

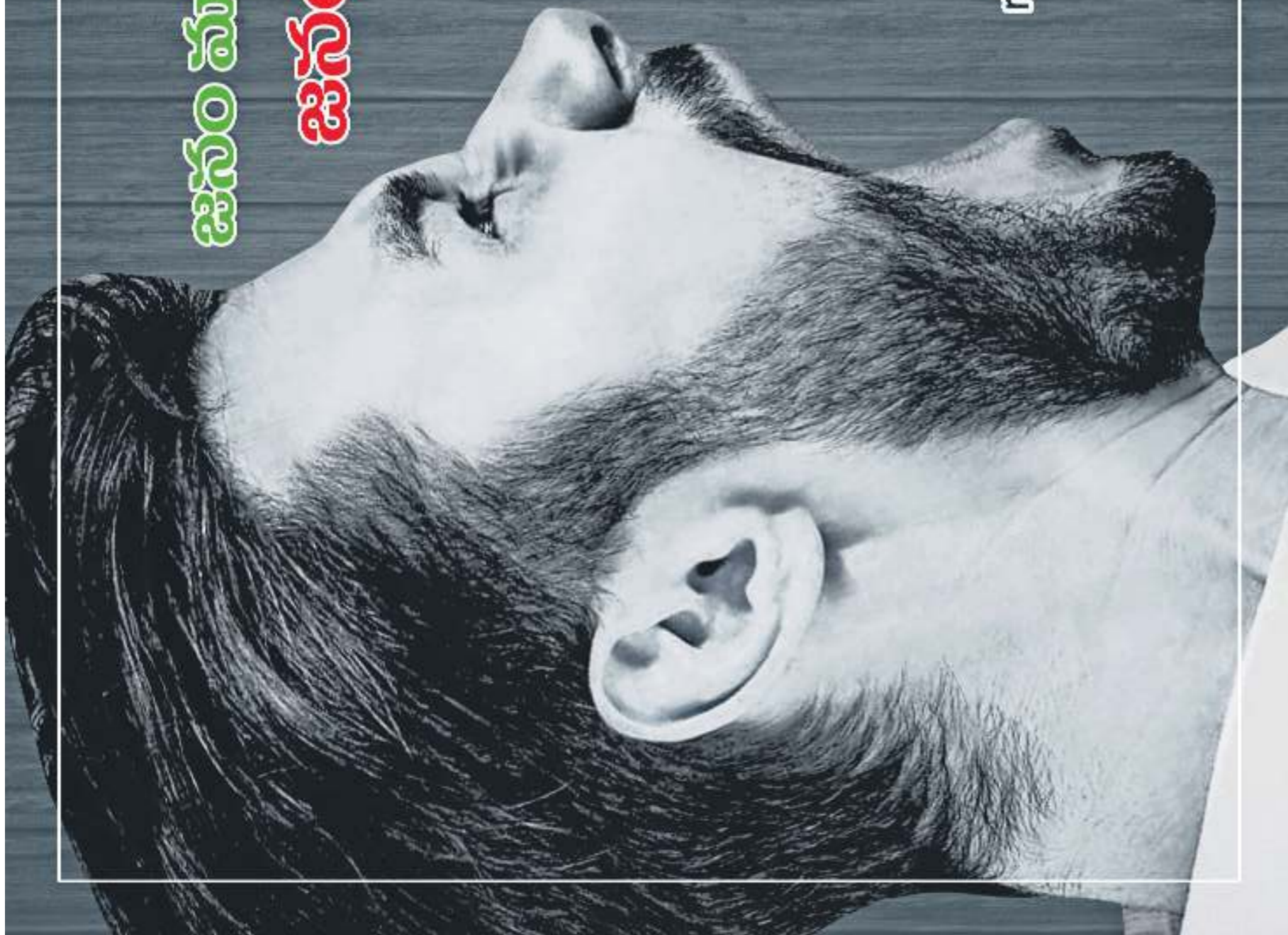
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SUNDAY, DECEMBER 25, 2022

SUNDAY



PAY

pioneer

A 'Sardar' of baddies
like no other

5



Wearable art from the heart
P:3&4

Synthesizing science and spirituality
Swamy Mukundananda

689

 **PERSON**
CHARLES SOBHRAJ

Nepal's top court ordered on Wednesday the release of Charles Sobhraj, the French serial killer portrayed in the Netflix series *The Serpent* who was responsible for a string of murders across Asia in the 1970s. The Supreme Court ruled Sobhraj, 78, who has been in prison in the Himalayan republic since 2003 for murdering two North American tourists, should be freed on health grounds. After a troubled childhood and several prison terms in France for petty crimes, Sobhraj began travelling the world in the early 1970s and wound up in the Thai capital Bangkok.


 **VIDEO**
PASSENGER VS INDIGO FLIGHT ATTENDANT!

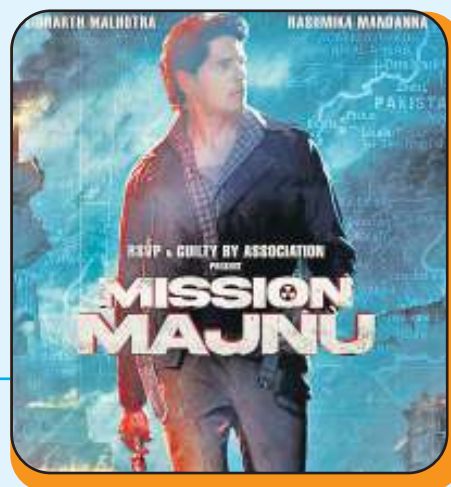
A video showing a heated exchange between an IndiGo crew member and a passenger has gone viral on social media. The crew member is heard saying, "I am an employee, I am not your servant" in the clip, dividing internet users. The incident reportedly happened on an Istanbul flight to Delhi and the airline company has apparently responded saying the issue is being looked upon. Sanjiv Kapoor, Jet Airways CEO, rallied in support of the crew member saying they are human too.


 **SONG**
JHOOME JO PATHAAN

Shah Rukh Khan has unveiled the second song from his upcoming movie, *Pathaan*. Titled *Jhoom Jo Pathaan*, it also features Deepika Padukone. The film's first song to release was *Besharam Rang*, which created quite the controversy all across the country. The song is shot in picturesque European locations and features a bunch of outfit changes and a catchy Western tune. It is sung by Arijit Singh. The song shows Shah Rukh and Deepika dancing together with a few background dancers. Shah Rukh is in a rugged look while Deepika looks glam. Produced by Aditya Chopra, *Pathaan* stars Shah Rukh Khan, Deepika Padukone and John Abraham in the lead roles and is all set to hit the theatres on January 25, 2023 in Hindi, Tamil and Telugu.


 **MOVIE**
MISSION MAJNU

Mission Majnu is one of the extensively awaited films of 2023 starring Sidharth Malhotra and Rashmika Mandanna. Directed by Shantanu Bagchi and produced by Ronnie Screwvala, Amar Butala, and Garima Mehta, this spy thriller is inspired by true events. *Mission Majnu* is set to premiere on January 20, 2023, on Netflix. This film also stars Kumud Mishra, Parmeet Sethi, Sharib Hashmi, Mir Sarwar, and Zakir Hussain. Recently, Sidharth in one of the promotional events of the film was mobbed by his fans.


 **PICTURE**
LEO MESSI LIFTING FIFA WORLD CUP

Argentina lifted the FIFA world cup after thirty six years in a riveting match against France. Lionel Messi put out a magnificent performance on the big night and won the cup for his country. With 70 million likes, the picture that Leo Messi posted on Instagram with the world cup is officially the most liked picture on the platform beating the famous photo of a hen's egg (57 million likes and counting).



Wearable art from the heart

Tattooing may be trendy, but its roots are prehistoric. Historically, they have been used for varied purposes, including as markers to identify the group or clan to which an individual belonged, magical protection against misfortune or to ward off evil, badge of courage, designating rank in society and branding criminals. Its use in modern society as a decorative and cosmetic wearable art, usually as a message coming straight from the heart, is of recent origin. *The Pioneer's* **AMARTYA SMARAN** traces the evolution of tattooing among various communities in India with focus on how it has become a respected art form in itself.

The tradition of tattooing was very much prevalent in ancient India, where several tribes had adapted maze-like patterns found on boulders dating back to 1,000 B.C. in the form of permanent tattoos. The Apatani Tribes in Arunachal Pradesh are known for their distinct practices. The elderly women of the tribe can be spotted with huge nose plugs and face tattoos. According to folk tales, beautiful women of the Apatani tribe were subjected to these practices to keep them safe from neighboring tribes. The whole objective was to make beautiful women look unattractive to deter men from other sects. The tattooing technique involved the usage of a thorny plant and cane to ink the tattoo on the faces of women. Although elderly Apatani women used to take pride in the tradition, the younger generations of the tribe came to detest it.

The Government of India banned these practices in 1974 as the nose plugs and face tattoos made the individuals susceptible to discrimination.

While the men of the Munda tribe in Jharkhand considered getting inked as a symbol of valor and courage in response to defeating the mighty Mughals, the Dhanuks tribes of Bihar practiced the painful tradition to modify the natural state of their women to protect them from influential sexual predators. The women of the Baiga tribes of Madhya Pradesh chronologically get inked with age. For example, when a woman reaches the age of 15-16, the tattoo artists would ink her hands and legs. Once the woman becomes a mother, she would get her chest tattooed. In southern India, the practice of tattooing is referred to as 'pachakutharathu'. The Korathi community of Tamil Nadu would go in search of people who were interested in getting a tattoo in exchange for rice, betel leaves, and nuts.

The tattoo culture has been an integral part of various ethnic groups in Nagaland like the AO, Chang, Khiamniungan, Konyak, Phom, Pochury, Sangtum, and Yimchunger. Individuals were given tattoos based on their social status. For example, the head chief's wife would get a distinct tattoo to distinguish her from her counterparts and a successful man would be given another kind of tattoo. The tattoo artists in Nagaland were mostly women who would tactfully shape the tattoos using traditional tools made from thorns taken from cane plants. The ink would be taken from the resin or sap of the tree. To obtain the ink, the artists would burn the resin under an inverted piece of a vessel. Later, the sticky extracts would be scraped off and mixed with rice beer, breast milk, leaves, or water.

During the British Raj, the bureaucratic system did not permit individuals with visible tattoos at the workplace. Therefore, fearing the risk of not cracking jobs, men were compelled to discontinue the tradition. Due to the patriarchal system that prevailed during the time, women stayed home for the

most part. Hence, they were in a position to carry the legacy of the age-old traditions and pass it on to future generations.

Despite such a rich history, the stigma around tattooing still exists in India. Some consider it a taboo and others unabashedly pass judgments on those who embrace the art form, making it look alienated. *The Pioneer* spoke to experts and tattoo enthusiasts from the city, including those who wear their hearts on their skin, to know their viewpoints.

