

LIFESTYLE
EXOTIC
LOCATIONS,
GRAND PARTIES:
INDIAN
WEDDINGS
ARE GETTING
FANCIER
P2



DelhiTimes

TUESDAY, JULY 9, 2024
ADVERTORIAL, ENTERTAINMENT INDUSTRY
PROMOTIONAL FEATURE

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OF INDIA



BACK BEAT
GLAD I DIDN'T
GIVE UP:
GURPREET
SINGH
P4



INTRODUCING
ARJUN TANWAR



SONG OUT NOW





CANDLEHOLDERS CAN ELEVATE YOUR SPACE & ADD DEPTH

Shivika Manchanda

Looking to add a touch of whimsy to your home? Candleholders can help. From wooden holders and wrought iron stands for a vintage look to brass holders with animal figurines, the options are endless. Online interior design stores and local markets have a variety of candleholders to choose from as per your style.

Candleholders are one of the most preferred products in the home decor segment, with a year-on-year growth of nearly 1.6x. Candelabras, votives and taper candle holders are perfect for gifting on anniversaries, weddings or housewarmings, along with decorative candles

— KN Srikanth, director of the home, kitchen and outdoors segment of an e-commerce platform

'CANDLEHOLDERS ADD DEPTH TO A SPACE'

Ruchita Bansal, co-founder of a decor studio, says, "Candles mounted on holders add more depth to a room. Applying the mix-and-match method, one can pair tall and short candlesticks with shorter tea light holders to create visual contrast. Colours also play a vital role in elevating your personal space. So, choose candle holders that complement a specific colour theme—whether monochromatic or one with multiple hues. Using different textures and materials such as metal, glass or ceramics helps elevate existing aesthetics."



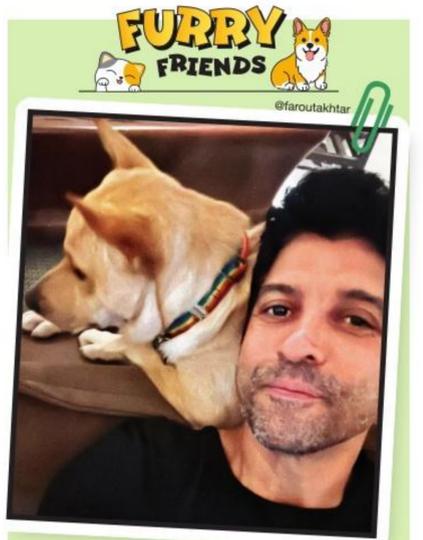
From vintage holders to whimsical ones, candle stands can add depth to your home decor

Different holder arrangements for different vibes

- For a cosy setting, you can bring a cluster of votives and keep them on fine-spun placemats and add fresh flowers
- You can include cast iron candlesticks, that may or may not be branched and pair them with a classic artwork to kindle nostalgia
- Go beyond the glass and acrylic variants to explore shimmery, textured finish in metal or wood, to give an interesting spin to the regular decor
- If you do intend to include glass candlestands, curate a pond-like centrepiece with pebbles, shells or gemstones with floating tea lights
- For minimalist look, a simple wick candle in a wooden holder or a tapered candle mounted on an acrylic candle holder with dried flowers can be a perfect tablepiece

— Inputs from Punam Kaira, interior designer and creative director of a Delhi-based design studio

Home Decor



Posting a pic with his furbaby, FARHAN AKHTAR writes, "The boy loves being my pillow... #Rumi #puppylove"

Napoleon's pistols sell for ₹15 crores in France



Two pistols that Napoleon Bonaparte once intended to use to kill himself were sold in France on Sunday for 1.69 million euros (₹15.29 crores), the auction house said, with the government insisting that they stay in the country as national treasures. The identity of the buyer was not made public. "After the defeat of the French campaign, Napoleon was depressed and wanted to commit suicide with these weapons but his grand squire removed the powder," said auction house expert Jean-Pierre Osenat ahead of the sale.

EVENTS

EXHIBITION
India Habitat Centre:
ANTERMAN - An exhibition of paintings by Archana Jha. Till tomorrow, Convention Centre Foyer, IHC

India Habitat Centre:
Pancha-Bhutas - An exhibition of paintings by Apurba Biswas. From July 11-15, Convention Centre Foyer, IHC

Email us at tims.delhitimes@timesofindia.com

SUDOKU CHALLENGE

Level: Medium

	9		1	6				
6		8						
3		2						4
4	2			8				
			4				1	8
6					1		2	
					4		7	
		7	5		6			

HOW TO PLAY
Fill in the grid so that every horizontal row, every vertical column, and every 3x3 box contains the digits 1-9, without repeating the numbers in the same row, column or box. You can't change the digits already given in the grid. Every puzzle has one solution.

TIMES HITORI

HOW TO PLAY
1. A number may appear just once in each row or column. Eliminate repeat numbers by darkening cells. (see example)
2. Darkened cells must never be adjacent in a row or column.
3. Unmarked cells must create a single continuous area, undivided by darkened cells.
4. Every time you darken a cell, you can automatically circle its vertical and horizontal neighbours, which means they cannot be eliminated.
5. Any cell "sandwiched" between neighbours of the same value can be circled. (e.g. 6 4 6)
6. A "triple" is a special case of sandwich. Circle the centre cells, and darken the ends. (e.g. 6 6 6)

5	5	5	1	8	3	1	2
3	2	5	9	8	4	1	6
9	6	4	9	2	1	7	9
3	4	5	6	4	2	9	1
4	1	2	8	3	6	4	7
9	9	9	2	8	7	8	5
1	8	3	4	7	5	1	9
3	7	5	3	7	8	5	4

Example

8	5	5	7	3	5	4	6
4	5	1	6	7	6	5	2
2	5	7	1	5	4	6	8
5	6	2	4	3	7	6	3
1	6	6	4	3	5	7	
7	8	4	6	2	3	3	7
8	4	5	2	3	5	7	1

LOOP THE LOOP

RULES

- Connect adjacent dots with vertical or horizontal lines, creating a single loop (Fig A).
- Crossovers or branches are not allowed (As shown by dotted lines in Fig B).
- Numbers in the puzzle indicate the number of lines that should surround it, while empty cells may be surrounded by any number of lines.
- You can't draw lines around zeroes.
- Each puzzle has just one unique solution.

HOW TO BEGIN:
Example (Fig A) - Begin with the zero next to 3. Since no lines can be drawn around zero, mark crosses around it, as shown. Now there is a cross in one space around 3. So we know the three lines of 3 can only be drawn in the remaining three spaces. Next, these lines can only be extended in one direction each. Continue, using the same logic.
Hints: Keep eliminating possibilities by marking crosses in spaces between dots where a line isn't possible, i.e., if you have already completed required lines or where a line extension may create a branch or cause a deadend (Fig B).

