SaaS), revenue totaled \$2.8 billion for the first half of 2022.

"With the growth in digital innovation, organizations are looking to bring new products and services to the market faster through digital streams and increase their investments in technologies like AI/ML, edge computing, blockchain, and IoT to improve customer experience and business efficiency," said Rajiv Ranjan, Associate Research Director, Cloud and Artificial Intelligence, IDC India.

SaaS continued to be the largest component of the over-

all public cloud services market, followed by IaaS and PaaS during the first half of 2022.

The top two public cloud service providers continue to hold more than 45 per cent of the market, said the IDC report.

With India being a key growth market, cloud service providers continued to expand their presence in the country by unveiling new data centers/cloud regions, thus enhancing their service delivery capabilities.

There was also a surge in the adoption of cloud-based AI platforms and cloud-native application development.

"With more Indian enterprises working on strengthening their digital and smart capabilities, public cloud adoption will continue to be driven by the demand for upgrading legacy systems, omnichannel customer expenses, real-time data analytics, connected platforms and applications, etc," said Harish Krishnakumar, senior market analyst, IDC India.

Tips to avoid falling prey to banking fraud

With more than 690 million active internet users or about 41% of our nation's total population, India comes in second only to China. Numerous services, especially online banking, have blossomed in India's rural and urban areas as a result of this extensive digital penetration.

The number of banking and cyber frauds has skyrocketed, impacting both banks and consumers. Therefore, it is crucial to raise public awareness about scammers and keep taking measures to stop their bad deeds.

Here are some tips to prevent banking fraud:

- Never disclose your personal details, like your credit card number or UPI PIN, to anyone. Banks or other financial companies will never ask for your username, password, or other bank details.
- Avoid using public wi-fi networks for any kind of transaction.
- Do not open emails that look suspicious.
- Avoid downloading or opening attachments from unknown sources.
- Do not trust an email that asks for your personal information.
- Always have strong and unique

passwords. Include a combination of upper and lowercase characters along with numbers.

- Do not download apps that are not used or required.
- Always read communications sent by banks or financial institutions related to fraud awareness.
- Restrict the ability to download apps on your mobile device.
- If you receive a call or e-mail asking for your banking details for KYC/Re-KYC or any other purpose, then immediately visit the nearest branch or call your relationship manager for assistance.



How planets influence the education of your child

Hello readers! You may know that traditionally, Vijayadashami has been considered the best time to start the education of the child. Like with everything else in life, education too is influenced by the actions of planets and houses in Vedic astrology. Knowing the positions of the planets in the horoscope of your child will help you know in advance how he or she is going to fare at school. Remember, education is not just about scoring top marks in examinations; an education horoscope is about realising the child's skill set and putting them to maximum productive use. It is the most crucial step in parenting. Ensuring the proper education is the biggest thing you can do for your child and the nation. For this, an education horoscope would be of immense help.

In our constant strive towards a better quality lifestyle, a concern exists within every child and parent about choosing the correct stream of education for a better future. It is through examination that a student gains confidence, knowledge, and wisdom in life. An examination is the base of the Hindu education system. In Hinduism, Goddess Saraswati is worshipped as the goddess of education, knowledge and wisdom. This Saraswati Mantra, if duly chanted, is very helpful and important for a student:

Which house represents education?


The education prospects of a person rest largely on the 2nd house, the 4th house, the 5th house and the 9th house. The 8th house is also sometimes analysed in an education horoscope. The only condition that is to be required for success in education is that the concerned house, its lord and the significator planet should be in a good state.














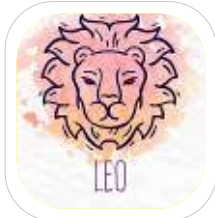







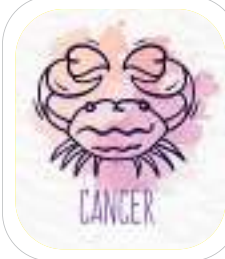


The 2nd house represents education and early childhood. A malefic influence on this house or its lord may lead to problems in early-age education. If left unchecked, this may even lead to a complete break in the education of the child. Any 'dusthana' presence results in bad effects.