Tattooist Amin Sultan Hajiani of Angel Tattoos and Piercing elaborates on the importance of traditional tattoo practices, saying: "Traditional art and basics are always important as they are the roots. Using them to improvise and hone their skill level is up to an artist. The modern way of tattooing has come a long way, be it the equipment or the art itself".

"For me, it is a never-ending learning process. Even after 15 years, I am still figuring out and exploring things like a beginner and there is too much art to improve and execute. However, we have come a long way in terms of the perception of people regarding the art form. Thanks to the cinema, people mostly take inspiration from there. Though the industry is heading in the right direction, we are still 10 years behind the West in terms of people respecting the art, the artist, and the tattoo culture.

Continued on Page 4...



Continued from Page 3...

I would urge young artists to pick up tattooing as a passion and not as a business. One must look forward to up their skills and keep practicing the art form. When it comes to judgment, I think one must ignore it. After all, it is your art on your body," says Amin.

Alif Hirani, founder of BOATS Tattoo Studios, speaking with great passion, observes: "In essence, before I started tattooing, I was a fine artist. I enjoy discovering new styles, learning them, and using them to create and express things to others. So, in terms of tattooing, I adore everything about it because it offers me the chance to make something every day that will last a lifetime and remind people of me whenever they talk about their tattoos. I enjoy hearing diverse explanations from people about the significance of their tattoos and the motivations behind them. Additionally, interacting with new people every day is exciting since you may learn from them and there are some people who are interested in learning how tattooing works."

The young artist underscored the importance of keeping things clean in the studio and shared his thoughts on the risks involved in getting a tattoo, "For us, safety is the most important concern, though it is not hard if you keep everything hygienic and maintain cleanliness in your surroundings and in the studio.

Risks involved in getting a tattoo starts from where you get it. Have you searched about the place enough to trust the artist? People with heart problems, epilepsy, diabetes, hemophilia, or those who are on blood thinners medication should not get it.

Not to scare anyone but also maintaining your tattoo after getting it and taking care of it is very important to prevent infections."

Busting notions around the art form and addressing the state of tattooing in Hyderabad, the expert says: "There are numerous tattoo-related myths throughout the world, and I think this is because people don't know enough about tattooing (tattoos) --- from deceptive aftercare to associated risks and safety aspects. For a very long time, the tattoo industry has altered and advanced beyond what the average person is aware of.

Reverting to the original question,

as I previously stated, people only view it as a tattoo and not as artwork, which is why I believe people are not being particularly creative in this arena. I would not say that much has changed, especially in Hyderabad, but it is a steady process and you can see that people's perceptions are shifting as it becomes more of an art form. From my point of view,

I don't believe you need to be qualified or educated to understand tattooing and not view it as taboo; it's more about being open and accepting it as an art form. Seeing it as a decoration to your body and seeing it as something that defines you, something that makes you different from others, and when people do understand I feel happy about it. Tattoos are one of the only things you take to the grave, having tattoos does not make you a delinquent or a thug. It's art! Art is about self-expression and creativity. Some people hang their art. We wear ours!"

Sravs Kadium, a female tattoo artist and founder of Sravs Tattoos and Piercings, takes us through her journey in the tattoo industry. "Every job is challenging, so is mine. I see tattooing from an artist's perspective, but most of the clients see it on paper and expect an outcome that replicates exactly the same thing. I see tattoos on different skins: dark, brown, and white. The results of every skin tattoo vary but the clients expect the same results. I try to explain to the clients the shape and size for a better result. The most challenging aspect is when clients say 'Can I get a small tattoo?'. I try to explain to them not to go for a small tattoo but to go for a clear tattoo because, in the future, the client might put on weight or lose weight. I always want my tattoos to last longer. I like designing complicated ones because I enjoy them to the fullest. It feels challenging to work with new tattoos every single day and I give my 100% to get the best results."

There are people who rush to the studios in order to get a tattoo. It could be peer pressure or a deep desire to emulate your favorite hero on screen. Commenting on people regretting their tattoos, Sravs says: "Tattoo regrets are very common, but I help clients with a tattoo cover-up. Redesign or redo tattoos to make them look beautiful and help them forget their past. Getting a tattoo is like a permanent addition to one's body and more importantly to their soul. Tattoos are forever, so please take your time and choose the best design or a professional like me can help you with the design. My goal is to become the best tattoo artist and I am constantly learning every day. I will give my best for any kind of tattoo, I will keep learning every day until I become the best artist. I would like to thank Amin Sultan Hajiani for teaching me the craft of tattooing."

Now, let us get into the psychology of getting a tattoo. Counseling psychologist V.S.L. Vidya pinpoints the various factors that lead individuals to gravitate towards getting a tattoo: "Tattooing is an age-old practice dating back to 3250 BC. To date, many cultures continue the legacy of the tradition. Around 38% of adults between the age groups of 18-29 have a minimum of one tattoo on their body. Tattooing is an art pertaining to the body. It is a form of self-expression. It could mean different things to different people. Self-expression, traditional and cultural belief systems, self-identity, imitating idols, risk-taking behavior, and peer pressure are the factors that propel people toward getting a tattoo. When people look at celebrities with tattoos, people might look at them and develop a desire to get inked. In order to be unique, one might

get a tattoo. Some people are capable of taking multiple risks like doing drugs. That aggressive pleasure-seeking behavior is also another reason why one might show interest in body art.

Professor Viren Swami suggested in one of his papers that the process of tattooing can be a powerful means of processing one's trauma and reclaiming one's body. Factors like extreme anger, grief, and lack of confidence might as well take the center-stage and push one toward the art form in order to express themselves better. Tattoos can say a lot about a person both inwardly and outwardly. What we think is what we do. One must recognize, understand, and acknowledge their feelings and ask themselves: "Is this the only way to express my feelings?". If that's the right way, then one can go for a tattoo with proper knowledge and understanding."

Sreerupa Kanwar, a tattoo enthusiast, tells us her story of getting inked for the first time. "I have got around six tattoos and I am going to get another one soon. This has been

pachabottu. Ever since I was a kid, I have wanted to get a pachabottu. However, I could never connect with one particular thing to get inked. So, I decided to go to a tattoo place and see what connects. I got my first tattoo on the first day after the lockdown. I thought to myself during the Covid period that if I'm gonna die; I'd rather die having done everything that I wanted to do in life. My first tattoo was very significant to who I am as a person and it has extraordinary spiritual meaning attached to it. I have nine tattoos now and eight of them are spiritual in nature. My biggest tattoo is a Pink Floyd tattoo. I get comments like, "Get it removed, or else you won't get married". There is an idea that people won't accept you if you have tattoos. I did come across a

couple of uncles and aunties who said things like that,

but then there were others who would come and say nice things. I am really against getting the names of their partners inked because it's all pretty uncertain. One should be deeply connected to their tattoo and it should be a reflection of who

you are."

Sharing her journey of getting inked, Sneha, an investigation specialist at Amazon, opines: "Growing up, I was intrigued by designs and patterns. When I was fourteen years old, I used to draw these tattoos on my hand and I'd watch the ink master show religiously. I am the first one from my house to get a tattoo. My first tattoo was a rose which I got in 2019, but that artist wasn't really good. Later, I found the right artist and I had the snake and cassette tape drawn on my hand a few years ago. People say your tattoos must have a traditional meaning to them, but I don't think that's really the case. I am someone who loves designs and if it looks good, it makes me want to get a good tattoo. It's the process of getting a tattoo that excited me more than anything else. I am also into observational astronomy, so, I got a telescope and Saturn tattooed on my skin. I have got around eight tattoos now. Although there was some resistance at home initially, they are okay with it now. People judge you sometimes but I understand that not everyone is going to be appreciative of the design. I've had many people come up to me to look at my tattoos and give me a compliment. I feel my tattoos make me stand out from the crowd. The judgment wouldn't matter to me because I never really asked those people for advice anyway. I like designs, art, tattoos and it makes me really happy and that's what matters at the end of the day."

Self-expression can take many forms and the bottom line with respect to tattooing is that it is a great way to wear your heart on the skin. Although one can erase a tattoo through the painful process of laser treatment, it would be wiser to have a clear idea as to why one wants to get a tattoo. All told, the art of tattooing is a wonderful means to express oneself. The choice to pick a medium to put our feelings and thoughts across is what empowers us. So, what better medium than our bodies?



tattoo. Counseling psychologist V.S.L. Vidya pinpoints the various factors that lead individuals to gravitate towards getting a tattoo: "Tattooing is an age-old practice dating back to 3250 BC. To date, many cultures continue the legacy of the tradition. Around 38% of adults between the age groups of 18-29 have a minimum of one tattoo on their body. Tattooing is an art pertaining to the body. It is a form of self-expression. It could mean different things to different people. Self-expression, traditional and cultural belief systems, self-identity, imitating idols, risk-taking behavior, and peer pressure are the factors that propel people toward getting a tattoo. When people look at celebrities with tattoos, people might look at them and develop a desire to get inked. In order to be unique, one might



something that I always wanted to do. Thirty years ago, we'd only find tattoos on villagers. In the North, the tattooing process is called Godna/Gondwana. At birth, the villagers would get the tattoo with their names. Back in the day, when I was in Delhi, this man would come home to deliver milk from a nearby village. He had this traditional tattoo of a peacock feather along with his name on his hand. That really fascinated me and stayed with me. While growing up, getting a tattoo was definitely not something that was acceptable. Now that I worked for the media, I used to see all these foreigners with nice tattoos and my curiosity grew. Ten years ago, when I moved to Hyderabad, I found a good tattoo artist and got my first tattoo. Even then tattooing was not considered desirable by people. Society would think only druggies and drunkards would get it. I thought I'd stop it with one tattoo, but it's an addiction now. I'm quite an enthusiast; I love the feeling of getting inked."

Sravanthi Juluri, a visual and performance artiste shared her experience with us: "By profession, I'm an abstract and a performance artiste. People connect with my art on a different level and I connect with the art of tattooing on a different level. I was six or seven years old when I first spotted a tattoo on my cook. She had the typical traditional Telangana

A 'Sardar' of baddies like no other

Chunky Panday has not only conquered Bollywood with his films, but he also has his own craze in Bangladesh. His latest movie, *Sardar*, showed how he can be a hell of a baddie too. He's been in the business for over 30 years and has made over \$400 million at the box office. We spent the day with Tezaab fame while he was mitigating in Doha after watching a fantastic football match with his kids to learn more about his emerging vogue in south cinema now! "There were no strategic moves planned to seep into the south market; all the offers are pouring in by chance. The beginning is from Begum Jaan. Look for me opposite Vidya Balan, Saaho director! For the first time, my rough appearance piqued the interest of a filmmaker, which surprised me. Because the character in *Sardar* becomes an anti-hero by chance, the director of the respective movie visualised me with the help of my older projects from the 1990s. I was playing a mad villain for Tamil cinema!" he said. Struggling for almost three years to get a film and having the first one come through interaction in the bathroom is not only bizarre for Chunky but also hilarious. And, with the age of experience, he feels there is no formula to the cinema, no apt permutations and combinations that can bring you fame. He continued, "There will be hits and misses. My career blockbuster, *Aankhen*, would not have done as well if it had been released last year as it did in the 1990s because times change. Playing antagonist roles now doesn't bring any gloom around me; the worst of the worst villains also need not justify themselves since it's a character-driven role for a film."