Fig A:

Fig B:

	3	3		2			
	2	1	2		3		
	3		3	2	2	2	
	3		3	0		3	
2	1		3			1	
				2	1		2
							3

THE DAILY CROSSWORD

By Kyle Dolan 09/07/2024

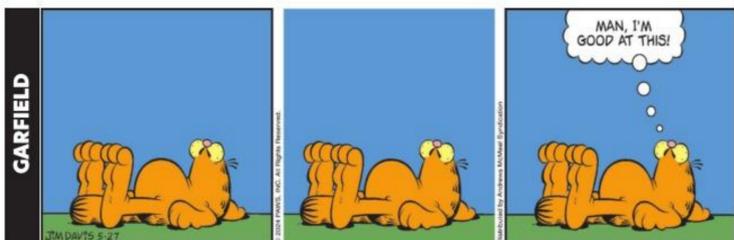
ACROSS

- Speck released by fluffing cushions
- Outfit
- Phishing, e.g.
- Talk Like a Pirate Day greeting
- Friend in Oaxaca
- Silicon Valley's ___ Alto
- "Go," to a driver
- NBA and WNBA
- Tile floor covering
- Sworn statement
- Go nuts for
- Classic video game maker
- Insurance company whose slogan begins "Like a good neighbor"
- Garden shovel
- Easily reached, in a way
- Scattergories game piece with 20 sides
- Frozen treats in Roma
- Serum container
- Trip of a lifetime
- Hosted, for short
- Basketball venues
- Med. condition featured in the novel "Turtles All the Way Down"
- "Bien sûr"
- Garden statue with a pointy hat
- Boost for a hockey team after a penalty
- Disappear, as a puddle
- Time-saving options for bakers
- Post re-re-shared on social media
- Sign of 'b' way success
- ___ golf
- People who share a living space, and what both parts of 17-, 26-, 37-, and 49-Across

MONDAY'S PUZZLE SOLVED

S	E	D	A	N	W	E	D	R	P	M	S
O	R	A	T	O	R	A	V	E	O	H	O
F	I	R	M	B	E	L	I	E	F	S	O
A	C	E	S	A	O	L	M	E	T	A	L
					F	R	I	S	B	E	E
A	P	C	L	A	S	S	I	D	E	A	
A	L	O	U	D		D	O	G	T	R	E
R	E	I	N		B	O	I	S	E	D	A
P	A	N	C	R	E	A	S		C	E	R
					H	E	A	T	B	E	A
F	A	R	M	E	R	S	M	U	R	F	
S	L	E	E	K		A	R	E	E	M	M
T	A	D	A		F	R	E	N	C	H	O
O	M	I	T		L	U	V		T	A	R
P	O	D	S		U	T	E		N	U	T

LEISURE



SCRAMBLE

Rearrange the letters in the four word jumbles, one letter to each square/circle, to make four ordinary words

BVAEO
DEBIT
AELRY
ILNYGJ

Irony is the ___ of reflection and the ___ of wisdom. - Anatole France (6,3)

HOW TO PLAY
Now arrange the letters in the circles to form the answer to the riddle or to fill in the missing word as indicated

SPELLATHON

Today's Ratings:
03-average | 04-good | 05-outstanding

How many words of four or more letters can you make from the letters shown in today's puzzle? In making a word, a letter can be used as many times as it appears in the puzzle. Each word must contain the central letter. There should be at least one seven letter word. Plurals, foreign words and proper names are not allowed. British English Dictionary is used as reference.

O I N
M L L



FINOLEX FORTUNE

For appointments: ANUPAM V KAPIL
9822042295 or anupamvkapil@gmail.com

See what the stars have in store for you - according to your moon sign.

ARIES: Buying a place to live, relocating to a prosperous area and starting a family are possibilities. You need to live in a place where you can make a good living and enjoy a home life.

TAURUS: Things have been going well, but you've been too busy to notice. By focusing on the positive, you'll attract more abundance. Have you been looking for love? You'll find it with an accomplished artist. You admire their talent, while they respect your refined taste.

GEMINI: The end is in sight, but it will take longer to get there than anticipated. It's possible a home repair has been more complicated than you imagined. If you've been planning on moving, you might have to wait for the previous inhabitants to move out.

CANCER: It's important to be honest about a friend's shortcomings. While you yearn for support in key areas, it simply isn't forthcoming. You'll have to meet these challenges alone. Don't take out your disappointment on your partner.

LEO: Spreading the word about an important cause is a good use of your time. You're tired of hearing misinformed people talk about subjects they know little about. Setting the record straight will take time, but you need to be patient.

SOLUTIONS TO GAMES/PUZZLES

TIMES SUDOKU

1	3	9	5	7	2	7	6
6	7	8	4	2	9	1	5
5	2	4	1	6	3	7	8
8	1	3	2	5	9	6	7
7	4	7	8	9	6	5	1
9	5	6	7	1	8	3	2
4	9	1	4	2	8	5	3
5	8	3	6	7	2	9	5

LOOP THE LOOP

TIMES HITORI

4	5	8	7	6	1
5	9	8	2	6	7
7	8	4	2	6	1
1	2	9	7	1	7
1	2	9	7	1	7
9	1	7	6	5	2
2	8	1	6	5	2

SPELLATHON

Words: Above, bidet, yearly, jingly

SCRAMBLE

Answer: Irony is the quality of reflection and the quality of wisdom.

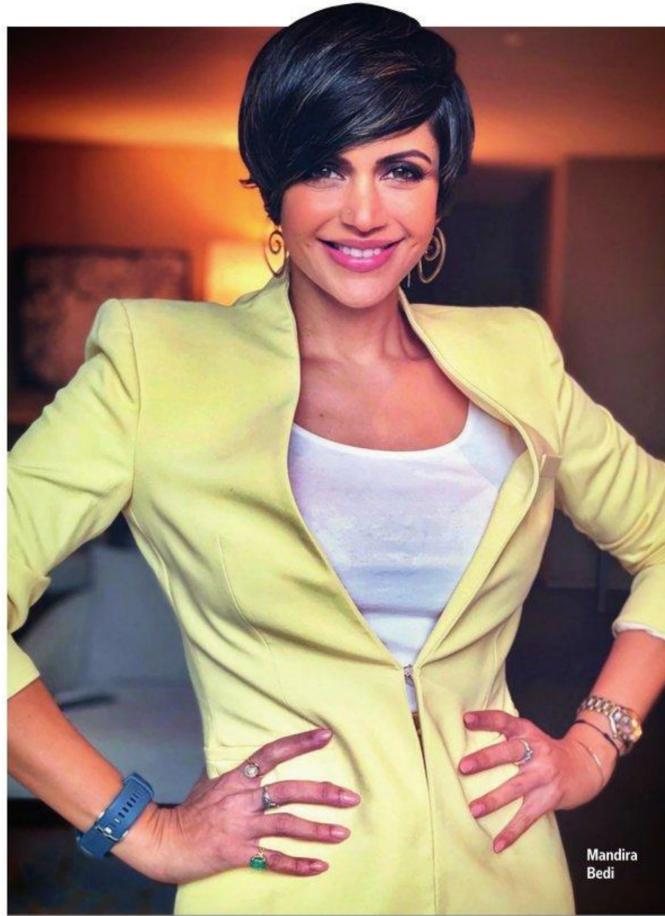


SHOWBIZ
BHUVAN
BAM LODGES
COMPLAINT
AGAINST
DEEPFAKE
VIDEO
P3

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OF INDIA

People have forgotten that I'm an actor: Mandira



Mandira Bedi

Hasti Doshi

Mandira Bedi started her journey in the entertainment industry 30 years ago with the long-running television serial *Shanti*. The actress went on to feature in several other daily soaps, following the success of her first show. She also became a very popular host, and while she really enjoyed that space, Mandira tells us that she missed out on a lot of acting opportunities. She says, "I got an opportunity to host and that changed things for me," adding, "After nine years of acting in TV shows, I thought of taking a sabbatical in 2003, but coincidentally, the Cricket World Cup was taking place that year and I got an opportunity to host that. It changed things for me. It was nice to break the glass ceiling, but after that nobody saw me as an actor anymore, people only saw me as a host."