The 4th house plays an important role in the education prospects of a person. The 4th house represents the mind and mental stability. This house reflects the capability of learning or grasping anything quickly and correctly. It is believed that around 50% of the whole grasping power of an individual depends on the strength of this house and its lord. If both are exalted, strong or well influenced, due mental strength and good grasping power will be blessed on the native.

However, if the house or lord or both come under the bad influence in the form of planets or other houses, then the person may experience disappointment and failure in education due to poor grasping power and a restless mind. The intensity of this impact will depend on the intensity of the planet or house in question. In the backdrop of modern education, the 4th house represents education till the school level.

The 5th house in the horoscope represents all the memory power and over 50% of the grasping power of an individual. The 4th and 5th house combined control all the grasping power of a person. On the strength of these two houses and their lords, it can be decided whether the person can grasp anything very quickly or not. A strong 5th house is necessary for one to pass high school and go for further studies. The 5th house represents the analytical power of the person. A student with a strong 5th house can do well in any situation. It gives a person the ability to make the right decision at the right time. The 5th house also represents intelligence and logic.



           				
 <p>ARIES</p> <p>Self-improvement will be your motto. Friends and relatives will help you. There may be financial pressure, but nothing serious. Life will be joyful.</p>	 <p>LEO</p> <p>Your confidence will help you to face some harsh situations. Keep a tight grip on emotions. This is not the time for new starts. Don't get depressed.</p>	 <p>SAGITTARIUS</p> <p>You may turn into a workaholic. Hard work will bring results without delay. You may be craving romance. Others' expectations may be a burden.</p>	 <p>CAPRICORN</p> <p>It may be difficult to manage relationships. Be gentle with yourself and your loved ones. There may be new projects. Stay away from chauvinism.</p>	 <p>VIRGO</p> <p>You will have many novel ideas. What you need is the support of co-workers. You will receive help to come out of delusions. Creativity will get a boost.</p>
<div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between; align-items: center;"> <div>  <p>TAURUS</p> </div> <div style="text-align: center;"> <h2>YOUR WEEK AHEAD</h2> </div> <div>  <p>LIBRA</p> </div> </div>				
<p>Hard work that was being done will finally reap benefits. Enjoy it, but do not let them make you lazy. Special moments may deepen relationships.</p>	 <p>AQUARIUS</p> <p>Adjustments may be needed in life. There may be a critical situation. Your endeavours will bring due results. Good time to lay the ground for life ahead.</p>	 <p>SCORPIO</p> <p>There may be dilemmas in life. Others count on you to make a decision. Friends may back you. Show patience and accept advice when it's given.</p>	 <p>CANCER</p> <p>Siblings will be more supportive towards you. This is not the time for new beginnings. Fortune will find you soon. Time is good for a family outing.</p>	<p>Super sensitive feelings will hamper progress. You need to loosen up a bit. Dealing with troubles will cost time. Time is good to make changes in life.</p>
 <p>GEMINI</p>	 <p>PISCES</p>			

The 9th house represents higher education in Vedic astrology. Here, higher studies mean studies beyond bachelor programmes. The 9th house is also the house of religion and spirituality. Additionally, the 8th house in astrology is the house that denotes education which is not related to mainstream or conventional. Students and youth who get attracted to offbeat and occult streams of science are most likely to have a strong 8th house in their horoscope.

A planet present in the 10th house directly aspects the 4th house. Also, the planets in the 11th house aspect the 5th house resulting in a strong impact on the field of choice in education. The presence of malefic planets in the 10th and 11th houses indicate hurdles in getting an education, while the presence of benefic planets represents getting a good education.

Which is the best combination for studies?

To get success in studies Jupiter, Mercury, Venus and Ketu have to be in a good position. From the 2nd house, the primary education of a child is assessed. The 4th house is for the analysis of senior secondary classes while the 5th house is for the assessment of graduation. The 9th house signifies higher education.

If the 5th and 9th lords are connected, it leads to Parivartan Yoga where the person is blessed with academic excellence and receives great respect and recognition in society. If the lord of the 9th is placed in the 5th house, then the person would excel in writing and will possess abundant wealth.

If the 4th lord and 12th lord are connected with the 5th lord then the person will travel abroad for foreign education and settle there. If the 5th, 9th, and 12th houses are connected,

the person will go abroad for education but will return home.

