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Picture: ASHKA JAIN

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This is not **NEET** **A**

The Supreme Court after a month-long hearing concluded that there will be no re-test of NEET UG 2024.

This NEET is not neat

ASHKA JAIN

Bachelor of Journalism & Mass Communication

First it was the notorious Vyapam scam (1990-2013) that rocked the Madhya Pradesh Government. And now it is the NEET (National Eligibility and Entrance Test which determines admission to medical and dentistry schools in India) scam.

For the uninitiated, on May 5, 2024, NEET-UG was accused of alleged question paper leaks. As social media posts claimed about the leaks, the NTA (National Testing Agency) denied these charges.

As the controversy still rages and the government is cracking the whip on defaulter, what is worrying is that it has affected the future of lakhs of students.

The scam has highlighted structural, academic, and emotional difficulties. Many students dedicate several years to intense study to prepare for NEET.

The scam has raised their stress levels. Even as students have remained extremely anxious about the prospect of retaking the exam and about reliability

of the result, the Supreme Court after a month-long hearing concluded that there will be no re-test of NEET UG 2024. The three judge Bench led by Chief Justice DY Chandrachud on July 23 rejected series of petitions suggesting 'there is an absence of materials on record to show systemic breach in the conduct of the exam'. As per the Supreme Court verdict on NEET, the bonus marks awarded to certain candidates for the controversial Physics paper have been revoked, hence a new revised list and scorecard is to be released by NTA. A CBI investigation is however on to crack the gang behind the leak.

The real question remains how did it happen even after so many measures taken by the Indian Government to ensure smooth conduct of the examination? Dharmendra Pradhan, minister of education, acknowledged that documents had been leaked after first refusing to acknowledge the wrongdoing. According to Pradhan, "Only a limited number of students were affected by the NEET paper leak."

As investigations continue, a network of paper leaks has been discovered, and

it is evident that many students were impacted by both corruption and paper leaks. The exam system's credibility has been damaged by the leak. Students are disillusioned after the incident because they believe that the acts of a few people have diminished the worth of their sincere efforts.

In midst of the NEET-UG 2024 paper leak claims, Samastipur contestant Anurag Yadav, 22, admitted to the police that he got his uncle's leaked copy of the exam question paper a day before the May exam. Yadav confessed to Patna Police that his uncle, Sikander Prasad Yadavendu, an engineer at Danapur Town council, called him to tell him that all arrangements were done. The whole controversy erupted when a surprising number of 67 students achieved a perfect score of 720, with a few students achieving impossible scores such as 719, 718.

While over 24 lakh students were waiting for the re-test of NEET but their wait seems to be over to get justice? What is required is more security and transparency in the examination procedure. ■

NEET 2024 was conducted on May 5, 2024.

Over 24 lakh students registered for NEET 2024.

Available seats based on NEET scores:

- Over 1 lakh MBBS seats
- 26,949 BDS seats
- 52,720 AYUSH seats
- 603 BVSc & AH seats
- 1,899 AIIMS seats
- 249 JIPMER seats
- These seats are distributed across 612 medical and 315 dental colleges.

NTA's Role:

The National Testing Agency (NTA) conducts NEET.

Controversies

Grace Marks Controversy:

- Over 1,500 students were awarded grace marks in the NEET-UG 2024 exam. This decision sparked heated debates and protests.
- Some argued that the criteria for awarding grace marks were unclear, leading to questions about fairness and transparency.

Allegations of Leaked Question Paper:

- Aspirants and parents alleged that the NEET-UG 2024 question paper was leaked at certain examination centers.
- The controversy intensified due to suspicions surrounding the integrity of the exam process.

Unusually High Perfect Scores:

- An unusually high number of

students achieved perfect scores (720 out of 720) in NEET 2024.

- This raised eyebrows because in previous years, very few students had managed this feat. For instance, in 2023, only two students scored full marks.