CONTINUED ON P 3

It was nice to break the glass ceiling, when I anchored the Cricket World Cup in 2003, but after that nobody saw me as an actor anymore, people only saw me as a host



SPOTTED
Ayushmann Khurrana was spotted on Sunday shooting for an untitled film in Hari Nagar Ghanta Ghar in Delhi. The shoot is scheduled for 10 to 12 days in many iconic spots in the city like CP, India Gate, and Old Delhi

Pics: Ajay Kumar Gautam

DELHI IS BUZZING WITH FILM SHOOTS



As per Delhi Tourism officials, in the past 1.5 years, over 100 films and web series have applied for shooting permissions, and over 23 have already been shot, while others are expected to shoot in the upcoming months in the city

Last week, Diana Penty, Jaaved Jaferi, and Tamannaah Bhatia were spotted shooting for a project at Lodhi Garden. The three actors are in the city for a week and have been shooting in Barakhamba, Old Delhi, and Lodhi Garden

Buzzstop

MARGOT ROBBIE IS EXPECTING FIRST BABY WITH TOM ACKERLEY

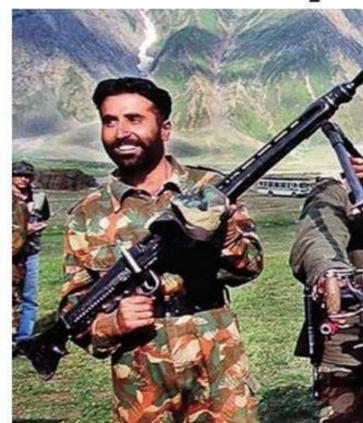
Margot Robbie is pregnant. The 34-year-old Barbie star is expecting her first child with husband Tom Ackerley, whom she married in a private ceremony in 2016. A photo of the actress exposing her baby bump as she boarded a boat during her holiday at Lake Como in Italy has now gone viral. Agencies



Sidharth remembers Captain Vikram Batra on his 25th death anniversary



Sidharth in a still from *Shershaah*



Captain Vikram Batra's legacy is all about "bravery and honour", wrote Sidharth Malhotra as he marked the 25th death anniversary of the Kargil war hero. The actor, who played the titular role in 2021's *Shershaah* based on the life of Captain Vikram

Batra, remembered the real-life hero and wrote on X, "Param Vir Chakra, Captain Vikram Batra, it's been 25 years since your fearless actions and ultimate sacrifice made history. Your legacy to this day remains the highest ideals of bravery and honour." PTI

"We remember and honor you today and always for 'Yeh Dil Mange More'. Jai Hind #CaptainVikramBatra #25YearsOfKargilVijay #Kargil", wrote Sidharth as he shared a picture of Captain Vikram Batra (above)

'There's a huge demand for fake fans at film events'

Be it a film teaser launch or a fan engagement activity, a large crowd usually means popularity; but showbiz insiders share that not all of it is spontaneous - some of these 'fans' are fake and hired by marketing agencies

Niharika Lal

A strong turnout of 200-400 participants at many film trailer and teaser launches, as well as fan engagement activities in Mumbai, can be ensured for just ₹200-500 per person and a meal, say showbiz insiders. It ensures that the actors receive a lively welcome, they say. While this notion of a manufactured crowd and popularity may be surprising, those in showbiz say that over the years, it has become an established trend in Mumbai. This charade of popularity creates an illusion that there are hundreds of genuine fans cheering for the actors.

Insiders say that there are publicity teams and marketing agencies working to create fake crowds - both for cheering and protesting - to create hype.

CONTINUED ON P 2



The cost of fake fans
Payment per 'fan'
₹100-300 + meal
Payment to agencies for each event
₹60,000 - ₹2-3 lakhs



While the existence of fake fans and manufactured crowds for film events is a surprise to many, showbiz insiders say it is a routine strategy in Mumbai. Event management agencies hire an external agency to gather 'fans' to cheer for actors, and they are called junior artists

Recently, a film on campus politics needed some publicity, and for that, we needed to manufacture a crowd in Delhi, Lucknow, and Mumbai that could protest against the film. But at the last minute, the organisers backed out due to budget constraints
- A source, who assembles fake fans on short notice

'Fake fans ko mahaul banane ke liye bulaya jata hai'

But why do production houses add this additional expense of hiring fans? A source from an agency that sources fake fans, says, "There is a huge demand for this at film events. *Inn logon ko mahaul banane ke liye bulaya jata hai*. They shout a lot, whistle, cheer, and go overboard to create the impression that there is hype around the film. All our junior artists are briefed to act as genuine fans. We brief them before the event to shout names. These clips are then posted and shared on social media to create hype about the actor."

GREAT INDIAN WEDDING 2.0

Jets, celebs, and gourmet menus: Indian weddings redefine luxury



AVERAGE BUDGET OF A LUXURY WEDDING

30-40%
HIKE IN ENQUIRIES FOR LUXURY WEDDINGS

75% Enquiries about luxurious locations

₹ 30 lakh - ₹ 50 crore
Approx budget for luxury destination weddings (As shared by multiple wedding planners)

₹ 10 lakh crore
Valuation of the Indian wedding industry

No 2

The standing of the Indian wedding industry in terms of expenditure. Food and grocery sales take the top spot

80 lakh - 1 crore
The number of weddings in India annually

On average, Indians invest twice the amount in weddings than they do on education

(Source: A report by brokerage firm Jefferies)



52%
Jewellery



20%
Catering



10%
Events



10%
Clothing



8%
Photography and videos

(Approx numbers)

Indians spare no expense for their extravagant weddings, turning them into dazzling showcases of intricate decorations, designer fashion and exotic locations

Guests' preferences dictate the decor budget

Apart from expenses on jewellery, apparel, catering, and event management, decor is stated as an underrated aspect of weddings. Himish Agarwal, CEO of Konark Events, explains, "For example, some communities favour a grand experience overall, while others prioritise top-tier entertainment. Some guests want to see renowned artists, skilled anchors, talented performers, photographers, and makeup artists at the wedding. International guests at destination weddings in India expect superb management and professional services. All these factors dictate the decor and event expenses of a wedding."

Offbeat lakeside destinations, royal venues in Rajasthan and the picturesque Kashmir have become popular wedding destinations in the country. At the same time, large groups prefer hosting weddings in their hometowns, like Delhi, Mumbai and Chennai, but with big budgets

— Ambika Gupta, founder of A-Cube Project (a wedding designing company)

Rajasthan is a popular wedding destination for many. One can expect to spend between ₹12 and ₹42 lakhs on renting a 5-star property alone. Exclusive venues in Udaipur and Jaipur may command higher prices

— Saumitra Singh, Managing Director, The Tigress Resort & SPA, Ranthambore



Anukriti Sharma

Indians aren't just getting married — they're orchestrating grand spectacles. Picture extravagant private jets whisking couples to remote destinations, towering decor, regal invites, global celebrities serenading guests, designer attire, and gourmet menus. For this opulence and grandeur, families are shelling out money like never before. The India's wedding industry is valued at an astounding ₹10 lakh crore (\$130 billion), according to a recent report, just behind that of China (\$170 billion).

SKY'S THE LIMIT FOR SPENDS

From modest affairs costing around ₹12 lakh, to extravagant budgets rivalling those of Bollywood weddings, Indian weddings span a vast spectrum. "Saving for their kids' weddings is something every parent has been doing since ages. It's just that in the last few years, weddings have changed a lot. Now, sky's the limit when it comes to luxury weddings which cost upwards of ₹3 crore," explains Darshan Shroff, partner, Momente Weddings.