With no work in his hands for a certain period of time, the profession taught him something very useful: "Failure is the easiest accident to handle because nobody is interested in you for that moment, whereas success is very difficult to hold on to! I started with a bang and then couldn't hold on to my prosperity. Several of the films I signed were probably bad choices! In fact, I confess, I did become gluttonous for money. I fell for multi-starter scripts because, unlike other stars, these scripts were actually working for me. After 1994, ensemble cast films ceased and solo heroes began to appear, ushering in the musical chairs that I witnessed in this industry. I didn't have a chair to sit on! That's when I went to Bangladesh and came back with the thought that I am no longer a superstar — just here in films to play character roles. I stopped fooling myself." Vijay Sethupathi's *Super Deluxe* basically made him fall for Tamil cinema. "The filmmaker was least judgmental about his characters. Following that, I began binge-watching South films for entertainment purposes. I noticed how a solo filmmaker is able to connect interrelated themes with such ease. But I refrain from watching these movies to master how the southern cinema works since it starts to lack variety for me then. Your subconscious is on the roll anyway," he added. He also admitted further in the interview

that his wife, whom he calls a rare and beautiful woman in his life, gave him a reality check too! "I feel contrite about not winning an award until now; that phase disturbs me a lot sometimes. Then I realised that it's not a medal that every star has to win — I have box office collections coming in; what could be better than that? Award functions are organised because they are a way of celebrating our contribution to the cinema. I have never shied away from attending any award function, despite some of my peers making fun of it. They didn't understand I was there to participate in their celebration of success!" Taking us back to the sets

Today, I enjoy watching Shah Rukh Khan's stardom across the globe; that's just how I function. I can never hold resentment against him." Now taking us to the sets of *Sardar*, he explained how the makeup artists represented evil: "The whole transformation was startling to me too. It was a figment of the

The Pioneer's SHIKHA DUGGAL spent the day with Chunky Panday, while he was relaxing in Doha after watching a fantastic football match with his kids to learn more about his emerging vogue in south cinema now!

of Saaho, he expressed, "There were so many actors on the sets. From Bollywood to Tollywood, the arena was full. To me, Prabhas was the deal-sealing factor! When I saw him in *Baahubali*, his enigma pulled me towards Saaho. When the director was narrating the script to me, there was excitement about Prabhas helming the film, and my character tickled something inside me for the first time. Moreover, the comparison of Saaho to *Baahubali* was an achievement in itself." Always surrounded by the influential families of Bollywood, the bitterness of any other actor's success never touched Chunky Panday. That's just how he is! He said, "Just after my arrival in the cinema, Govinda took over. I was observing lapses in my career, and I started to take it for granted too. I saw Shah Rukh going faster than me, and I couldn't catch up with the new set of boys that came in after my arrival. I totally blame myself; I felt there was something lacking in me.

director's imagination, and he did an excellent job of designing it. Because the director was too particular about my beard, we won half the battle when the look and tone were just right. I would like to hang around as the baddie for a while but don't typecast me again. A superstar can continue to be famous only if he has a superior aura around him or if he or she is unpredictable on screen. Kader Khan, Shakti Kapoor, and actors like these inspired me while beginning to take up the role of antagonists! They were a mix of both; they did comedy in one movie and played a villain in the other, and that's just how my career graph has been too."



Swirl, twirl, and sweat it out

Using hula hoops for exercise can be traced back to our forefathers' generation. While it was one of the fun activities that engaged most of the 90s kids, later it had vanished somewhere. Today, for our new segment of Health Talk, *The Pioneer's* TEJAL SINHA brings to you how the age-old fun exercise is once again back and is now being enjoyed by every age group.

Most of us, as much as we could remember, would say that the last time we swirled a hula hoop was sometime around our middle school days, at our school playgrounds or in the park. gives you a nostalgic feeling, isn't it?

The popularity of hula hooping, or the exercise via the hoops, has waxed and waned. They were red-hot in the 60s and continued for a long time, at least till the 90s, and then settled into a steady hum of usage.

But much like the varsity jackets and chunky sneakers of the 90s, the hula hoop is making a comeback — and it's reinventing itself as a sassy piece of fitness equipment.

Thanks to the pandemic, many of us once again got back to wearing our hula rings. The pandemic isolation catapulted hoops back to prominence. Exercise enthusiasts (stuck at home) started looking for ways to jazz up their workouts and turned to hoops. They posted their own hooping videos on social media, garnering millions of views.

Sukesh Rane, a fitness and yoga instructor who has trained over 1,000 people in Hyderabad, says, "People are lazy when it comes to following a fitness routine. What's different about this exercise is that you not only do movemental exercise but also have fun at the same time. It can be done wherever you want, whether at home, on a terrace, in a park, or even at the gym. For the people that

I have been currently training, be it for

fitness or yoga, I have asked them to do the hula hoop exercise for a minimum of 25 to 30 minutes, especially after the pandemic. The reason being that, due to the pandemic, the way that our body functions in terms of fitness has changed."

Keeping an exercise hoop spinning for any length of time requires you to activate lots of muscle groups. To do it, it takes all of your core muscles and the muscles in your buttocks, upper legs, and calves.

"That's the same number of muscles that walking, jogging, or cycling activates. Working the core and leg muscles contributes to improved muscle strength, coordination, and balance. Spin the hoop on your arm, and you'll use even more muscles — the ones in your shoulders, chest, and back," said Sukesh.

Some experts suggest that hooping might also help an aching back. Swasthi Srivastav, a certified trainer, shared that it can be a great rehab exercise to get you out of pain. As the hoop workout involves vigorous exercise, Swasthi shares that it has some risks, including:

People suffering from hip or low back arthritis are at risk.

It can increase the risk of falling if one has balancing issues.

People might also report abdominal bruising after using weighted hoops on the heavier side.

Are you planning to start hula hooping if you've never done it before? Here are

some expert recommendations for you.

If you have an underlying condition, make sure your doctor advises you to begin hooping.

You can choose from lightweight plastic hoops or weighted hoops. "Weighted hoops are made of a much softer material, and they are usually thicker than a traditional hula hoop." Which type of hoop should you start with? Weighted hoops are easier to use.

"If you are new to hooping, purchase a weighted hoop that will help you get your form down and develop the ability to keep it going for a longer period of time," said Swasthi.

Hooping and mental health

Hooping improves your mental health because it is more enjoyable than any other exercise. Several experts have also suggested that hooping helps keep you in the present.

- Hula hooping aids in proper sleep.
- helps you connect with yourself.
- It releases happy brain chemicals.
- reduces stress and anxiety.
- helps you meditate through movement.
- enhances your focus.

The Advantages of Hula Hoop Exercise

- Burns calories and fat.
- Strengthens your core.
- Works and improves your lower body.
- Improves posture.
- Perfect for a warm-up.
- Helps with mental detox.



It's time to cocoon the coconut

Coconuts are by far one of the most important fruits in India. Around 12 million people are dependent on coconut farming for their livelihood and the contribution of the coconut farming sector is huge. However, lately, a deadly disease called Coconut Stem Bleeding has been affecting the cocooned life of coconut plants. Take a stroll through the story as **TANISHA SAXENA** uncovers the facts of the disease with a group of experts in the field.

Coconuts, in India, symbolise a gamut of things. Religious events begin with the act of breaking open a coconut. During the Chath festival in Uttar Pradesh and Bihar, women offer coconuts to God as a custom, and in fact, the cremation ceremonies involve pouring coconut water over the bones or using coconut shells and husks to light a funeral pyre. And it is the lifeline of Indian foods, without which one cannot relish the taste. In essence, coconut is a vital fruit as far as the socio-cultural dimensions of the country are concerned. However, today this coconut tree is suffering from very serious diseases like stem bleeding, basal stem rot, bud rot, yellowing, and many more. Out of these, stem bleeding is a lethal disease that is severely affecting the coconut growers in Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, and Tamil Nadu. It is primarily soil-borne and spreads via spores.

Dr. Navin Kumar Mogha, Department of Chemistry, Inha University, South Korea, elaborated on the disease: "The stem bleeding disease of coconut was first discovered in 2009 in Hainan, China. It is caused by a plant-pathogenic fungus named *Thielaviopsis paradoxa*. This disease is distinguished by the oozing of a dark reddish-brown liquid from cracks or wounds in the bark, covering the stem with a black layer of the fluid ranging in thickness from inches to several feet. The best time to plant coconuts is from July to November, when the chances of this disease's progress are highest. The severity of the disease can be understood by turning affected coconut trunks hollow due to the decay of inner tissues in most advanced cases leading to premature drying and shedding of the outer whorl of the leaves, nut fall, and adverse bunch production. Environmentally sustainable methods that can be used for the prevention and treatment of this disease include the soil application of neem-based cakes and the use of *Trioderma*-based biological control agents."

According to a study conducted by the Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR) in Palakkad, Kerala, stem bleeding incidence was high in the Eruthempathi, Vadakarapathi, Kozizijampara, Nallepalli,

Perumatti, Pattanclereri, and Ozhalapathi areas of the Palakkad district. On close observation, it was noticed that the number of plants with a stem bleeding incidence was higher in the plots with waterlogged conditions compared to other plots. Stem bleeding incidence was found to be high in palms below the age of 20 years. Percentage of palm mortality was high in the

Further, Dr. Vivek Choudhary, Scientist Incharge, Tughlaqabad Biodiversity Park, Delhi, said, "Stem bleeding disease caused by fungus is a really serious concern

case of palms belonging to the age group of 15-20 years in all places surveyed. The disease index calculated to quantify the disease incidence showed that the attack is moderate, with a disease index between 2.39 and 8.01. The first case of stem bleeding disease in coconuts was reported in India in 1922.

The Director, Horticulture, Mr. Chelliah Sellamuthu, who keeps working throughout to maintain and upkeep the planting of the annuals, perennials, and seasonals in the NDMC region of Delhi, spoke with us about the stem bleeding of coconuts and why it happens. He stated, "Such deadly diseases mostly appear owing to poor management and poor care of coconut trees. The majority of the time, they are to blame for the condition and its spread. Moreover, soil health is often neglected and poorly managed with little or no application of organic manures and fertilizers. As a result of this negligence, the coconut palms do not get enough nutrients or adequate conditions for growth. Hence, the stem becomes weak and diseases attack."

for the farmers in our country. Novel biological threats are emerging every day due to climate change and heavy pesticide loads. We should promote more bio-based pesticides, integrated pest management to control the diseases otherwise we may create another major imbalance in the ecosystem."