Supreme Court Intervention:

- The Supreme Court stepped in and decided that a retest would be conducted for 1,563 students who received grace marks.
- The re-exam took place on June 23, 2024, and the results were announced on June 30.
- Admissions counseling continued, and if any of the candidates opted out of the retest, their previous marks (without grace marks) were considered.



Pictures: SHRUTI KAPOOR

Academic projects mark students' SUMMER BREAK

SHRUTI KAPOOR

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This summer break was different. As first year graduates, the anticipation was that the break, a justified one after the month-long Sem end exams, would be like the one experienced in schools. But the narrative was a changed one and a pleasant one too. It was marked by summer projects, internships and vacation.

Looking forward to returning to the campus after this wonderful break was one unique experience for these first year students graduating to second year of college. The buzz was that the break had introduced these young minds to new professional challenges and learning opportunities that would shape their perspectives on studies and career paths.

Students, like Ahana Kulshrestha from BJMC's third semester, commemorated their return to campus by reflecting on their first Non-Term Credit Course (NTCC). Ahana's approach to this academic en-

deavour was one of progressive participation and methodical preparation, notwithstanding her initial anxiety. She learnt to successfully analyse data while her mentor played an important part in this process, providing support and inspiration, allowing her to gain confidence and develop fundamental skills in research.

Molly Singh, a fifth-semester BJMC student, found her internship with an international e-magazine firm to be transformational. Molly's work as a rookie with no prior industry expertise was developing novel approaches to interview formats and social media content. Her seniors recognized her efforts as they guided her through. She says each day provided an opportunity to better her performance helping her develop her personality and increasing her understanding of the business world.

Stuti Vyas, a recent MJMC alumnae, spent her summer handling social media for a journalistic organisation. This position required keeping up with current events, analysing audience involvement,

and modifying strategy accordingly. Working closely with the editorial team, Stuti realised the crucial relevance of rapid and accurate news distribution. The fast-paced atmosphere prepared her for a vibrant future in digital media.

Other students like Aarohi Seem from BJMC's third semester tackled serious societal concerns through NTCC projects. Aarohi's dedication in her research resulted in significant insights and a rewarding experience for her making her realize about social banes in Indian society.

Mahi, a fifth-semester BJMC student, discussed her experience as a public relations intern, emphasising the industry's dynamic nature. Mahi's internship entailed preparing press releases, communicating with media, and devising tactics to get publicity for clients. Her hands-on experience solidified her grasp of public relations and laid the groundwork for her future professional choice.

Bhavna Soni from BJMC's third semester investigated ChatGPT's influence on student life for her NTCC report. She embarked on the relatively new field of research paper writing, guided by teachers and mentors. This academic endeavour not only improved her research abilities, but it also gave a thorough awareness of how technology innovations such as ChatGPT affect educational dynamics.

No doubt, as students returned to their routine life on campus, the pooled experiences from summer projects and internships provided them with a revitalised sense of purpose and perspective for their academic goals. ■

Reality TV shows: Impacting the young

MANI RANI

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There is no denying the fact that reality television is now the norm in India winning over millions of viewers. Reality television comprises an extensive range of genres that cater to a vast range of viewers, including talent competitions, adventure challenges, and lifestyle changes. These events now serve more than mere entertainment; they have a significant impact on people's attitudes, behaviour and aspirations.

The Indian youth is attracted to reality TV because it offers gifted persons a chance to showcase their talent on a wider platform. Youth programs such as "Dance India Dance," "Indian Idol," and "India's Got Talent" provide an opportunity for young people to demonstrate their talent in dance, singing and other performing arts. Past participants of these programmes have gone on to have prosperous careers in the entertainment sector. Singers like Monali Thakur and Neha Kakkar, for example, credit their success to these kinds of platforms. As Kakkar once said, "Reality shows gave me the exposure and confidence I needed to make it in the industry." These opportunities can be life-changing, offering not only a career path but also a stable financial future.