People are always pushing boundaries, drawing inspiration from the latest trends in showbiz and on social media. For instance, *Bridgerton* inspired a themed event we did this year. While not everyone can afford the full celeb wedding extravaganza, many aim for a scaled-down version of the same

— Darshan Shroff, partner, Momente Weddings

According to experts, photography and videography budgets have also gone up depending on the venues. "High-end venues for special shoots may charge around ₹3 lakh per day," shares Apoorv Mohan Shrivastav and Sanyogita Sao, from Plush Affairs, a wedding photography company

ENTERTAINMENT

'There's nothing organic or genuine about many fan engagement activities'

CONTINUED FROM R 1

'External agencies hire fake fans'

Event management agencies hire an external agency to gather pretend-fans to cheer for actors. These supposed fans are called junior artistes. A source says, "We were promoting a popular Punjabi actor's film, and he had an event for his upcoming movie. While he was going through the final details with the events agency, the organiser asked, 'Junior artiste ka kya karna hai?' The actor was shocked to find out that these junior artistes are hired to cheer for actors. Next day, at the press con, the actor said, 'Humne taali bajane ke liye fan nahi bulaye, aap log hi baja do.'" In Mumbai, this is not shocking but rather routine. Sources say that excluding A-listers' films, several big-budget films have hired fans in the last two to three years. There are several south films as well for which a paid crowd was orchestrated.



School and college students are taken to such events to create perception of popularity and make them look like genuine fans. But there is nothing organic or genuine about these fan engagement activities

— A source

Recently, at an event in Gwalior, Kabir Khan was quoted as saying, "When we do (such events) in Mumbai, there would be a (bigger) crowd, but half of them would have been paid to attend." When producers and actors don't have enough money to spend and still want a young crowd cheering for them, they approach schools and college fest organisers, who send their students to fill seats and cheer. While the industry in Mumbai is aware of this strategy, fans outside the city often mistake the manufactured crowds for actual hype around an event.



London in London: Hilton's daughter makes first trip to her namesake city

Paris Hilton has named her daughter London Marilyn, after her 'favourite city in the world'



Paris Hilton and her nearly 8-month-old daughter, London Marilyn are enjoying their time in the city she was named after. Taking to her Instagram account on Sunday, the 43-year-old shared a video, marking her daughter, London's first visit to the English capital. In the video, Hilton, cooing at her daughter, joyfully said, "London is in London!" Along with the video, Hilton added a long caption that read, "So in love with my little Princess! Bringing her to the city she's named after for the first time is a dream come true! I've spent every summer at this hotel since I was a baby, and now I get to share this special family tradition with my daughter, London Named after my favourite city in the world!" Hilton and her husband, Carter Reum, welcomed London in November 2023. The couple also has a 17-month-old son, Phoenix Barron, born in January 2023.

ANI

I've been turning down roles to play a cricket presenter: Mandira Bedi



Mandira Bedi; (inset) The actress in *The Railway Men*

CONTINUED FROM R 1

'I WANT TO DO A GOOD ROLE, I MISS ACTING'

The actress, who played the role of a cop in 24 with Anil Kapoor, says that she still longs to act. "If there's one thing that I'm really missing, it's acting. After doing the web show *The Railway Men*, I realised how much I missed being in front of the camera. People offer me roles to play cricket presenter or a news anchor, but I turn them down. I want to do a good role. It's like people have completely forgotten that I'm an actor."



'I'VE SEEN A LOT OF UPS AND DOWNS IN LIFE'

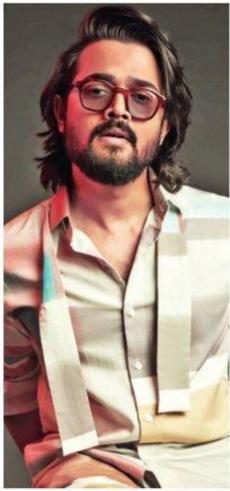
Mandira has been through a lot on her personal and professional journey. However, she is deeply grateful for everything. "I wake up every morning and say thank you. Gratitude inspires me and keeps me positive. I've seen a lot of ups and downs in life. A lot hasn't gone my way, but focusing on that can take you into a downward spiral. I just focus on the positives," she says.

Gratitude inspires me and keeps me positive. I've seen a lot of ups and downs in life. A lot hasn't gone my way, but focusing on that can take you into a downward spiral

'My husband had no problem with my short hair'

Mandira's decision to go for a short crop 15 years ago was a bold move that defied industry norms. She says, "When I got married, I told my mom that I'm cutting my hair, and my husband (Raj Kaushal) had no problem with it. My father said, 'Short hair suits you'. The person who cut my hair said, 'You won't get work if you cut your hair short'. But I got some amazing work after that."

Bhuvan takes action against his deepfake video

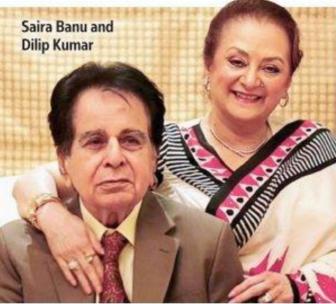


Content creator and actor Bhuvan Bam, who was last seen in the OTT show *Taaza Khabar*, has alerted his followers on social media about a deepfake video of him that has been circulating online. The video falsely shows Bhuvan urging people to bet on tennis matches. Bhuvan's team quickly took action and filed a complaint at the Oshiwara police station in Mumbai. The police are currently investigating the matter.

Addressing the issue, Bhuvan told us, "I want to alert all my fans and followers about a deepfake video of me that is making rounds on social media. This video is completely fake and misguided, encouraging people to bet on tennis matches through predictions made by a certain bookie. I humbly request everyone not to fall for this video. Please stay safe and avoid making any investments that might lead to trouble or financial loss. It's crucial to be vigilant and not get trapped by these deceitful baits."

—Vinay MR Mishra

Saira Banu reveals Dilip Kumar suffered from severe insomnia



Saira Banu and Dilip Kumar

Saira Banu took to Instagram recently to post a few pictures of herself with Dilip Kumar and a letter she wrote to him. She also revealed that the late actor suffered from insomnia.

Saira wrote, "*Sahib* was the greatest actor of all time. He had absolutely everything at his disposal, yet not many people know that he suffered from severe insomnia. Before our marriage, even after taking pills, he would remain awake until dawn. However, once we got married, he started sleeping just in time. He even gave me a cute nickname, endearingly saying, Saira, you are my sleeping pill, you are my pillow."

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• WAZIRPUR A-5, Near Richi Rich Banquet (Opp. Shalimar Bagh)
• JANAKPURI B-1/2, Main Najafgarh Road, Opp. Metro Pillar 543
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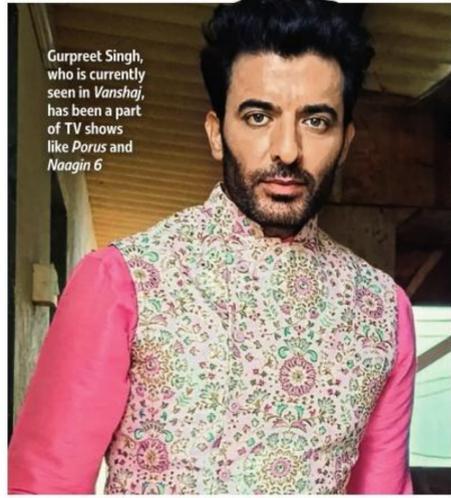
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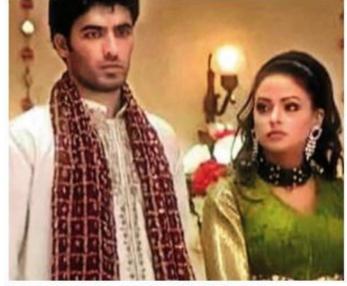
I am glad I didn't give up: Gurpreet Singh



Gurpreet Singh, who is currently seen in *Vanshaj*, has been a part of TV shows like *Porus* and *Naagin 6*

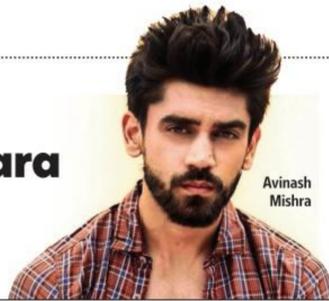
Gurpreet Singh started with a bang many years ago when he came in place of Rajeev Khandelwal to play the new Sujal in *Kaahin to Hoga*. But thereafter, the journey wasn't easy and Gurpreet went through his share of struggles. However, he continued to try his luck in showbiz and today, he is happy to bag good roles consistently. He says, "I always try not to think about the uncertainties that are a part of our profession. I don't dwell on that. There is nothing you can do about that, so why waste time thinking about it? You'd rather do what's in your capacity, which is to stay positive, focused and keep working hard. I used the time when I was free to hone my craft." Gurpreet adds "I am glad I didn't give up. Today, my mantra is to go with the flow and focus on my performances."