While there are several studies being conducted by the agricultural departments across the country, Tamil Nadu Agricultural University lists out some key points about the symptoms and management of the disease.

STEM BLEEDING DISEASE: *Thielaviopsis paradoxa*

Symptoms:

- The progress of the disease is faster from July to November.
- Stem bleeding is distinguished by the exudation of a dark reddish brown liquid from longitudinal cracks in the bark and wounds on the stem, which trickles down for several inches to several feet.
- The lesions spread upward as the disease progresses.
- The liquid oozing out dries up and turns black. The tissues below the lesions become rotten and turn yellow first, then black.
- In advanced cases, the inner portions of affected trunks are hollow due to the decay of

inner tissues.

- As a result of extensive damage to the stem tissue, the outer whorl of the leaves turns yellow, dries, and sheds prematurely. The production of bunches is affected adversely. Nut fall is also noticed.

Management:

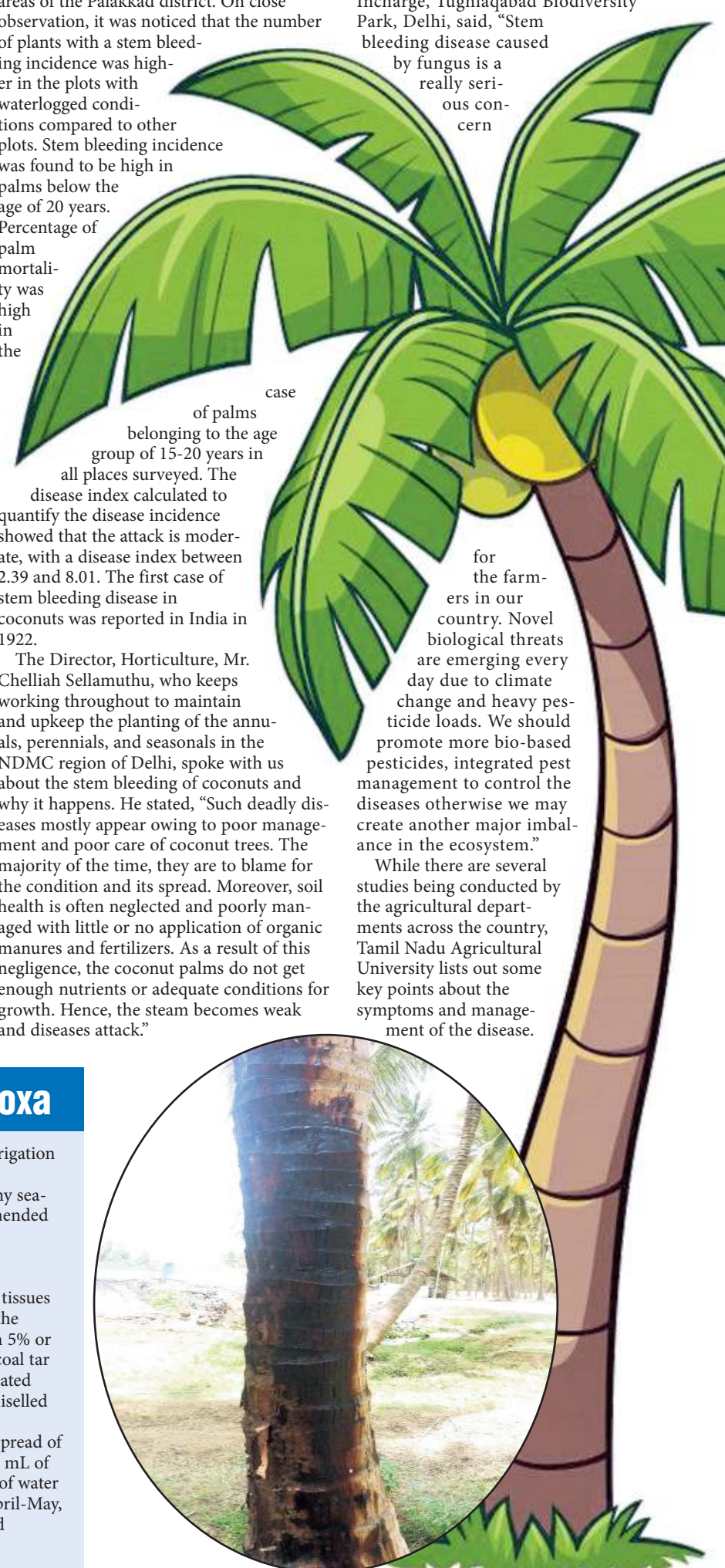
Cultural method:

- Destroy the chiselled materials by burning. Avoid any mechanical injury to the trunk.
- Along with 50 kg FYM, apply 5 kg of neem cake containing the antagonistic fungi *Trichoderma* at 200 g per palm per year to the basin during September.

- Provide adequate irrigation during the summer and drainage during the rainy season, along with recommended fertilizer.

Chemical method:

- Remove all affected tissues with a chisel and paint the wound with tridemorph 5% or Bordeaux paste. Apply coal tar after 1-2 days on the treated portion. Burn off the chiselled pieces.
- To prevent further spread of lesions, root feed with 5 mL of Tridemorph in 100 mL of water three times a year, in April-May, September-October, and January-February.



Synthesizing science and spirituality

Swamy Mukundananda

The quest for truth has put many an individual, whether materialistic or spiritualistic, on a seemingly endless inward journey. Some of them get to know their calling after significant accomplishments in mundane fields. Swamy Mukundananda, a spiritual leader, best-selling author, Vedic scholar, and more importantly, founder of JKYog (Jagadguru Kripaluji Yog), belongs to this rare group. Having done BTech and MBA from prestigious institutions like IIT and IIM, he chose to tread the spiritual path with altruistic goals. In this week's edition of Dil Se, **The Pioneer's K. RAMYA SREE** speaks to Swamy Mukundananda to know inter alia what makes his system of Yoga unique for spiritual aspirants and why he is placed among the most-respected spiritual leaders in the world today.



IIT AND IIM PRODUCT...

I used to play a lot of football in school, tennis and squash while in college. I was fortunate to be educated at IIT and IIM, two of the finest institutions in the world. However, the purpose of education is more than equipping the student to make money, earn fame, status, etc. Rigorous science training left me unimpressed. At IIT, I learnt about so many models - all based on hypothesis and assumptions, and the laws of nature, but there was no mention of the 'lawmaker'. At IIM, while learning Management, Economics, Psychology, and other subjects, the bigger questions of life persisted in my mind: Who am I? Why did I come to this world? What is the purpose of my life? I also realized that working to increase the profits of shareholders of a company is not my calling.

SPiritUAL JOURNEY...

The quest for the 'Absolute Truth' led me to the *Bhagavad Gita* and my spiritual journey began thereafter. I understood that I am a part of God and the purpose of my life is to serve Him. My Gurudev also emphasized how the world has no shortage of engineers and MBAs; it rather needs youth to understand spiritual science and explain it to others as well. That clicked with my value system and there has been no looking back after that.

DIFFICULT TO HAVE A ROUTINE...

Given my travel schedules across the globe and the responsibilities of managing a worldwide volunteer-driven organisation, it is difficult to maintain a routine. Typically, my day from 4:00 AM to 11:00 PM comprises time for exercise, satsangs, meetings with various team members and stakeholders on different JKYog charitable projects, responding to emails, addressing devotees concerns, doing recordings, giving discourses, etc. I like to spend meal times with devotees. Writing books is also on my yearly agenda and there are also days when I get interviewed. I go with the flow of what the day demands from me as priorities. Ofcourse, I too have disruptions in my schedules with unexpected things like computer breakdowns!

DRIVING FORCE...

My Gurudev, Jagadguru Shree Kripaluji Maharaj, worked tirelessly for the welfare of souls, every single day, till the ripe age of 91. He taught humankind the supreme process of building a noble value system through selfless and ceaseless devotion to God, thereby creating a better world. He taught me by his example the importance of nurturing souls with love and care, to help them realize a glorious future. My work of sharing Vedic knowledge with the masses is my worship to Him.

Balancing spirituality...

To balance material pursuits and spirituality, one must dedicate an hour everyday for inner growth. Read about great saints in Indian history like Surdas, Mirabai, Kalidas, Tukaram, etc. You can also invest that time in reading Holy Scriptures like the *Ramayana*, *Bhagavad Gita*, *Shreemad Bhagavatam*, etc. Contemplate on the knowledge gained. Practice meditation by visualising the forms, names, pastimes, virtues, abodes of God. Engaging in community service can also be helpful in contributing to self-peace and consequently world peace. The idea behind these activities is to engage the mind in the divine with the attitude to serve Him. This in turn purifies our thoughts, which are precursors to all our actions.

ON THE NEW BOOK...

We all share the same aspirations. We hope to achieve true happiness, perfect love, and well-being. Unfortunately, life presents us with the reverse, and we find difficulties, disheartenment, and failures on our platter. The challenges are further compounded, since situations present themselves first, while the wisdom for handling them is learnt later. Thus, learning comes the hard way-through bitter experiences-or not at all. Most of us would appreciate it if we could have a manual for life to refer to. We could then reverse the sequence of problems and solutions and equip ourselves in advance to make good choices. My new books *The Power of Thoughts* and *Golden Rules For Living Your Best Life* aims at bridging the gap by synthesizing science and spirituality to present several hundred gems of knowledge across the key critical areas of life: spiritual and emotional wellness, good health and well-being, relational harmony, professional fulfilment, and financial abundance. If you can effectively manage these five dimensions of your existence, the other aspects automatically get upgraded. Thus, this book, through 70 different topics, is aimed to empower the reader to create a paradigm shift in their life.



REASONS TO TRAVEL MORE...

I am typically in India from October to March and spend the remaining half of the year in the US. While in India, I visit about 40 cities across the length and breadth of the country to give discourses, conduct devotional congregations, meet people, take care of the University and other charitable projects, etc. JKYog conducts three retreats annually in India-two on our JKU campus in Banaras, Odisha, and one offsite, at a holy place. In the US, I visit more than 20 cities to conduct week-long Life Transformation Programs in each city. Retreats are conducted on every long weekend (Memorial Day weekend in May, Independence Day weekend in July, and Labor Day weekend in September) along with a Family Camp for one week in our US headquarters at Radha Krishna Temple in Dallas.

DEFINING SUCCESS...