Stories of common individuals attaining exceptional achievement are a common component of reality TV. Young viewers may find great encouragement in this story. Seeing someone from humble background achieve success and renown with grit and perseverance inspires young people to pursue their goals with more vigor. These shows' portrayals of successful people inspire young people to have faith in their own abilities and pursue greatness in their chosen industries. A former contestant on "Indian Idol" put it, "The journey was tough, but seeing others succeed pushed me to work harder."

Reality television shows the great cultural variety that exists in India. Travel, culinary, and lifestyle shows introduce



viewers to a variety of national customs, civilizations, and lifestyles. For instance, programmes like "MasterChef India" showcase local delicacies together with the cultural histories that accompany them. The youth have a deeper respect and comprehension of India's rich cultural legacy as a result of this exposure. Chef Vikas Khanna, a judge on "MasterChef India," remarked, "Food is a way to connect with our roots and understand the vast diversity of our country."

While reality TV can be inspirational, it can also lead to young viewers having inflated expectations. A distorted perspective of reality might result from the glamorization of success and recognition, which are frequently attained quickly. Many young individuals could grow up thinking that recognition and success can be attained with little time or effort, ignoring the hardships and hard work that are typically involved in the background. When they encounter the true obstacles of life, this might cause them to become frustrated and disillusioned.

The mental health of competitors on reality TV programmes might suffer from the intense competition and pressure to succeed. Stress, anxiety, and sadness can result from the public, media, and courts' unrelenting scrutiny. This pressure can be particularly intense for younger contenders who may not yet have strong coping skills. Furthermore, the way disputes and

emotional breakdowns are portrayed in these shows—which are sometimes exaggerated for dramatic effect—may be detrimental to the psychological well-being of both performers and spectators. Dr. Samir Parikh, a psychiatrist, notes, "The emotional toll of constant scrutiny and competition can be significant, and we need to be mindful of the mental health of young participants." ■

According to a study by the Centre for Media Studies, 75% of Indian youth feel motivated to pursue their dreams after watching reality TV shows.

A study by the National Institute of Mental Health and Neurosciences (NIMHANS) found that 40% of youth viewers believe reality TV depicts an easy path to success.

Embracing diversity at workplace



Pictures: MOLLY SINGH

“ Inclusion in the workplace creates a sense of belonging among co-workers that can translate to greater productivity, more innovation, and better decision-making. Team performance improves when employees feel more connected. Get everyone pulling on the same side of the rope, and the possibilities for growth and success increase exponentially. ”

(Source- nu.edu blogs)

MOLLY SINGH

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Embracing new ways of functioning at workplaces with evolving trends and tradition is an integral part of staying updated in the global network market. Interns and new employees bring fresh ideas to the table, if given a chance, which are often innovative as they come from different backgrounds and experiences. Inclusion of newcomer's ideas and perspectives at workplaces encourages creative environment which results in productivity.

With the expanding worldwide market trends, some corporates have ad-

opted a more assertive attitude towards interns. "Fortunately, contrary to popular belief, Not only were my ideas valued, but my seniors themselves asked for ideas from me. They wanted to see what I bring to the table as a fresher and luckily what I brought was much appreciated," said Aishani Purkayastha, a content writing intern.

Inclusivity grants freshers or new employees the freedom to exercise their creativity. "I don't think a lot of workplaces understand just how important and incorporated environment is for one's productivity. There is a sense of fairness but above all, there is a sense of responsibility and belongingness," said Vanshika Pandey, a corporate employee. It also

serves as a medium of fair evaluation of the employee's capabilities by granting them opportunities to showcase their potential rather than any other external varieties.

Creativity flourishes in an environment where newcomers are empowered and encouraged to speak about their vision, no matter how outlandish they may appear at first. Embracing of these practices of equal chances and inclusivity is crucial for company advancement as a whole. As corporate world continues to evolve, adapting to these changes not only enhances employee's morale and participation but also helps businesses to more efficiently navigate the complexities in a fast paced global marketplace. ■

For them, footpath is their home



For them, footpath is their home. Their life is all about struggles and resilience as they navigate their daily existence on the societal verges. Though god has created all creatures big and small, it is man only who has created the social divide. Some live luxuriously while some are marginalized. But this does not mean that life on footpath is not important. It is important. In a big city the road is a page and footpaths are the margins. The situation in Lucknow is no different.