—Hasti Doshi



Gurpreet with Aamna Sharif in *Kaahin to Hoga*

TV show Meetha Khatta Pyaar Hamara going off air in just two months



Avinash Mishra

The TV show *Meetha Khatta Pyaar Hamara* will end on July 10 after being on air for just two-and-a-half months. When we reached out to lead actor Avinash Mishra, he said, "When a show wraps up so soon, it means somewhere we have gone wrong with the script. I feel the audience wants to watch newer stories and not a remake or a concept which has already been used in an

old show. We all gave our best, but somewhere maybe the story did not appeal to the masses."

Talking about his plans ahead, the actor, who has been part of shows like *Yeh Rishrey Hain Pyaar Ke*, *Tili*, *Nath* and *Durga* added, "I am not taking a break after this show. I want to focus on interesting roles and will wait for something meaty to come my way." —Tanvi Trivedi

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Is Tobacco Control Failing? A Much-Needed Shift from Fear to a Holistic Approach

In a bustling Indian city, a corporate executive at a multinational corporation has been a smoker since his teenage years, spending a significant portion of his income on tobacco. His smoking habit began innocently after seeing a family member light up, driven by curiosity and peer pressure. What started as a social habit evolved into a coping mechanism for stress. Despite knowing the health risks and making numerous attempts to quit, he finds it difficult to stop. This story is not unique; it echoes across millions of households in India, highlighting the profound challenge of tobacco control in the country.

The Vicious Cycle of Poverty and Tobacco Use

Tobacco control in India presents a complex challenge, particularly due to its large economically disadvantaged population. This situation perpetuates a vicious cycle of poverty, especially in low and middle-income countries (LMICs), where tobacco consumption predominantly comes from the lower economic class. This cycle is driven by three main factors:

- **Increased Taxes:** Higher taxes on tobacco products force individuals to spend more of their limited income on these products, exacerbating their financial difficulties.
- **Illicit Tobacco Trade:** Elevated taxes also fuel the illicit tobacco trade, reducing government revenues

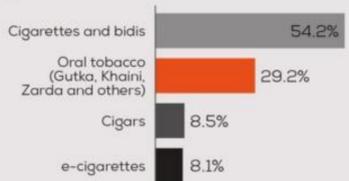
and impacting social welfare programs, further affecting the poor.

- **Healthcare Costs:** Tobacco users face high healthcare costs due to tobacco-related diseases, further straining their finances.

The Landscape of Tobacco Use in India

The 'Human-Centric Approach to Tobacco Control' report provides a detailed snapshot of tobacco and nicotine product usage in India:

Most commonly used tobacco and nicotine products in India



Based on a survey in the report 'Human-Centric Approach to Tobacco Control'

India has one of the highest rates of tobacco usage globally, with a 27% prevalence among individuals aged 15 and above as of 2020. Both smoking and oral forms of tobacco are prevalent, with 250 million smokers aged 16 to 64 as of 2018, making India the country with the second-highest number of tobacco users. Notably, legally produced cigarettes account for only 8% of overall tobacco consumption, with the remaining 92% being cheaper products like bidis and chewing tobacco.

The National Family Health Survey 2019-21 (NFHS-5) highlights a significant disparity in tobacco usage between men and women. While tobacco consumption among females is gradually increasing, driven by factors such as stress and shifting social norms, males still have a significantly higher rate of tobacco consumption.

Tobacco use is more prevalent among economically weaker sections, who are at greater risk of tobacco-related harms. Loose and affordable cigarettes are common and preferred by lower and middle-income groups. In rural India, bidis are widely consumed due to their affordability, despite being more harmful than cigarettes because of their higher concentration of toxic substances and lack of filters. Rural areas also experience lower government oversight, allowing bidi production and marketing to persist unchecked, which poses a significant health risk to the rural population with limited access to healthcare.

The affordability of tobacco products, while



seemingly beneficial for the economically disadvantaged, comes at a significant public health cost. The sale of cheap tobacco products perpetuates a poverty trap, with increasing taxes potentially leading to higher expenses for the lower-income classes or pushing consumers towards illicit tobacco sources. The prevalence of smoking among young adults (ages 20-44) is alarming, with this demographic forming a significant part of the workforce. A survey indicates that 45% of young adults cannot quit smoking or chewing tobacco due to a lack of alternatives, despite nearly half attempting to quit in the past year.

The persistence of tobacco consumption among young adults highlights the need for tailored, India-specific policies based on regulations and science. Understanding the socio-cultural factors contributing

to tobacco use is crucial. The survey in the report 'Human-Centric Approach to Tobacco Control' found that 66% of respondents began using tobacco between the ages of 20-25, significantly increasing their risk of long-term health problems.

Much Needed Comprehensive Approach

A complete ban on tobacco is impractical, as it would negatively impact farmers engaged in tobacco cultivation, reduce tax income, and boost illegal trade. Instead, India needs to adopt an approach that combines scientific evidence with emotional appeal, focusing on both cessation and education. India's tobacco control strategy must evolve beyond fear-based tactics to a more holistic approach that includes practical education and regulation.

With 74% of both smokers and oral tobacco users having an adult smoker in their family, intergenerational education and support are essential. By leveraging science-based solutions, progressive policies, and fostering collaboration among government bodies, healthcare professionals, educators, and community stakeholders, India can effectively curb tobacco consumption and break the cycle of poverty and disease associated with it.

In conclusion, addressing the tobacco epidemic in India requires a multifaceted approach that balances regulation, education, and cultural sensitivity to create lasting change and promote a healthier society.

27% Indian adults Engage in tobacco consumption

38% adult males in India consume tobacco, compared to 9% adult females

1% GDP lost every year to diseases and early deaths from tobacco use

5% total healthcare expenditures attributes to the direct expenses for treating tobacco-related diseases

CAN INDIA REDUCE TOBACCO CONSUMPTION?

2nd rank In tobacco usage, globally

Cigarettes and Bidis account for **54.2%** usage

45% young adults can't quit smoking/chewing tobacco

66% start consuming tobacco at the age of 20-25

Source:
HUMAN-CENTRIC APPROACH TO TOBACCO CONTROL
Leverage science and regulations to solve tobacco related challenges and diseases

Curious Case of Japanese Cessation

Cigarette sales halved (52%); use of alternatives transform public health

As in most high-income countries, smoking rates in Japan have been falling in recent decades, but the introduction of alternatives, coupled with a favourable legislative climate, has accelerated that decline. Over the last 10 years, millions of Japanese adults who smoke have started to use HTPs, leading to a globally unprecedented 52% fall in cigarette sales.