Remedies for good education

Putting up green curtains in the study room will improve the influence of planet Mercury resulting in greater concentration and stronger memory. Reciting Saraswati Beej Mantra (Om Shreem Hreem Saraswati-Ya Namaha) 21 times before studying will help to attain the divine blessings of Devi Saraswati, the goddess of education and wisdom. Placing the idol of Devi Saraswati in the study room would also be beneficial.

Combining roli, sugar and rose petals and storing them in a copper container will help to attain the blessings of the Sun. Donating something red-coloured to the needy and poor and having food with little or no salt on Sundays will improve chances for educational success. Recite the Gayatri mantra 21 times every day. Having one

teaspoon of tulsi juice (basil) with honey every day before breakfast will increase memory power.

Heavy furniture has no place in a study room. Offering green moong seeds, cardamom seeds and dhruva wrapped in a green cloth to Lord Ganesha every Wednesday will help to overcome the ill effects and negative influence of Mercury. Sit facing the East direction while studying. This will help the person to be calm and composed with positive thoughts in the mind. This will also help in increasing concentration. Placing the study desk in the north, east or north-east direction will ensure the flow of positive energy in the room. Recite the mantra 'guru grehgayepadhaanraghuraee, alp kaal vidya sab pai' 108 times every Wednesday. While sleeping, make sure the head is facing South or East. Wearing a small square piece of copper in a long chain is also effective in improving educational prospects.

GLOBE TROT

'Korean' woman YouTuber harassed on Mumbai street in viral video

A South Korean YouTuber was harassed by a man on the streets of Mumbai. A video of the incident has gone viral on various social media platforms.

In the one-minute-long video, the accused can be seen offering a lift to the woman YouTuber by grabbing her hand while she uncomfortably resists. When the woman refuses to sit, the accused puts a hand around her neck and tries to kiss her on the cheek.

However, the police have registered a case of sexual assault on its own based on



the video. The accused were identified as Mobeen Chand Mohd Shaikh, 19, and Mohd Naqib Sadarialam Ansari, 20.

Influencer kicks dog for reel, posts apology after being slammed on internet

Instagram influencer Kajal Kiran has been facing backlash on social media after she filmed a video of kicking a stray dog and laughing. Following this, the animal lovers across the social media platforms reported the video and filed complaints against the woman to the authorities.

Soon after facing an outage on social media, Kiran deleted the video from her account and issued an apology.

In the video, she claimed that she is an animal lover. In the caption, she wrote, "Hi Guys, I am sorry for my cruel act, this was a heat of the moment. I regret my actions and didn't realize the gravity at that point of time. I vow to not harm any animals." Commented on the post, an



NGO called Animal Hope and Wellness wrote, [That wasn't funny, it was disgusting. I guess it was amusing to you and the people around you, but not to many of us. You showed your "true colors" and so don't pretend now to be someone you're not. Make sure you're not around any animals from now on, they will be much better off.]

Gujarat couple goes to vote straight from their wedding

A newlywed couple, who came all the way to the polling station to cast their vote during the first phase of state elections in Gujarat, has caught the Internet's attention. Pictures clicked at a polling booth show the bride and groom, Kavita and Vaibhav, in their wedding attire as they stand next to security personnel.

The couple was spotted at polling booth number 208 in the Bhuj Assembly constituency in Kutch district. The bride looked stunning in a white floral lehenga with gota and zari work on the blouse. She teamed it up with a traditional red dupatta that featured golden embroidery



on the borders. She also wore a statement Kundan set for her big day. The groom complemented her by picking a finely tailored sherwani in a similar shade.

Election Commission of India: Supreme Court's unfinished task

On November 24th, when the Supreme Court questioned the 'lightning speed' at which Arun Goel was appointed as Election Commissioner, the nation woke up to another *chamatkar* of Modi sarkar. The procedure for Goel's appointment took less than 24 hours! The wonderful appointment was made the day after the apex court started examining the need to insulate the Election Commission of India (ECI) from political influence by setting up a 'neutral and independent mechanism' for the appointment of Election Commissioners.

The post of Election Commissioner in question had been vacant since May. After Goel had taken voluntary retirement as secretary (on Nov 18), the very next day (Saturday) he was appointed as the Election Commissioner. He took charge on Monday.