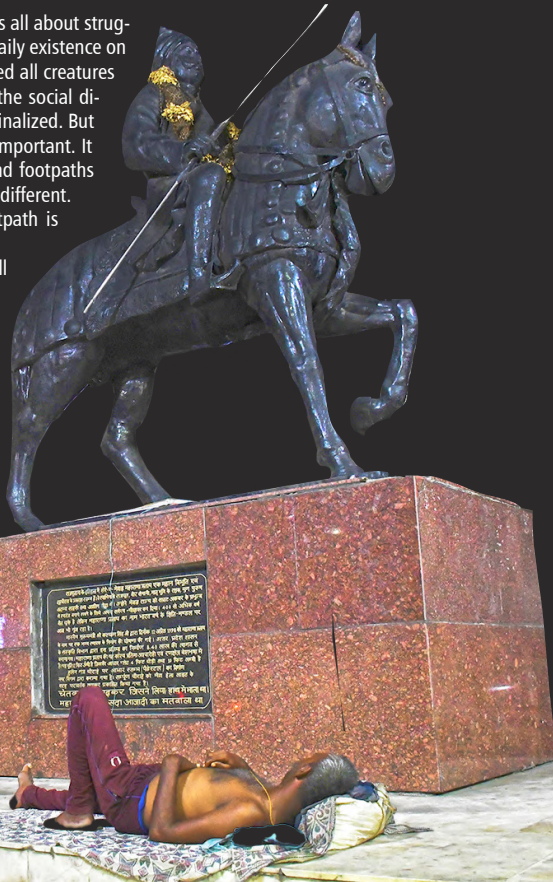
For these daily workers and labourers, footpath is important. They live here.

As the night intensifies, life on footpath is still alive and kicking. If you move in any big city in the night, you will find thousands of persons living on footpaths.

In India, there are more than two crore people spending their lives on the footpath. They cannot take a rented room and there is no way out for them but to live on the footpath.

They are the ones who left their home to have better earnings in a city and have become permanent dwellers here.

Our cameraman [Suresh Sahu](#) went round the city to capture night life on footpath.





Picture: BHAVNA SONI

BHAVNA SONI

Bachelor of Journalism & Mass Communication

“What a wonderful childhood we had when we used to find ways to sneak out of our homes and spend time outdoors playing games like hopscotch, gilli danda, kabaddi and hide and seek. Those times were uncomplicated. We were respectful, innocent and hardly familiar with irritability and aggression. Life was simple back then,” Ramkumari (68) says while talking to Expressions.

Ramkumari was reminiscing her childhood while talking about what she misses in today's children.

It is common for today's parents to use digital devices as a means of pacifying their children specially when they exhibit disruptive behaviour or express desire for visual stimulation. Children have become adept at exploiting this parental reliance on digital devices often employing manipulative tactics to obtain access to these devices. Parent Manisha Rastogi, a 32-year-old mother of a four-year-old, says the challenges she faces when she has to feed her offspring in absence of a digital device. Her child's irritability and anger compelled Rastogi to acquiesce to

the demand for a device.

Things have come to such a pass that they find short-form content such as reels and YouTube shorts more captivating than cartoons, say many mothers.

YouTube shorts, typically ranging from 15 to 30 seconds, often lack substantial moral narratives and primarily feature nonsensical content aimed at capturing viewers' attention. Their brevity keeps viewers, particularly children, eager to explore the next short in the sequence. While these short clips may seem harmless and serve as a momentary distraction, closer examination reveals their potentially detrimental effects on children's mental and cognitive development. These developments include: mental processes: Children's mental processes, which should ideally be nurtured through thoughtful engagement, are now subjected to a relentless barrage of mindless content. This overstimulation can hinder cognitive development and creativity; maturing at an early age: The exposure to content often beyond their age leads to an early maturation of children; distorted sense of reality - While classic animations like Mickey Mouse and Tom and Jerry offered entertainment with underlying moral lessons, many social media reels and shorts prioritize shock value and

sensationalism; behavioural changes: excessive use of these platforms can lead to impulsive behaviour and decreased social interaction; less attention span : Short duration of reels leads to less attention span including other problems like loss of appetite and binge eating.