An annual, cross-sectional nationwide survey on smoking in Japan shows smoking rates for men peaked in 1970, when 79% of those aged 20-29 years old smoked. The highest rates for women came in 2000, when 23% of 20-29-year-olds smoked. The combustion of tobacco releases nicotine and a cocktail of harmful chemicals in smoke, which is inhaled by the user.

By contrast, alternatives like heated tobacco products (HTP) heat sticks of tobacco to a temperature of no more than 350°C. Heating tobacco to this level causes nicotine to be released as a vapour without combustion. This means the level of toxic chemicals in the resulting vapour is much lower than in cigarette smoke.

A Cochrane Review on HTP found "there was moderate-certainty evidence that heated tobacco users have lower exposure to toxicants/carcinogens than cigarette smokers". This systematic review included only randomised controlled trials.

Japan presented a unique opportunity for the manufacturers of HTP. While smoking rates had been falling steadily for some time, when HTP arrived, 29.7% of men and 9.7% of women were still smoking in 2016. This meant there was potential to switch away from smoking to a safer nicotine. With e-cigarettes effectively banned in Japan, there were no other alternatives available.

There were also a range of societal and cultural factors that meant HTP might prove successful in the country. Japanese people are keen adopters of new technologies. They are also motivated by a desire to reduce their impact on their fellow citizens, while maintaining high standards of hygiene. It was therefore reasonably likely that they would want to try out a new electronic gadget which produced neither the smoke associated with combustible cigarettes, nor the smell or ash.

The rise in the use of heated tobacco products in Japan has been significant and rapid. By February 2018, just two years after they had become available across the whole of the country, one study found there were 5.23 million HTP users in Japan. This figure equated to one in four of all Japanese tobacco users and meant 8.3% of men (4.21 million) and 1.9% of women (1.02 million) in the country were HTP consumers. In comparison, 22% of men and 7.5% of women were current cigarette smokers that year (down from 29.7% of men and 9.7% of women in 2016). By 2022, the number of HTP users had more than doubled, with 17.9% of men and 6% of women using the safer nicotine alternative.

As previously noted, smoking rates had been falling for a number of years in Japan, but the speed of this decline accelerated after the introduction of HTP. The reduction in cigarette sales between 2016-2019 was five times greater than the drop between 2011-2015.

Similar trends have been witnessed in other countries as well. Sweden continues to reap the health dividend with 41% lower cancer rates as compared to their European counterparts, owing it to recognizing nicotine alternatives. With a 5.6% smoking rate, they continue to adopt policies to lower duties on these alternatives. Poland has recently brought in a legislative proposal that defines HTPs as an acceptable tobacco product that would be regulated in the country.

Russia, under its national healthcare project 'Long and Active Life' is looking to promote a shift for smokers to less harmful alternatives. If 100,000 adult males and equal number of females switch to nicotine alternatives, the country could prevent an economic loss of 14 billion rubles annually.

Source: <https://rb.gy/y8p7ps>

Tobacco Economy: From Deficit to Surplus

India is rapidly positioning itself as the world's fastest-growing economy, with projections indicating it will become the leading contributor to global GDP growth by 2028, according to a Bloomberg Economics analysis. To realize this ambitious forecast, India must address several pressing issues, one of which is the regulation of its tobacco sector—a sector that has the potential to shift from economic deficit to surplus earnings if managed with a visionary and practical approach.

India stands as the world's second-largest producer of tobacco, with an annual production of around 800 million kgs, and a leading tobacco exporter. The average annual revenue collection from tobacco products, for the years 2019 to 2021, stood at about INR 53,750 crore. The tobacco industry employs approximately 45.7 million people across farming, processing, manufacturing, and related export activities, generating over INR 12,000 crore in foreign exchange annually. For 6 million farmers and 20 million farm labourers, tobacco cultivation provides essential livelihood, income, and security, contributing significantly to the nation's tax revenues.

Despite these economic benefits, the tobacco sector poses considerable challenges, particularly concerning health costs. With 250 million tobacco consumers in the country, 5.3% of India's total private and public healthcare expenditure goes into treating tobacco-related diseases in a year, as per the report on 'Human-Centric Approach to Tobacco Control'. Moreover, rising taxes have spurred an illicit tobacco trade, depriving the exchequer of vital revenues. Euromonitor International reports that illicit cigarette

volumes in India soared by 44% over a decade, from 19.5 billion sticks in 2011 to 28.1 billion sticks in 2020. As per the Human-Centric Approach to Tobacco Control report, the total loss incurred by the Indian government due to the illicit tobacco industry stood at INR 13,331 crore in 2022, which could have potentially contributed to the social welfare investments.



The recent proposal by the government to expand Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) restrictions in the tobacco sector could exacerbate these economic challenges. Such restrictions risk depriving farmers of export opportunities, denying the government access to harm-reducing technologies, and diminishing India's competitive edge compared to other countries. The United Nations Conference on Trade & Development (UNCTAD) reported a 43% fall in FDI in 2023 compared to 2022, underscoring the need for a more nuanced policy. Restrictive measures could prevent the Indian tobacco farming community from accessing advanced technologies and

securing fair prices, while also undermining India's ability to leverage the China + 1 strategy, as countries like Vietnam, Indonesia, and the Philippines offer more attractive propositions for FDI investment.

Globally, the challenges of tobacco consumption have prompted significant initiatives aimed at curbing usage. India has implemented numerous steps and stringent regulations to safeguard public health. State-level initiatives complement nationwide regulations, forming a comprehensive tobacco control framework. However, the limited impact of these measures indicates a need to rethink India's tobacco control policies.

A human-centric approach is crucial for achieving effective economic results. According to the report 'Human-Centric Approach to Tobacco Control,' implementing WHO FCTC recommendations could reduce smoking-related deaths from 10 million in the 2030s to 6.5 million in the coming years. This decline could be further halved with the adoption of better alternatives and cessation measures, directly lowering health expenditures. Additionally, encouraging FDI could help curb the illicit import of foreign cigarettes, ease business operations, and provide farmers with more export opportunities, thereby boosting government revenues.

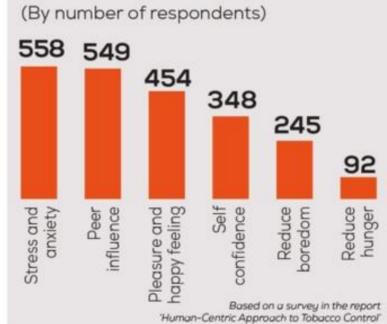
In conclusion, a comprehensive approach is urgently needed to effectively tackle the tobacco challenge and mitigate its growing negative impact on the economy. By adopting a balanced, forward-thinking policy framework, India can transform its tobacco sector from a source of economic deficit to a driver of surplus earnings, ensuring sustainable growth and prosperity.

Psychological Drivers of Tobacco Use

Tobacco use in India remains a pervasive public health challenge, deeply rooted in various psychological and social factors that influence individuals across different demographics. While efforts to curb tobacco consumption have been ongoing, understanding the underlying psychological drivers is crucial for effective intervention strategies.

Tobacco consumption determinants

(By number of respondents)



Stress and Anxiety

One of the primary psychological factors driving tobacco use in India is stress and anxiety. Many individuals turn to smoking or chewing tobacco as a coping mechanism to alleviate stress from work, family pressures, or personal issues. The nicotine in tobacco products acts as a stimulant, temporarily reducing feelings of tension and anxiety. According to a survey in the 'Human-Centric Approach to Tobacco Control' report, 62% of males and 40% of females in tier 1 cities cite stress and anxiety as motivations for tobacco use.

Peer Pressure and Social Acceptance

Peer pressure plays a significant role, particularly among younger populations. Adolescents and young adults often start smoking to fit in with their peers or to appear more socially accepted. The desire to "look cool" or be part of a social group that smokes, contributes to initiation and continued use. Studies indicate that peer influence strongly predicts tobacco experimentation and regular use among youth in urban and rural settings alike.