The thought that my classmates must be high up in the corporate ladder never occurred to me! Often people define success as becoming billionaires, owning a limousine, being socially popular, or occupying a powerful position. But if financial prosperity or fame or power is a measure of success, then multi-millionaires would not need sleeping pills and famous people would not commit suicide due to depression. The truth is that people may possess all the wealth in the world, but if their mind is agitated, they can never be happy. Success can never satisfy a person if it does not bestow peace of mind. Ultimately, life is all about attaining happiness. Everything we seek, be it a good job, a beautiful spouse or a palatial home, is only an intermediate goal towards happiness. And when we walk the path that we believe is the purpose of our life, happiness is not some far-fetched destination, rather it is the journey itself. The happiness we are searching for is not on the outside; rather, it is within us and is accessed through purity of our mind.

PURPOSE OF JKU...

Education is considered a basic human right in developed nations. However, in a developing nation like India, accessible and quality education continues to be a challenge for its socially and economically disadvantaged population. Also, the existing premier institutions in India equip students with high-class academic qualifications and help them secure dream jobs early in life. However, being on a hedonistic treadmill of material allurements alone has caused the degradation of human values in India and around the world. The consequences are visible with widespread anxiety, increase in suicide rates, alcoholism, and drug abuse. Evidently, today's youth is falling short of inner strength and character. It is also reflective of their inability to gracefully sustain themselves through the ups and downs of life. Therefore, the Jagadguru Kripalu University (JKU) has been uniquely envisioned as a multi-disciplinary university with a focus on all-around personality development coupled with spiritual wisdom. JKU aims to bridge the void by empowering students with the virtuous qualities of both the head and the heart.



FONDEST ME...

JKYog is a holistic system of health that I have established. It is also called 'Yoga for the body, mind and soul'. It focuses on five aspects: yogasans, pranayam, subtle body relaxation, roop dhyana meditation, and a healthy diet. Together, these work on the five sheaths/koshas of the human body and work to purify the mind to take it closer to God.

The divine vision of my Gurudev inspired the establishment of this non-profit, philanthropic, and volunteer-driven organization in 2008. Under the umbrella of JKYog, we run many charitable projects focusing on education and healthcare in rural India. Along with physical service, we also promote comprehensive development of society by teaching the true knowledge of the Vedic scriptures, including the Upanishads, Puranas, Ramayana, Bhagavad Gita etc. In doing so, we address the physical, emotional, intellectual, and spiritual dimensions of humankind. JKYog has its US headquarters at the Radha Krishna Temple of Dallas, Texas. Its India headquarters at Banaras in Odisha houses a Yogashram, a fully functional Naturopathy hospital, and a Skill Institute that seeks to provide vocational training to the local underprivileged youth. We have drawn up plans for building a full-scale university.

SHORT TAKES:

- **Describe yourself in three words?** Spiritual teacher and servant of the community of devotees
- **What makes you happy?** When I see those under my care progress towards inner growth, happiness, and fulfillment.
- **You work 7 days throughout the year. If Sunday is the same as Monday for you, what is a vacation for you?** Walking is part of my daily exercise regime, in addition to yoga. Whenever an opportunity arises, I take Nature walks. Mother Nature is inspiring because it never tires of giving and never demands a vacation.
- **Your definition of spirituality?** Purifying the inner self (the mind), illuminating the higher self (the intellect), and aligning them both in selfless love with the Supreme.



Liberal arts programmes are here to stay

PNS | HYDERABAD

Thank God for modern times, because if a student wanted to pursue the arts as a major, society had a lot of strange comments to make. A hard truth to digest is that subjects included in the arts stream are thought to be very easy, but they aren't! They are extensive and in-depth readings. It is never graded too high like the sciences do, but well, it at least teaches us life's philosophy and the art of critiquing and analysing.

"An increasing number of universities in India are now offering liberal arts education. Even though the present-day model of liberal arts education is an American innovation, its roots go back to the ancient Greeks! Despite many changes over the centuries, the emphasis on the formation of character that is necessary for broader human flourishing differentiates it from training in crafts. The liberal arts educational practises emphasising the development of generic, transferable skills. Also, the holistic understanding of the human condition, training in practical judgement, formation of new habits of being in the world, ethical orientation, skilful coping in the face of uncer-

tainty, respect for difference, creative expression, cultivation of wonder, and life-long learning distinguish contemporary practises of liberal arts education," emphasised V. Krishnappa, a professor of philosophy and interdisciplinary studies at RV University.

The extent to which it has changed the learner's ways of being in the world can be used to assess success! He adds, "Contrary to conventional wisdom, liberal arts programmes are highly demanding — they are of a different order of diffi-

culty than what is to be expected from conventional education programmes! Part of the challenge stems from the fact that students are expected to investigate broader areas of social science. Arts learners are also required to participate in a range of extracurricular activities in order to develop a holistic sense of the world and

also

appreciate the wisdom and beauty of artistic forms."

A major pedagogical emphasis in the arts is focused on developing new ways of seeing psychological, political, and environmental phenomena in a different light. He explained, "Such an orientation requires learning to accept the irreducible complexity, ambiguity, and uncertainty that constitute everyday experience. An ability to continually look out for discontinuities, flaws, and processes is a critical skill in a world that is changing faster than our ability to make sense of it. Experiential learning is the key differentiator in this educational process. It literally prioritises learning by doing, whether in the classroom, through community service projects, performing arts, field studies, or other extracurricular activities! Learners are expected to pay attention to detail, notice differences, see aspects that are not self-evident, and respond to these experiences creatively."

Liberal arts educators appreciate that contemporary social, economic, political, and technological systems are continuously being transformed by a dynamic process that cannot be adequately anticipated by our existing knowledge systems.



Essential tips for NEET PG preparation

NEET-PG is an annual examination for medical students pursuing a Doctor of Medicine (MD), Master of Surgery (MS), Diploma programmes, and other specialities at public and private universities. Given the difficulty of the exam, the best time for aspirants to begin preparing is now. Beginning preparations in advance will help reduce the burden of the syllabus and boost aspirants' confidence.

According to the National Board of Examination in Medical Sciences (NBE), the 2023 exam is scheduled for 5th March 2023. The exam will be computer-based, with aspirants having three hours and thirty minutes to complete 200 multiple-choice questions. According to the NEET PG 2023 marking scheme, aspirants will receive four marks for each correct answer and one mark will be deducted for each incorrect answer.

The following are some expert-recommended tips that will help aspirants make their preparation process more effective:

- **Weightage:** Aspirants must ensure that they are aware of the weightage each subject carries. As the number of questions in the NEET PG examination is predetermined, aspirants need to prioritize topics basis their weightage and dedicate their

time accordingly

- **Time allocation:** To make their preparation more streamlined, aspirants can allocate a fixed time to individually prepare



for major and minor subjects. For any major subject, aspirants must allocate 7-10 days for the first reading, which must be strong and not too extensive. Similarly, 3-4 days can be allocated for minor subjects. However, aspirants must note that they should not spend more than two weeks for the first reading of any subject, be it major or minor

- **Make notes:** In the era where everything

is at the aspirant's disposal, it is critical for them to make their own notes during both online and offline classes. Even if aspirants possess a copy of printed notes

for a particular topic or subject, they must ensure that they write down the concepts in simplified language to make it easier for them to understand and retain concepts during revision

- **Daily study routine:** Oftentimes, aspirants are advised to study for 13-14 hours a day to score well in the NEET PG examination. However, aspirants must note that consistency is vital as compared

to intensity. Studying for 5-6 hours a day and solving MCQs on a regular basis is essential and more efficient as compared to studying for longer hours each day. Aspirants must devote one hour every day to solving MCQs so that they are able to strengthen their foundational concepts and be prepared for the different patterns of questions that can be expected in the exam.

- **Revision:** Aspirants must remember to revise each topic with a special focus on PYQs. The focus of their revision process should be to cover repeated topics in all subjects and to rewire those concepts mentally. Aspirants should focus on high-yielding and difficult topics more, as compared to studying the entirety of the material during revision.

Lastly, aspirants must remember that there is no definitive recipe for success. They must use the resources available to them and personalise their preparation strategy per their own strengths and weaknesses in order to prepare well for any examination.

(The writer, Dr. Ranjith AR, is a top NEET PG Educator at Unacademy and holds a gold medal in UG and PG Pathology)

SAGE-RED OUTLET WITH GASTRONOMICAL DELIGHTS

SHIKHA DUGGAL

Representing a different style, Tasca Bar and Kitchen, located in Gandipet, has executed a classy interior in a very cost-effective manner. With all the hustle and bustle going around in the Ranga Reddy district, the owner of the eatery made sure there were kind valets appointed outside of it to ensure there was no chaos. And then you enter the lavish eating place, with extensive art pieces hung in the two major nooks of the resto. Those were human figures — so enthralling.

Moving past the enchanting and massive painting, your gaze is drawn to the luxurious alcohol inn, which offers every drink imaginable, including international brands. Nothing says sophistication louder than a beautiful

wooden bar area! The moment you see the design, it brings in extra hints of lavishness. It was built in the right area, guests were getting a glimpse of it, and it made a lasting impression on them!

Another attractive spot was the in-built live music space given to the musicians. When the whole week is tiresome, you can just catch up with your friends for a gig

a gigantic projector right in front of you and the ceiling adorned with cosmic golden embellishments on top of you in the form of multiple flowers, the restaurant's reputation has never been better.

Let's come to the gastronomical part of Tasca: holy smoke. Begin with some Nihari Tacos, which are not only delicious but also filled with Nihari-birria. Combining the

curry leaves rather than coriander. The flavours and the aroma turned out to be awesome. The artistry with Thai basil rice then brought in pineapple shells, yum. The super-aroma of basil and the tinge of pineapple shell in it brought out the tenderness in it. They go well with the Nihari tacos, which are brimming with chopped onions. Soaked in three kinds of milk — “boiled” milk per se — and topped with

whipped white malai and mulberry, known as “tres leches,” you couldn't have gotten more decadent than this.

Topping it with a chatpat guava mocktail was the crux of the restaurant, coming straight from the lounge. Tasca Bar and Kitchen is worth a visit because it combines talent and charisma.