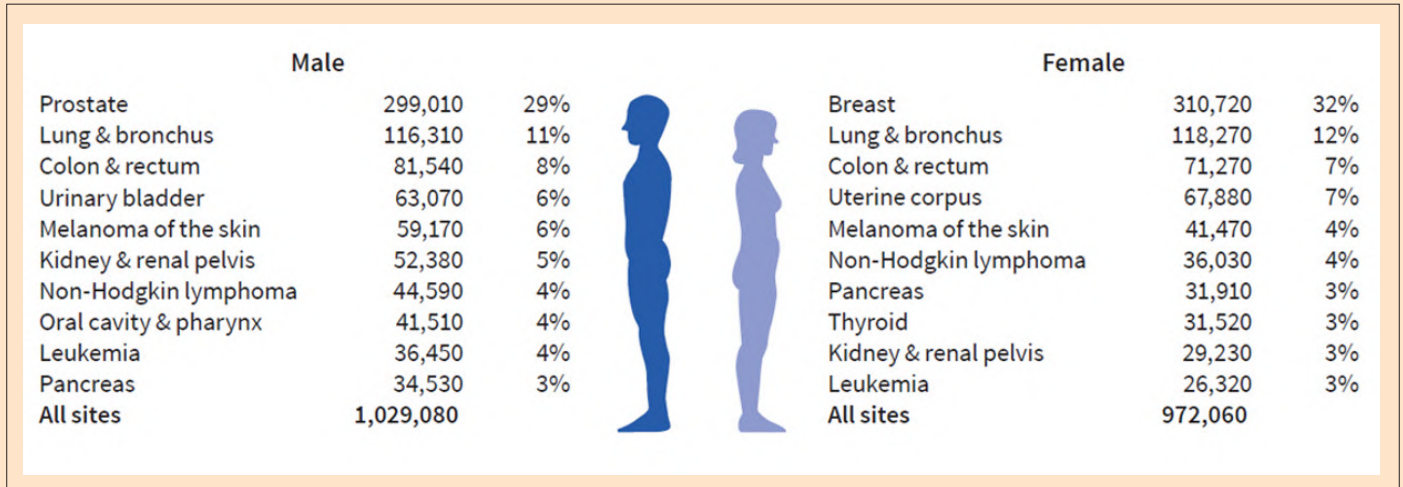
Even as children are not able to judge what is good or bad, parents should monitor this. As parents are generally working, they show their love for their children by providing them with digital devices without realizing the negatives.

Experts suggest that solutions do exist: Parental guidance: Parents should avoid using phone if their child is still in his/her learning and imitating phase. They should monitor child's activities; Strictness: children can be nasty and stubborn when not given what they want so parents should maintain strictness; Media literacy: It will encourage responsible consumption of media; Exposing the child to skill-based development and problem solving shows; Spending quality time with children - parents should spend quality time with their children; Stress on outdoors.

All in all, it can be said that if parents monitor their children, this young generation will grow up to be a responsible one. ■

Cancer: India stares at a malignant problem

Global cancer incidence: both sexes (2022-24)



Infographic: MARIA SIDDIQUI

Source: World Cancer Research Fund International

MARIA SIDDIQUI

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A January 2024 Lancet study states that India registered around 12 lakh new cancer cases and 9.3 lakh deaths in 2019 becoming the second highest contributor to the disease burden in Asia, along with China and Japan in 2019. Additionally, annual Health of Nation report states India is emerging as the 'cancer capital of the world' with cases expected to reach 1.57 million in 2025.