Justice KM Joseph, the presiding judge of the bench, observed: "We don't have anything against an individual. This man, in fact, is excellent in terms of academics. But we are concerned with the structure of the appointment. On 18th we hear the case, on same day you move the file, on same day PM says I recommend his name. Why this urgency? It says based on the list maintained, there are four names that you have recommended. I want to understand that out of vast reservoir of names, how do you actually select a name...Someone who was about to be superannuated in December. He is the youngest among the four names that were recommended. Is that a criterion? How did you select?"

The court then pointed out that three of the four candidates on the panel from which Goel was picked were 62 years old and could not have completed a full term of six years.

Under law, the Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) as well as the two Election Commissioners (ECs) ought to have separate six-year tenures. Still, as the SC lay bare, the Centre has reduced the scope of candidates to bureaucrats and ensured that neither the CEC nor any of the ECs serves their full term.

"A CEC is a person to be appointed in his own right. You have made it into a promotion source. You are supposed to appoint a person directly as CEC. You have made ECs a feeder category. The founding fathers contemplated a CEC who will hold office for six years independently... not as a promotion," Justice Joseph said, addressing the Union government.

Thanks to the resilience and long-standing strengths of India's democracy, the Judiciary has time and again proactively halted insidious attacks on constitutional bodies by myopic and lesser mortals presiding over the Executive. Since Independence, successive governments at the Centre have chosen to ignore the functional independence of the Election Commission of India by not enacting a law envisaged by Article 324 of the Constitution. Article 324 provides for the appointment of Election Commissioners, but it does not delineate the mechanism or procedure for such appointments. The enabling law that the Constitution-makers had envis-

aged for proper appointment of ECs has not seen the light of the day in the past 72 years. Matters came to a head with Goel's (dis)appointment.

Since 1993, the ECI has been a multi-member body, comprising a CEC (chairman) and two Election Commissioners (ECs). It was made a multi-member body mainly to belittle former CEC TN Seshan, who, as a no-nonsense official, had become a hot potato for the Union government of the day. The CEC has six-year tenure, but the incumbent should demit office on attaining 65. The SC has questioned the trend to casually appoint ECs and elevate one among them as CEC based on seniority. The Court has called out the present practice of appointing CECs close to that age as it leaves them with a

brief, insecure tenure. Unlike in the case of Chief Justices, insecure tenures of ECs undermine their independence. Supreme Court judges have security of tenure in that they can be removed only by impeachment by Parliament. In the case of the ECI, only the CEC enjoys such status. The ECs can be removed on the CEC's recommendation.

On the ECI as it stands today, former CEC SY Quraishi has gone on record: "The most powerful Commission in the world has the most defective system of appointment. Unilaterally the Executive of the day is appointing the Election Commissioners, whereas all over the world there is a wider system of consultation". Quraishi's point is that the ECI, a constitutional body performing politically sensitive functions, surely deserves to have a collegium.

The Supreme Court has rightly underlined the importance of having a Chief Election Commissioner who is 'independent and a man of character'. The Court pithily observed: "Suppose for example, there are some allegations against the Prime Minister and the CEC has to act but he does not act. Will it not be a case of complete breakdown of the system?"

The Court paid tributes to TN Seshan, who, as the CEC during 1990-96, had initiated the process spring cleaning India's electoral system. The semblance of sanity that we do have today in the electoral process is because of the introduction of electors' photo identity cards and the strict enforcement of the Model Code of Conduct under his dreaded watch. Derided as 'Alsatian' by mighty politicians whom he had dutifully humbled, the dogged CEC went on to list 150 malpractices that he himself scrupulously uprooted from all the elections held under his hawk-eyed superintendence, including distribution of liquor, bribing voters, ban on writing on walls, and the use of religion in election speeches.

The apex court, having turned the spotlight on flaws in appointment of ECs, must now take the case before it to its logical conclusion. It must get the Union government to institute a collegium-like system (we know the Centre is averse to even collegiums of SC and HCs) to address systemic flaws in the Election Commission of India. This includes extending the CEC's tenure security to the ECs. The nation will be beholden to the Supreme Court if it completes this unfinished task.



MURALI RAMASWAMY
Senior Journalist

**LIGHT
THEESKO**