Our recommendations:

- Nihari tacos
- Thai basil rice
- Les treches



at a multi-purpose resto like this. Many of the gangs were already spotted lazing around in adorable cubicles made of current pastel and golden interiors with a soothing ambience! And nothing beats live India to unwind after a long weekend. Agree? With

elements of both, it results in a hybrid taco, making us want to visit the diner once again. One must have eaten a lot of kebabs around town; after all, we're famous for them, but Tasca brought us Karivepak Kodi Kebabs! We were blown away by boneless chicken marinated in chopped

Red velvet banana pudding

What you need:

- Sweetened condensed milk: One 14 oz. can
- Ice cold water: 1 1/2 cups
- Instant vanilla pudding mix (preferably Jell-O brand): One 3.4-ounce package
- Cream cheese, softened and cut into 8 pieces: 8 oz.
- Heavy cream: 3 cups
- Red velvet cake: One 9 x 13 inch layer
- Ripe bananas: 4 – 5
- Mini chocolate chips: 1 cup

How to make:

- In a small bowl, on the medium speed of an electric mixer, mix the sweetened condensed milk and water together until well combined, about 1 minute.
- Add the pudding mix and mix until there are no lumps and the mixture is smooth about 2 minutes. Cover and refrigerate for 3-4 hours or overnight.
- Place the pudding mixture into the mixer bowl with the whisk attachment, and add the cream cheese to the pudding mix. Mix until thoroughly combined and smooth. Place in the refrigerator while you prepare the whipped cream.
- In a clean mixer bowl with the whisk attachment whip the heavy cream on medium speed for about one minute until the cream starts to thicken, then increase the speed to medium-high and whip the cream until stiff peaks form. Be careful not to over- whip. Carefully add the pudding mixture to the whipped cream and mix on low speed until well blended and no streaks of pudding remain.
- Cut the red velvet cake into 4-inch squares. Cut each square into 1/2" layers. Set aside.
- To assemble the pudding select either a trifle bowl or a wide glass bowl with a 4-5-quart capacity. Spread a layer of pudding on the bottom and layer with enough slices of the red velvet cake to cover the layer, add sliced bananas to cover the cake and sprinkle with 1/3 cup of mini chips. Continue layering with 1/3 of the pudding mixture, another layer of cake, sliced bananas and mini chips. Repeat one more time, ending with pudding. Sprinkle the top with crumbled red velvet cake and a tablespoon of mini chips. Cover tightly with plastic wrap and allow to chill in the refrigerator for 4 hours or overnight before serving.



Red velvet cake with whipped vanilla icing

What you need:

- Sugar: 2 cups
- Cocoa: 1/4 cup
- Cake flour: 3 1/3 cups
- Baking soda: 1 1/2 tsp
- Salt: 1/2 tsp
- Butter, room temp cut into 1-inch pieces: 8 oz.
- Eggs: 3
- Milk: 1/2 cup
- Sour cream: 3/4 cup
- Cider vinegar: 1 1/2 tsp
- Vanilla extract: 1 tbsl
- Red food colouring: 2 tbsl

How to make:

- Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Grease and lightly flour three 9 x 2" ground cake pans, then line the bottoms with parchment paper circles (or wax paper). If making cupcakes, line 2 dozen cupcake liners with paper liners.
- In the bowl of the electric mixer fitted with the paddle attachment, combine sugar, cocoa powder, cake, flour, baking soda, and salt. Mix on low speed for one minute. Turn the mixer off.
- Add the butter to the mixer bowl all at once. Mix on low speed for 2 – 3 minutes until the mixture resembles wet sand.
- In a liquid measuring cup whisk together the eggs, milk, sour cream, cider vinegar, vanilla extract and red food colouring.
- Turn the mixer on low and slowly pour in the egg mixture, mix for one minute. Remove the bowl and paddle from the mixer and scrape down the sides, paddle and bottom of the bowl. Place back on the mixer and mix for one or two minutes longer just until fully incorporated.
- Divide the batter among the prepared pans. Bake for 38-40 minutes, or until a cake tester inserted in the centre of



the cake comes out clean. Let the layers cool in the pans for 1 hour. Remove from the pans and cool completely on a wire rack.

- If making cupcakes: Carefully spoon the batter into the cupcake liners, filling them about three-quarters full. Bake for 20-25 minutes, or until a cake tester inserted into the centre of the cupcake comes out clean. Cool the cupcakes in the tins for 15 minutes. Remove from the tins and cool completely on a wire rack before icing.

Whipped vanilla icing

What you need:

- All-purpose flour: 6 tbsp
- Milk: 2 cups
- Unsalted butter, room temperature: 2 cups
- Sugar: 2 cups
- Vanilla extract: 2 tsp

How to make:

- In a medium-sized saucepan, whisk the flour into the milk until smooth. Place over medium-high heat and cook, stirring constantly until very thick and bubbly, making a roux.
- Remove from the heat and transfer to a glass or metal heatproof bowl. Place a piece of parchment paper or plastic wrap directly on the surface. Cool to room temperature before placing in the refrigerator. Chill for at least an hour. Can be made ahead of up to 2 days.
- To make the icing, remove the roux from the refrigerator and bring it to room temperature for about 30 minutes. In the bowl of the electric mixer with the paddle attachment beat the butter on medium speed for 3



minutes, until smooth and creamy. Gradually add the sugar in 1/2 cup increments, scraping down the sides and bottom of the bowl occasionally, until all the sugar has been incorporated beating continuously for 3 minutes until creamy and light in colour. Add the vanilla and beat well.

- Add the cooled milk mixture. Beat on low speed for 10-15 minutes, until very smooth and white in colour. Scraping down the sides and bottom of the bowl occasionally.
- Cover and refrigerate for 15 minutes (no less and no longer – set a timer!) *Courtesy: Bobbie Lloyd, Chief Baking Officer, Magnolia Bakery*

Limited edition exquisite gift set from Kama Ayurveda

Embrace the spirit of the Christmas season and shop for your loved ones the best of Ayurvedic beauty. Recently launched, this limited edition exquisite gift set from Kama Ayurveda is specially curated with the brand's bestsellers for skin and hair.

Price: Rs 2,100



Samsung expands entry segment portfolio with Galaxy A04 and Galaxy A04e

Samsung launched Galaxy A04 and Galaxy A04e. The latest additions to the popular Galaxy A series promise unprecedented style and unmatched performance to meet the needs of aspirational Gen Z consumers. Galaxy A04 and Galaxy A04e are powered by MediaTek Helio P35 processor that can clock up to 2.3GHz. For enhanced performance, smooth multitasking, seamless app navigation and uninterrupted gaming, Galaxy A04 and Galaxy A04e come with up to 8GB RAM with RAM Plus feature. The unique RAM Plus solution allows users to expand RAM size as per their requirements. Both come with Android 12 full version out of the box. Galaxy A04 ensures stunning captures with best-in-segment 50MP dual rear camera. Galaxy A04e comes with 13MP dual camera setup for taking amazing everyday photos. Both smartphones come with 5MP front camera to capture stunning selfies and the rear depth live focus camera to ensure good quality portraits with a variety of different modes that help you to capture unforgettable moments. From gorgeous selfies to stunning panoramas and spectacular slow-mo, there is a camera mode for every occasion. With a stylish textured glossy back, Galaxy A04 and Galaxy A04e will be available in bright and attractive colours. Galaxy A04 priced Rs 12999 for 4GB+128GB and Rs 11999 for 4GB+64GB. As a special offer, consumers can purchase the device with attractive EMI options starting from Rs 999. Additionally, consumers can get cashback worth Rs 1000 using Samsung Finance+, Zest and IDFC First.



Explore the new MOVADO timepieces to complement your look

The most sophisticated of the society has long prioritised wrist watches in their outfits; an exquisite timepiece is without a doubt the cornerstone of every watch collection. Movado is a high-end brand with a history of innovation and dedication to the future of time. This exquisite timepiece has a unique and striking sense of style. This design encompasses a 44mm gunmetal ion-plated stainless steel case and bracelet with tachymeter scale. It features a gunmetal chronograph dial, Swiss Super-LumiNova accents and date window detailing. This design is crafted from durable stainless steel and gleaming yellow-gold PVD.



Price: Rs 74,625

Be a Secret Santa for your loved one

Christmas is just around the corner. It is the most-awaited festival of the year for a reason. This Christmas be a 'Secret Santa' & take them to the next level by adding a personal touch with your own message of love with Zavya.

This beautiful silver jewellery set includes of Necklace and a pair of 8mm Freshwater Pearl Earrings. Necklace Length is 16"+1.5" with adjustable portion. They used freshwater pearls, and since natural pearls are rarely identical, you may find little difference in your earrings. It has Rhodium-plated to prevent silver from getting tarnished and is very much perfect for sensitive skin. Starting at Rs. 1,499



The Body Shop's iconic Christmas collection

It's that time of the year when there's a nip in the air. A festive cheer also sets in, and The Body Shop has kept up its tradition this year as well. For this year's Christmas, The Body Shop is launching a fantastic range of gift sets — from hand cream to shower gel and face masks ranges Wild Pine, in 3 limited-edition Passionfruit, and Spiced Orange.



'Tis the season for hot cocoa

Those familiar Christmas carols, the fragrance of hot cocoa and freshly-baked gingerbread cookies wafting in the air, and trees twinkling brighter than the starry sky — if this hits you with nostalgia, get set to relive those very merry holiday season memories. The most popular destination for Chocoholics — SMOOR is set to amp up the yuletide cheer at your festive table with a delicious collection of luxurious sweets and couverture chocolates.

SMOOR understood the relevance of this treat and has prepared the perfect delicacies to add sweetness to your Christmas evenings. Star and moon cookies, assorted cookies, cinnamon cookies and pinwheel cookies- it's all here to amp up the holiday season indulgence.



Is your health insurance plan in line with your current lifestyle?

'30 is the new 20' may be music to the ears. Medically, it seems, '30 is the new 40'. Diseases generally associated with old age till a generation ago are rampantly plaguing the young. Today, it is common to see people in their thirties popping pills for elevated cholesterol/high BP or taking insulin shots. It is equally common to see youngsters depend on inhalers to combat pollution-induced asthma attacks. The incidence of the young falling prey to cardiac diseases is also increasing by the day. The double whammy of a sedentary lifestyle and long stressful work hours spell nothing but doom. Lack of sleep, unhealthy eating habits, and the dark shadow of uncertainty cast by the pandemic are amongst the host of other reasons causing the early onset of, both mental and physical, burnout.

Identify your health insurance requirements

With unpredictability becoming a synonym for life, the only way to exercise some semblance of control is to get comprehensive health insurance coverage. To begin with, identify your health insurance requirements and the optimum sum insured you need; figure out whether you need a health insurance plan only for yourself or one that covers your family members as well. Accordingly, you can go for an individual plan or consider a family floater policy health insurance plan. Next, narrow down the type and extent of the coverage you need on the basis of your age, family medical history, pre-existing illnesses if any, nature of medical expenses, medical inflation, etc. As health insurance policies are lifelong renewals, it is pertinent to opt for such policies from insurers having a strong brand image.

Financial liabilities such as loans or

income tax savings are other things that have to be also considered while purchasing a policy.

Right age to buy a health insurance policy

Our parents usually planned to get health insurance coverage as they neared mid-life. However, in the wake of the early onset of lifestyle diseases, it is only wise to buy a plan as early as 30. Age is a significant factor when comes to the purchase of health insurance policies. The earlier one buys a health insurance policy, the better it is. Most insurance companies ask for a pre-policy medical screening before issuing a health insurance plan and it depends on the coverage opted for and medical/health conditions, if any, apart from age. Considering that diseases such as obesity, hypertension, cardiovascular conditions, diabetes, lung cancer, etc usually stem from an unhealthy lifestyle, it is highly advisable to get a policy when such conditions are either absent or are controlled with no associated complications. Get a cover before poor lifestyle choices take a toll and begin to reflect by way of deranged biomarkers. Secondly, based on the health conditions an individual is suffering, there is a high possibility that the individual is subject to an underwriting lens before acceptance of the proposal.