Talking to Expressions, 35-year-old Charu Misra (name changed), battling breast cancer and who recently completed her treatment, said, "I feel more connected with myself now.

I feel blessed to have been given this new life to me. I had days where I used to laugh about not spending money on hair care products. I used to cry in the mirror because the image I see of myself now was so different from what it was before. Many of my friends believed that I will be fine once treatment is completed, but a cancer diagnosis can and will remain with you."

The helpline number (93-555-20202) was established to allow people to receive a free second opinion (also known as expert opinion). Cancer sufferers can contact the hotline number to speak with

oncologists directly or schedule a video session to discuss their cancer therapy.

The WHO states that physical carcinogens including UV and ionising radiation, chemical carcinogens including asbestos, tobacco smoke components, alcohol, aflatoxin (a food contaminant), and arsenic (a water contaminant), growth in obesity rates, combined with consumption of processed foods and sugary beverages, contributes to an increase in cancer diagnosis among young people.

Excessive screen time to electromagnetic radiation from electronic gadgets has generated worries about their carcinogenic potential, too.

Dr. Rajiv Agarwal, MBBS MD, said "Cancer is a complicated group of disorders, with no one-size-fits-all treatment. The most common cancers vary by gender, with women having breast, cervix, and ovarian cancer, while males have lung, oral, and prostate cancer. In comparison to other nations cancer gets diagnosed mostly at a later stage in India making it hard for the individual."

It's been seen through research that patients with a positive attitude are better able to cope with disease-related problems and many respond better to therapy.

CAR-T cell therapy is a sort of cancer immunotherapy treatment that uses immune cells known as T cells that have

been genetically modified in a lab to help them locate and destroy cancer cells more efficiently.

CRISPR-Cas9 technology is being used to modify genes within cancer cells, potentially blocking cancer-promoting genes or boosting the immune response to tumours.

AI is transforming cancer care by analysing massive volumes of medical data to predict patient outcomes, optimise treatment regimens, and enable early detection. AI-powered diagnostic tools are improving cancer screening, accuracy and efficiency especially in nations like India where access to healthcare resources is limited.

For example, AI-based risk profiling can aid in the early detection of common malignancies such as breast cancer.

Meera Zaman, 62, recently started therapy for ovarian cancer. Her diagnosis came after she had recurrent stomach pain and sought medical assistance. On July 9, she finished her first chemotherapy session.

Despite this health difficulty, Meera stays committed to teaching home-schooled children, showing her perseverance and determination. She also participates in online forums and support groups where she discusses her experiences and learns from others going through similar struggles. ■

Push for sustainable beauty

“ There has been increased awareness among the major players like Procter & Gamble, Unilever, L’Oréal and others during the past decade to move towards more environmentally friendly ingredients, processes, and packaging. They are actively working towards getting to a greener world and these actions are further fuelled by changes in the global regulatory framework and the consumer demand for greener and sustainable products. ”

Dr. KP Ananth (Professor and Director of Cosmetic Science Programs, University of Cincinnati)

ARHAMA ALI

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They are applied to the human body maybe to beautify or clean. But a peep below the veneer of cosmetics reveals an ugly image. Chemicals like parabens, phthalates, aluminum, lead, mercury, fluoride and other hazardous substances are used in these beauty cosmetics to embellish the human body.

The silver lining is that awareness is growing about this health hazard. Now, people are shifting towards organic, not just in skincare, but almost in everything. From going to organic restaurants that serve you a vegan/plant-based version of every dish, getting locally sourced food-not leaving any carbon footprint on the planet, to going back to basics while using skin-care and hair care products just to name a few options.

Talking to Expressions, Nidhi Arora says, “As someone who studies environmental impacts, I appreciate brands that prioritize sustainability. Natural beauty products not only benefit personal health but also reduce pollution and waste. It’s a small

change that collectively makes a big difference for the planet.”