74% of total tobacco users have an adult smoker in their family

Psychological Resilience and Vulnerability Factors

Psychological factors such as low self-esteem, impulsivity, sensation-seeking behaviour, or a history of trauma can increase vulnerability to tobacco use. These factors may predispose individuals to seek out the immediate gratification and perceived benefits offered by tobacco.

Hunger Suppression in Economically Disadvantaged Communities

According to the report 'Human-Centric Approach to Tobacco Control', in India, legally produced cigarettes account for just 8% of the overall tobacco consumed, the remaining 92% of consumption is in the form of cheaper tobacco products such as bidis, chewing tobacco, khaini among others, mostly prevalent in the rural communities. For economically disadvantaged individuals, tobacco's perceived ability to suppress hunger plays a significant role. This misconception leads many to use tobacco products as a way to manage food scarcity, despite the harmful health consequences. This makes quitting particularly challenging, as the act of smoking becomes intertwined with basic survival instincts.

Addressing the Challenge

To effectively reduce tobacco consumption in India, it is crucial to adopt a human-centric approach that addresses the underlying psychological and socio-economic factors. This approach involves:

- Implementing targeted public health campaigns that educate about the risks of tobacco use and promote healthier coping mechanisms for stress.
- Strengthening tobacco control policies to curb advertising, increase taxes on tobacco products, and enforce regulations on production and sale.
- Providing accessible and affordable tobacco cessation services integrated into healthcare systems, particularly in rural and economically disadvantaged areas.

Embracing a Human-Centric Solution

Reducing tobacco consumption in India requires a comprehensive strategy that acknowledges and addresses the psychological drivers behind its use. By focusing on education, policy reform, and community-based interventions, India can make significant progress towards a healthier population. A human-centric approach, grounded in empathy and understanding of local contexts, is essential to effectively combatting tobacco use and improving public health outcomes nationwide.



Source: Human-Centric Approach To Tobacco Control



TOBACCO CONTROL 3.0

HUMAN CENTRIC APPROACH

Essential for **VIKSIT BHARAT**

AN ET EDGE INITIATIVE

TUESDAY, JULY 9, 2024

From Ban and Black Market to Educate and Regulate

Educate and Regulate, Don't Just Ban: Essential Steps to Combat Addiction and Eliminate Black Markets

On International Day Against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking, it's crucial to examine the alarming rise of the illegal tobacco market in India. Picture this: legally produced cigarettes account for a mere 8% of the overall tobacco consumption in India. Not only are counterfeit products a menace but even banned products like e-cigarettes and vapes have swiftly risen to prominence in the grey market. As per the survey conducted for the report "Human-Centric Approach for Tobacco Control", 8.1% of respondents consumed e-cigarettes. Despite the 2019 Prohibition of Electronic Cigarettes Act (PECA), that prohibits their manufacturing, selling, distribution, and possession of e-cigarettes, a thriving black market persists, posing significant health risks, while draining the nation's coffers through lost tax revenue.

Has the Ban Failed?

Human behaviour often gravitates toward the forbidden, driven by curiosity and intrigue. The objective of PECA 2019 in India was to protect public health, prevent initiation and support the tobacco control efforts, but the reality seems starkly different. Banned products like e-cigarettes and vapes are readily available from various sources, including tobacco vendors, general stores and online providers. These products are often seen being used in smoking zones of corporate buildings, lounge bars, clubs, and restaurants. This situation begs the question: How do we deal with this scenario? How do we curtail the black market?



Learning from Global Experiences

Japan, renowned for its meticulous public health policies, integrates traditional medicine with modern innovations to ensure effective disease prevention and healthcare delivery. Since 2014, its progressive regulations for less harmful alternatives and health education initiatives have successfully reduced cigarette sales by 52%, addressing a leading cause of disease in many countries.

Thailand, on the contrary, imposed stringent bans a decade ago and is now grappling with a thriving black market for e-cigarettes. To tackle this issue, in 2024, the government established an ad hoc parliamentary committee which has proposed three approaches: A) Continue the ban on e-cigarettes and toughen existing laws, B) Regulate heated tobacco products (HTPs) while maintaining the e-cigarette ban, or C) Regulate both e-cigarettes and HTPs.

Sweden's progressive public health policies have supported alternatives like snus and nicotine pouches (NP), resulting in a 60% decrease in smoking rates—the biggest reduction of any EU country between 2006 and 2020. This approach has also led to Sweden having the lowest incidence of cancer in the EU region, and the country has effectively become smoke-free, with less than 5% of the population over 15 years old smoking.

Addiction, Health Risks & Economic Burden: The Triple Threat of Banned Tobacco Products in India

The ease of obtaining these products is particularly concerning. There is no control over who is buying these devices or whether they are of legal age. Easy availability of such products fosters an environment where peer pressure and enticing flavours overshadow awareness of addiction risks among young adults. The allure of these products, coupled with their easy accessibility, exacerbates the challenge of curbing dependency.

Availability of illegally and banned substandard tobacco products in India poses severe health risks. Without standardized composition or clear sourcing, there is no oversight on the potentially harmful additives used. This lack of control raises concerns about the health implications, especially as consumer awareness and scrutiny of product ingredients continue to increase globally.

Tobacco use in India imposes a substantial economic burden, amounting to about 1% of the GDP, according to the report "Human-Centric Approach To Tobacco Control". This includes costs related to tobacco-induced diseases and premature deaths. Moreover, the presence of an illicit market further strains resources, diverting funds that could otherwise support economic growth into law enforcement efforts aimed at tackling the illicit trade.

Regulate & Educate: Key to Curbing the Black Market and Promoting Healthier Choices

While the government's efforts to safeguard public health and combat e-cigarette addiction are commendable, a balanced approach that includes better regulations and education is essential to mitigate the unintended rise of black markets. Highlighting the current scenario (PECA 2019), integrating regulation with education can curb illicit markets, ensure the availability of less harmful alternatives that meet health standards, and inform consumers about the dangers of counterfeit products. This strategy not only reduces health risks but also secures tax revenues. Strengthening regulatory frameworks and launching comprehensive public awareness campaigns will empower individuals to make healthier choices. As India navigates these challenges, effective regulation and consumer education will be pivotal in shaping a future where addiction is minimized, black markets are dismantled, and a healthier society is ensured for generations to come.

Busting Myths: Does Nicotine Cause Cancer?

In a world of information overload, especially with the proliferation of social media, the authenticity of information is often questionable. One such misconception is that nicotine is a carcinogen and the main cause of cancer. According to the US Food and Drug Administration (FDA), nicotine is not the primary cause of cancer or for that matter lung disease. Tobacco-related cancer is caused by toxins released from the combustion of cigarettes.

Even UK's National Health System (NHS) has stated that although nicotine is addictive, it is relatively harmless to health. However, it is the toxic chemicals contained in tobacco smoke that cause almost all the harm from smoking. Nicotine itself does not cause cancer, lung disease, heart disease or stroke and has been used safely for many years in medicines to help people stop smoking.