And be mindful of the fact that most health insurance policies do not

cover pre-existing diseases from day 1 of policy start. Depending on the Health insurance Plan bought, such pre-existing diseases get covered after a waiting period which typically is 36 or 48 months from the policy inception date.

It is also important to keep in mind the COVID-19 pandemic experience and hence deferment of purchase for a health insurance policy would not be a prudent decision.

Choose the best health insurance plan

If your health report card is all green, then opt for a health insurance plan that offers comprehensive coverage and look for no restrictions applied in the product such as room category restriction, disease/ailment-wise sub-limits, capping medical/surgeon expenses, co-payment, OPD cover and plan that offers higher cumulative 'No-claim Bonus' for every claim-free year. There are plans in the market that also offer annual preventive health check-ups.

Also, there are certain illnesses that necessitate substantial expenses pre-hospitalisation as well as post-hospitalisation. In such a case, opt for a Plan which offers a more comprehensive coverage duration for pre/post-hospitalization expenses. There are different plans with varied coverages and premiums and ample discretion is necessary. With the pandemic putting a spotlight on the role of co-morbidities in recovery from Covid, it is only wise to choose a plan which covers Covid-19-related medical expenses

such as consumables (e.g. PPE/gloves/face shields etc.).

Immense research has been happening in medical technology/treatment, diagnostic as well as therapeutic, which leads to medical inflation. Hence, plans with higher sum insured options (Rs. 10 lakh and above) are something one should look at. Secondly, access to healthcare treatment overseas is another key element to keep in mind. Insurers have started offering global coverage in their health insurance plans. Opting for such a policy will be an added advantage.

In the case of younger individuals, health insurance plans that offer maternity coverage should not be ignored. The need for this coverage should be aligned with one's requirements.

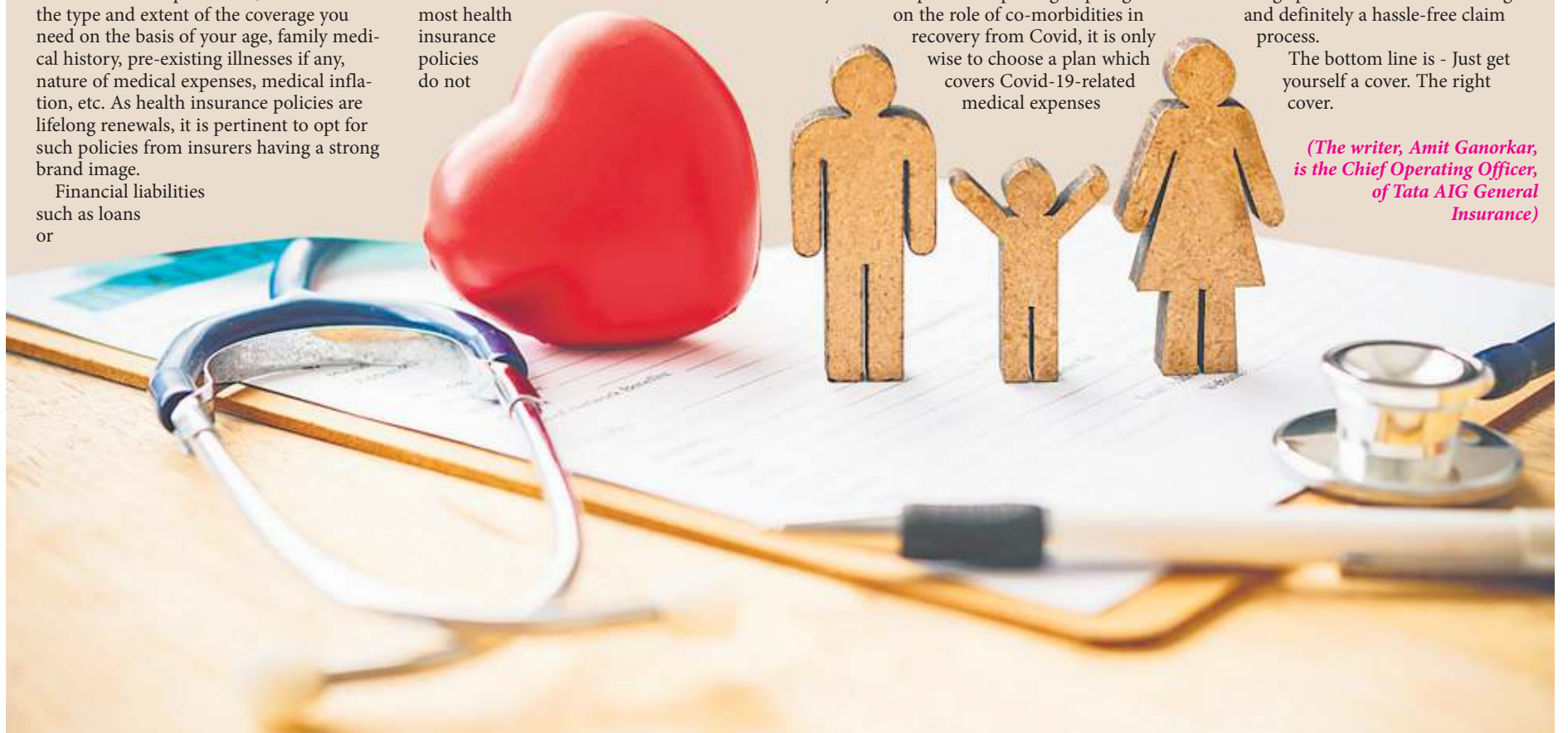
One should also look for the hospital network density of the insurer while purchasing the policy. Individuals should check for the availability of such network hospitals which offer cashless facilities in their own's city/vicinity and then freeze their health insurance plan.

The bottom line

From a macro perspective, choose an insurer that has a strong brand image and a policy that has a wide network of hospitals, no sub-limit on hospital room rent, covers consumables expenses, global treatment coverage plans to offer OPD coverage and definitely a hassle-free claim process.

The bottom line is - Just get yourself a cover. The right cover.

(The writer, Amit Ganorkar, is the Chief Operating Officer, of Tata AIG General Insurance)



New Year gifting ideas for zodiac signs

New Year is always considered the time for celebration. One of the things that make this day special is the spirit of giving gifts to our loved ones. People look forward to opening such gifts which they see as a token of love and affection. But how can we ensure that the gifts you give someone special do manage to satisfy their curiosity? Here is a suggestion – why not turn to zodiac signs the next time you have to buy a present? Handle the pressure to show up with a present he or she will love by taking a cue from their birth sign.

Aries

Aries is ruled by the fearless and active planet of Mars, which comes through as energetic, assertive and impulsive. Aries-borns also have a great sense of fun and will enjoy something amusing and entertaining. Beautiful, work-appropriate clothes or home office accessories make them happy. Present a photograph that best expresses your relation with the person encased in an attractive photo frame. Jewellery ideas for women should include diamonds. When choosing a perfume, go for some sophisticated scents.

Taurus

Taurus is ruled by Venus, the planet of beauty and love. As such Taurus is a modest, conservative, practical and unpretentious sign. Taurus-borns do appreciate luxury and are sensual and tactile but they are also realistic. Flowers, bouquets or a house plant as a present will warm their heart. A gift basket full of cookies or candies is another great idea. High-end perfume, a day at the spa, or a soft, gorgeous bathrobe are other options. Choose musky fragrances if you are thinking of buying perfumes.

Gemini

Gemini is ruled by Mercury, the planet of communication and intellect. Choosing a gift for a Gemini isn't as tricky as it seems. Unsurprisingly, Geminis love pen and paper. Gemini natives would appreciate a good fountain pen or personalized stationery. A nice overnight bag or a good book would be a perfect gift for them. Games that challenge Gemini-borns mentally, mobile phones, model train sets etc. would also work as presents. The gift of your unconditional love would be most appreciated.

Cancer

Cancer is ruled by the moon, which rules the home and anything associated with it. For Cancer-borns home is where the heart is. The best gift for a Cancerian is one that money can't buy. Cancers can also be very family-oriented. Plan a big family reunion and you will really make their New Year. Good Cancer gifts are often useful and practical items for the home, garden or garage. They love cooking. You can give them food hampers, recipe books or a new pan. A customized photo album, family portrait, camera or camcorder will also suit.

Leo

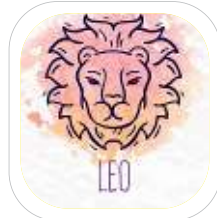
Leo is ruled by the Sun. Leos love to shine. They are attention-loving people. They want to dress up and make a statement. They can also be childish when they don't get their way. Try and do everything that might make them feel like the king or the queen. Gifts for Leos need to be attractive, big, eye-catching and attention-grabbing. If it feels at all too much, it's probably right. They love adornments and embellishments of any kind. So you can give them an elegant jewellery item but be sure that the same should be shiny, sparkling and outstanding. Clothing from their favourite fashion designer, a bottle of Champagne, or fancy beauty products will do just right.

Virgo

Ruled by Mercury, the planet of communication, the minds of Virgo-borns are always working. They



Your patience will make it easier to deal with your problems. Do not succumb to greed. You will be itching for emotional intensity. Keep a clear mind.



There may be starting troubles. Do not fall into depression. Fortune will find you without delay. Creativity and imagination are most important.



Balancing work and home life may be hard. Energy has to be well spent. Helping others will bring you happiness. Do not be afraid to think differently.



A critical situation may develop. Remain calm and unbiased. Greed will bring hostility. Get in touch with your inner virtues. Do something creative.



Minor setbacks should not affect you. Hard work will bring benefits today or later. Siblings will give you support. Adjustments may be wanted at work.

You will be an active and intensely alive person. You will face matters confidently. Try to keep a grip on emotions. Time is not good for new starts.

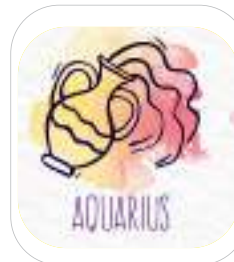


YOUR WEEK AHEAD



A sense of joy and hope will fill you. Rise above the mundane through mental exercise. Maintain good spirits when frustrated. Embrace soft skills.

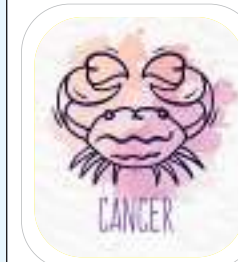
Set yourself to face situations calmly. Emotional blow-ups will cause problems. Showing sympathy will never cause harm. Don't let setbacks stop you.



You may feel strongly about a person you already know. The feeling may be reciprocated. Being too open will get you nothing. Don't commit blunders.