“I started using natural beauty products after experiencing skin irritation from conventional ones. Since switching over, my skin feels healthier, and I love knowing that I’m reducing my exposure to harmful chemicals. The zero-waste aspect also aligns with my goal of leading a more sustainable lifestyle,” says

Rimsha Aziz. “Fitness is about overall well-being, and that includes what we put on our bodies as well. Natural beauty products are a part of my regimen now. They’re better for my skin and align with my values of maintaining a healthy, toxin-free lifestyle,” Usman Khan adds.

There are many upcoming 100% organic skin and hair care brands that offer a wide range of products like serums, body butters, eye liners, lip balms, face packs, scrubs,

etc that cater to many skin and hair issues- naturally, without any chemicals. But people need to check the organic certification of the brand since many brands deceive by just mentioning one herbal in-

redient and broadly mentioning all the products are organic.

Earlier, brides were anointed with a haldi chandan ubtan pack which gave her a shiny and moisturized skin. Her hair was kept oiled many days prior to the wedding to enable her to have perfectly silky-smooth hair on the wedding day. She was bathed in raw milk to ensure a bright and clean look. Now, it has been replaced with expensive chemical treatments that have many health hazards and put a hole in their pockets too.

“Transitioning to natural beauty products was a game-changer for my sensitive skin. I used to struggle with breakouts, but natural ingredients have been much gentler. Plus, I’m glad I’m contributing less to plastic waste with eco-friendly packaging,” says Anamta Khan.

“Teaching children about the environment made me more conscious of my own choices. Using natural

beauty products is one way I practice what I preach. They’re effective and less harmful to the planet, which is a lesson I want to pass on,” Sonia Aggarwal added. But also, be aware



Pictures: ARHAMA ALI



about the fact that tests are carried out on animals for safety of cosmetic products. So, one has to be careful when one uses an anti-wrinkle cream or a deodorant, to find out whether it was tested on animals or not.

Also, it is people's responsibility to ensure that natural and plant-based self-care products are locally produced and made from locally grown produce.

"I wasn't very particular about beauty

products until I learned about the harmful effects of some chemicals. Switching to natural products was an easy decision once I realized it's better for my health and the environment. It's a simple way to make a positive change," says Ifra Ali.

"As a business owner, I believe in supporting companies that are making a positive impact. Natural beauty products not only work well but also reflect my commitment to sustainability. It's import-

ant to support brands that prioritize the planet," Shaista Razvi added.

"Art is about expression and so is my choice of beauty products. I feel more authentic using natural products that align with my eco-conscious values. It's empowering to choose products that are good for me and the environment," says Saif Khan. It is high time that people make a smart switch of daily care products from chemical-based to nature-based. ■

Murthy bats for cervical cancer vaccination

ABHINAV VARMA

Bachelor of Journalism & Mass Communication

Though she was given only five minutes to make her debut speech in the Rajya Sabha on July 3, 2024, renowned philanthropist and author Sudha Murthy took the opportunity to focus attention on cervical cancer vaccination for girls aged 9 to 14. She urged the government to prioritize it. She emphasized that prevention is better than cure and highlighted the significance of making the vaccine accessible and affordable.

Cervical cancer is a major health issue, being the fourth most common cancer among women worldwide. According to the World Health Organization (WHO), there were approximately 660,000 new cases and around 350,000 deaths in 2022. This type of cancer is primarily caused by the Human Papillomavirus (HPV), a common sexually transmitted infection. Persistent HPV infection of the cervix is responsible for nearly 95% of cervical cancers. The mortality rate of cervical cancer stands at 11.7 in the country.

Stressing why it was a serious issue, Murthy said, "For the hospital it is a count of plus one, but for a family a mother is lost forever." She stressed that early vaccination could significantly reduce the risk of developing cervical cancer. She noted that while the vaccine was available in the West for over 20 years, its uptake in India was limited

due to various factors, including cost and lack of awareness.

Currently there are three vaccines available, Cervavac, India's first locally produced vaccine, by Serum Institute, available in the market at Rs 2,000, Gardasil available at Rs 4,000, and Cervarix costing Rs 2,600. All of them are administered in 2-3 doses for age groups 5-14 years. Murthy proposed that with government intervention and negotiation, the cost could be reduced to Rs 700-800, making it more accessible to a larger population. She referenced the successful vaccination drives during the COVID-19 pandemic as evidence that large-scale vaccination programs were feasible in India.