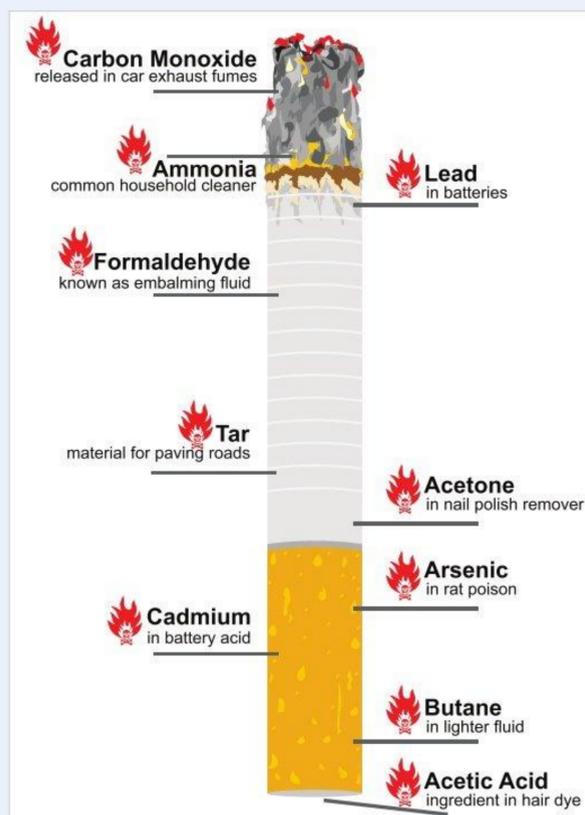
It is often concluded that nicotine is only found in tobacco and leads to cancer. But is it true? It is a natural ingredient found in several plants. Various vegetables such as eggplant, tomatoes, potatoes, among others, also contain nicotine in trace amounts.

There are more than 7000 chemicals in cigarette smoke. Of these, at least 250 are known to be harmful to health, such as hydrogen cyanide, carbon monoxide and ammonia. Some are natural components of the tobacco plant itself, but most harmful substances are only formed on combustion of tobacco and not by nicotine itself.

Products containing nicotine are often used to reduce anxiety, stress, or depression. A survey in the 'Human-Centric Approach to Tobacco Control' report highlights that stress and anxiety motivate tobacco consumption for 62% males and 40% females in tier I cities.

Nicotine from cigarettes is absorbed into the lungs through inhalation of smoke. When nicotine enters the body, it enters the circulatory system and reaches the brain within 20 seconds, causing nerve stimulation, resulting in feelings of euphoria.

The burden of cancer and tobacco related diseases is immense. A recent report by WHO suggests that new cancer cases are likely to rise to at least thirty-five



million in 2050, a 77% rise over the cases diagnosed in 2022. In India, an estimated 1.4 million cancer cases were recorded in the same year, while one in nine citizens could develop cancer in their lifetime.

Generally, lower doses of nicotine are used in safer tobacco alternatives, minimizing their exposure to carcinogens and other harmful substances in cigarette smoke. In fact, it is important to consider

that if nicotine were causing cancer, then why would experts and professionals promote Nicotine Replacement Therapy (NRT) as a cessation aid.

Nicotine alternatives eliminate combustion and consequently reduce the levels of harmful compounds. They are a crucial factor in one's journey to quit & should be the cornerstone for tobacco control policies to improve public health.

CHARTING THE COURSE TO A HEALTHIER TOMORROW



Tobacco Control 3.0 in India: The Road is Through Science, Technology and Collaboration

Evaluating alternative products creates an opportunity to empower individuals to make informed choices. The way forward in the battle against tobacco consumption entails a holistic and collaborative approach. Furthermore, harnessing the power of technology can amplify outreach efforts.

Countries including India are following World Health Organisation (WHO) Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (FCTC). However, they are free to exercise their own judgement on timelines given their relative compulsions. Incidentally, in a recent article by former WHO officials, Prof. Robert Beaglehole and Prof. Ruth Bonita have said that current tobacco control strategies are not working, highlighting the missing strategy of harm reductions and the technological advancements available.

According to the 'Human-Centric Approach for Tobacco Control' report, it is estimated that by the year 2030 more than 80 per cent of tobacco-related deaths are likely to be among the low and middle-income countries (LMICs). One third of all deaths due to tobacco use are anticipated to be

because of CVDs. Hence, India may consider to look at a redefined approach to save lives due to tobacco consumption.

The report further states that 27% per cent of Indian adults engage in tobacco consumption and the country is ranked second in tobacco usage, globally. Also, 38% of adult males in India consume tobacco, compared to 9% adult females, 1% of GDP lost every year to diseases and early deaths from tobacco use; and 5% of total healthcare expenditures attributes to the direct expenses for treating tobacco related diseases.

Public health experts agreed that cessation remains the quickest way to lessen deaths from tobacco. Policies such as tax increases, smoke-free spaces, advertising bans and educational programs have been emphasised by FCTC. Clinical and medicated solutions have not been fully integrated in

the public policy mitigating the tobacco challenge.

A diverse array of alternative products and cessation techniques have proven to be effective in aiding individuals in their journey towards quitting tobacco. Several strategies have been designed to permeate the usage of these products, such as government incentives, awareness campaigns and support from health professionals.

To further reduce death and disease rates, there is a need to consider new strategies for fast-tracking adult cessation and providing alternatives for those struggling to quit. For the same, the government of India has increased expenses on public health over the last few years.

Addressing current tobacco use and creating a harm reduction plan for consumers is crucial as tobacco imposes significant health burden and economic impact. Thus, providing less harmful alternatives and promoting safer practices, for those unable to quit, should be part of a holistic harm reduction approach, aiming to reduce the broader impact on the population.

Individuals who are unable to quit smoking should be encouraged to switch to less hazardous alternatives, minimising their overall health risks. Additionally, there can be an enhanced focus on making nicotine reduction techniques (NRTs) affordable and accessible to the general population. These should include plans and policies to monitor and maintain an exhaustive database of listed and unlisted manufacturers and retailers of tobacco products. Use blockchain to track the trade of illicit cigarettes and gutka.

There is also a need to increase investment in nationwide mass media campaigns, supported by targeted regional media, aimed at educating smokers, dispelling myths about tobacco use, and encouraging their support for cessation. This campaign could draw inspiration from the Pulse Polio campaign that led to the country being declared polio-free.

Besides, there is a clear case to increase investment in innovation funds to support research, data collection and impact monitoring. Public investment in science-based solutions for tobacco control, strengthening the regulatory framework and introducing subsidies for solutions and policies that can help to reduce the use of tobacco are the need of the hour.

There is also a need to provide incentives to manufacturers to develop products that reduce



exposure to tobacco toxicants while delivering similar consumer experiences. Offer subsidies to manufacturers of tobacco alternatives for creation of affordable harm reduction options and conducting research to understand their health impact.

There should also be a system to promote collaboration between the government, public health experts, regulators, consumers, healthcare practitioners, among other stakeholders to develop innovative and effective harm reduction methods and alternatives.

It is imperative and critical for India to have a holistic roadmap towards tobacco harm reduction and cessation because it plays a key role in controlling tobacco addiction by reducing consumption of cigarettes and risky oral tobacco products. Introduction of less harmful alternatives aligns with the government's goal of reducing tobacco-related harm and encouraging cessation. Offering smokers less harmful alternatives provides them with a potentially effective tool to withdraw from combustible tobacco.

Evaluating alternative products creates an opportunity to empower individuals to make informed choices about their tobacco use and reduce the harm associated with it. For individuals who are not willing to quit tobacco, switching to less harmful nicotine products could offer huge benefits. Hence, consumers, industry players and the government can together come forward to facilitate tobacco harm reduction policies for a healthy future.

The way forward in the battle against tobacco consumption entails a holistic and collaborative approach. Taking cognisance of the long-term irreversible consequences induced by tobacco consumption, it becomes imperative to design a human-centric harm reduction strategy encompassing all stakeholders - producers, consumers, regulatory agencies, public health professionals and support groups.

By persistently addressing the multidimensional challenges posed by tobacco, India can pave the way for a healthier smoke-free future for individuals and communities across the nation.