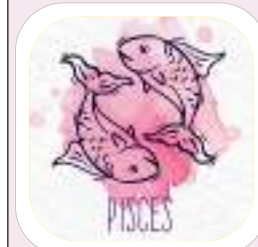
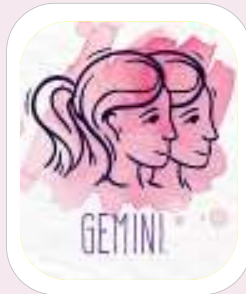


You may face a confidence crisis. Return to your core strengths. Use them to bring out outstanding results. Do not fall for fake displays of affection.



You will be attracted to someone. There will be many enjoyable moments. Do not insist on being perfect. Carry out your duties as best as you can.

The support you expected may not be coming. Do not let it stop you. Use your rapid mind to create. Now is the time to speak up. But rein in your ego.



are the most practical signs of the zodiac. Anything that can be readily used and helps organize their lives to an optimum level would be appreciated by them. Virgos are also fond of all things natural and grounded. A true Virgo is associated with intellectual pursuits such as reading and writing, practical crafts, health, fitness, and nutrition. They'd appreciate some organic clean beauty products or kitchen appliances. Virgos are usually disciplined about their health. So any Gym, dance classes or health club membership will be the best-suited gift for them.

Libra

Like Taurus, Libra is also ruled by sensuous and loving Venus. Libra-borns are all about soft beauty. Anything beautiful and artistic will entice the Venus-ruled Libran. They are associated with social and aesthetic pursuits. They'd love pretty earrings or a piece of art. A pack of CDs of their favourite music or a paint-

ing or print by their favourite artist will suit them well.

Scorpio

Scorpios can be mysterious and deep. Scorpio-borns are associated with a variety of high-intensity pastimes and the intellectual exploration of hidden aspects of the human mind and the world. Their love for mystery makes them interested in mystical subjects too. Gifts for Scorpios may include anything that offers the opportunity for strategic thinking or deep exploration of a topic. Books on meditation, religion and philosophy, and self-help will give them something to dip in with interest. Pair of designer sunglasses, a trendy scarf or a hat, designer watches, and exotic perfumes are also great choices for this sign.

Sagittarius

Sagittarius is ruled by Jupiter, the planet of positivity and optimism. Sagittarius-borns are often called the world travellers of the

zodiac. This sign is associated with social and outdoor pursuits. So the gifts associated with the astrological sign of Sagittarius should revolve around outdoor physical activities, social pursuits, and broadening horizons. They'd love a passport case, a suitcase, or a round-trip ticket to somewhere on their bucket list. These animal lovers adore any gift associated with their pets.

Capricorn

Capricorn is ruled by Saturn, the planet of discipline and conservation. Capricorn-borns are associated with musical talent, mimicry, athletic activities, and all other things that spread a positive aura around them. However, they are also notoriously practical and ambitious. Gifts associated with the astrological sign of Capricorn must revolve around practical and useful things, intellectual and fitness pursuits, and music. Because they never expect a lot, it is quite easy to buy gifts for a Capricorn. They love things with

historical value.

Aquarius

Aquarius-borns are eccentric, rebellious, and forward-thinking. Aquarius is an unpredictable sign, so never presume you know what an Aquarian would like. They love electronics; get them a new iPhone or iPad. Try the latest gizmo, portable TV for the bedroom, digital camera, DVD player and mobile phone.

Pisces

Pisces is ruled by Jupiter, which represents optimism. Pisces is a sensitive sign and they will appreciate the time and thought people put into the gifts they choose for them. Pisces-born prioritizes self-care and would appreciate luxurious gifts like a Lush bath bomb, fluffy slippers, and beautiful sheets. Pisceans are also incredibly romantic and creative. Pisces will appreciate a poem written especially for them, a bouquet, a chocolate basket, and a cuddly teddy bear.

GLOBE TROT

Toll company in MP sprinkles Gangajal to prevent accidents

After all measures taken to prevent road accidents failed, a toll company in Madhya Pradesh took to the shelter of God. They sprinkled Gangajal on a 250 kilometer long highway and performed "Hawan" for the victims of the accident. Close to 7 thousand vehicles ply daily on the 300 kilometer four-lane highway between Lebad and Nayagaon village of Neemuch district.

According to Rajesh Ramde of the toll company, Gangajal was sprinkled on the road with religious chants for the depart-



ed souls. He also said that a campaign around the toll gates has been started by the company to create awareness among people about traffic rules and driving carefully on the highway.

FIFA fever: Divided by teams, united by love

In a cricket-mad country like India, football fans in the southern state of Kerala have always maintained their love for the sport.

On Sunday, as the state prepared to watch the final between Argentina and France by setting up makeshift screens and fluttering their flags, a couple decided to get married by donning football jerseys of the finalists.

The BBC reported that Sachin R and R Athira's wedding date coincided with the final on Sunday. While they agreed on most things about their wedding, they didn't want to compromise on which team they supported in the final.



The couple tied the knot in a ceremony held in Kochi hours before the two teams met at the Lusail Stadium in Qatar in one of the most sensational finals in World Cup history.

Florida cop dressed as grinch gives onions to speeding drivers

In a unique bid to remind drivers to slow down, several overspeeding motorists were handed an odoured onion instead of traffic citation on the Florida Keys Overseas Highway from a county sheriff's deputy dressed as the Grinch.

Monroe County's Sheriff, Col. Lou Caputo donned the costume of Grinch on Tuesday and gave an odoured onion to the drivers speeding their vehicles above the limit of 5mph in an elementary school area.

"It's about education, awareness that our school zones are still operating even though it's the holiday season," Caputo said, adding, "We want people to slow

down."

The idea behind dressing up as the Grinch was that the fictional character, created by Children's author Dr. Seuss, would present 'gift' to the drivers.



Integrative medicine wing in all hospitals: audacious hope

Union Health Minister Mansukh Mandaviya has declared that the Centre is working towards setting up a separate wing for 'integrative medicine' (IM), an approach that combines conventional medicine with complementary treatments, in all medical colleges and hospitals. To promote the integration of modern medicine with homeopathy and Indian systems of medicine, particularly Ayurveda, the National Medical Commission had made it mandatory for all medical colleges to have a Department of Integrative Medicine Research. So far, so good.

The limitations of modern medicine and the significant outcomes achieved by complementing it with Ayurvedic treatment methods during the Covid waves in certain parts of the world have whetted interest in the ancient system of medicine so much so that even the World Health Organization has green-lighted efforts to bring the broad spectrum of traditional medicine into the mainstream. Setting the tone for it, Prime Minister Narendra Modi, while addressing the recent World Ayurveda Congress 2022, commended the recent growth of traditional medicine in general and Ayurveda in particular. He gave a clarion call to "bring together medical data, research, and journals and verify claims (benefit) using modern science parameters."

As things stand today, the roadmap to having integrative medicine units in all hospitals and medical colleges of the country is nebulous. The multi-disciplinary expert committee that was set by NITI Aayog in August 2021 to "formulate a futuristic policy on integrative health and medical care" is yet to come out with its draft document. The Centre must come clean on the shreds of evidence that exist to support its own theory that traditional medicine modalities (such as those of Ayurveda or homeopathy) can scientifically align with those of modern medicine for improved outcomes. Of course, bits of evidence based on two clinical models were presented at the WAC. These were based primarily on clinical practices at the Centre for Rheumatic Diseases, Pune (CRD) and the National Institute of Mental Health and Neuroscience (NIMHANS). The Centre's case is that a recently established Department of Integrative Medicine in NIMHANS has showed remarkable success in treating difficult neurological diseases with a team of Ayurvedic and modern medicine physicians working in line with a carefully planned and monitored integrative medicine strategy. Likewise, modern rheumatology practice in the CRD model includes critical elements of traditional medicine and Ayurveda that have shown unequivocal evidence in CRD research projects from 1995 to date. Supervised and monitored integrative medicine intervention (including Ayurvedic drugs) over several years showed a consistently superior and sustained clinical improvement in patients suffering from active rheumatoid arthritis. There was a measured improvement in arthritis, functionality, health and well-being. In several cases, potent modern medicine (including steroids) was reduced and in some cases even stopped for prolonged periods. Standardized Ayurvedic drug showed excellent efficacy on par with standard modern medicine in the treatment of osteoarthritis under the auspices of a central research programme that won a global award in clinical research excellence

in 2013.

The Union Health Ministry has previously indicated that the Modi govt wants to merge allopathy, homeopathy, Ayurveda and the like into one health system for launch in 2030 as per its vision of 'One Nation, One Health System'. The related policy would integrate modern and traditional systems of medicine in medical practice, education and research. It aims to formulate an integrative health system, under which patients would get treatment from any of the systems, depending on the severity of what ails them. "If a patient comes to a hospital, they can be given allopathic treatment if their condition is serious, but they can also be given homeopathic or Ayurvedic treatment in the same hospital if their condition can be managed with those," an official told the media. A committee was formed to propose a framework for the integrative health system to achieve "inclusive, affordable, evidence-based, person-centric health-care."

The 'One Nation, One Health System' was envisioned in the 2017 National Health Policy, which "recognizes the need for integrated courses for Indian systems of medicine, modern science and Ayurgenomics (a combination of Ayurveda with the study of all the genes of an organism, called genomics)". It also talks about getting AYUSH systems to contribute to "meeting the national health goals and objectives through integrative practices." Coordinated with this, the National Education Policy 2020 states: "Given that people exercise pluralistic choices in healthcare, our healthcare education system must be integrative, meaning thereby that all students of allopathic medical education must have a basic understanding of AYUSH and vice versa."

With the rollout of 'One Nation, One Health System' scheduled for 2030, four working groups are operational in the core areas of education, research, clinical practice, and public health and administration. These groups would also study how countries elsewhere in the world - particularly the USA, China and European nations - have translated integrative medicine into their health system.

The WHO Global Centre for Traditional Medicine (GCTM), established recently in Gujarat's Jamnagar, is going to be a repository and showpiece for a whole lot of projects related to integrative medicine. The rationale for the establishment of GCTM is that 88% of all countries are estimated to use traditional medicine such as herbal formulations, acupuncture, yoga, and indigenous therapies, among others. Traditional medicine is now part of the growing trillion-dollar global health, wellness, beauty, and pharmaceutical industries. Ayurveda has been accepted in more than thirty nations. The Ayush industry, estimated at Rs 20,000 crore in 2014, has reached a figure of around Rs 1.50 lakh crore now.

Over 40% of pharmaceutical formulations are based on natural products and landmark drugs that originated from traditional medicine. For example, aspirin was discovered from traditional medicine formulations using the bark of the willow tree. The contraceptive pill was developed from the roots of wild yam plants. Child cancer treatments have been based on the rosy periwinkle. Nobel-prize winning research on artemisinin for malaria control started with a review of ancient Chinese medicine texts.



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**LIGHT
THEESKO**