The World Health Organization (WHO), in August 2020, launched a global initiative to eliminate cervical cancer, aiming to reduce its incidence to less than four cases per 100,000 women. This comprehensive strategy focuses on three key pillars: vaccination, screening, and treatment. WHO's goal is to ensure that by 2030, 90% of girls are fully vaccinated with the HPV vaccine by age 15, 70% of women are screened with a high-precision test by age 35 and again by age 45, and 90% of women identified with cervical disease receive appropriate treatment.

This initiative emphasizes the need for widespread access to preventive measures and healthcare services, particularly in low- and middle-income countries where the burden of cervical cancer is highest. ■

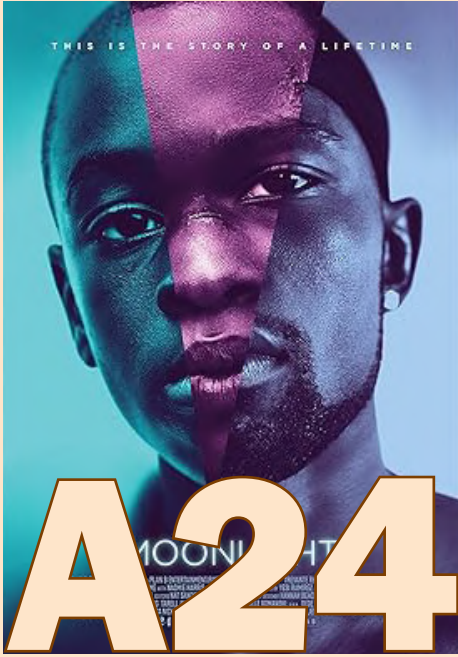
- According to the World Health Organization (WHO), there were approximately 660,000 new cases and around 350,000 deaths due to cervical cancer in 2022.

- Persistent HPV infection of the cervix is responsible for nearly 95% of cervical cancers.

- The mortality rate of cervical cancer stands at 11.7 in the country.

- Currently there are 3 vaccines available, Cervavac, India's first locally produced vaccine, by Serum Institute, available in the market at Rs 2000, Gardasil available at Rs 4000, and Cervarix costing Rs 2600. All of them are administered in 2-3 doses for age groups 5 - 14.

- The World Health Organization (WHO), in August 2020, launched a global initiative to eliminate cervical cancer, aiming to reduce its incidence to less than four cases per 100,000 women.



Moonlight(s) with creativity

Pictures: DIVYA KOTWANI

DIVYA KOTWANI

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In a world where superhero blockbusters and formulaic franchises dominate the box office, one studio dares to be different.

A24, the indie powerhouse behind some of the most critically acclaimed and culturally relevant films of the past decade, is revolutionizing modern cinema with its bold, innovative approach to storytelling. From the shadows of the indie film scene to the spotlight of mainstream success, A24 has emerged as a powerhouse of modern cinema.

Its impact on popular culture is undeniable, but what's behind the studio's remarkable rise to fame?"

"There is sort of a visible property that makes A24 movies so them. The colors, the unusual stories and of course the performances. It has become a ritual to watch any movie with the brand A24." Quotes Priyansh Verma, a fine arts student at Banaras Hindu University.

From the Oscar-winning masterpieces 'Moonlight' and 'Everything Everywhere All at Once' to horror sensations like 'Hereditary' and 'Midsommar', A24's films are not only pushing the boundaries of

cinematic storytelling but also redefining the very fabric of the film industry. By prioritizing innovation over commercial appeal, the studio is inspiring a new generation of filmmakers and artists to take risks and challenge the status quo.

It's impact on popular culture is undeniable. Their films have sparked conversations about identity, community, and the human experience, resonating with audiences from diverse backgrounds. The studio's commitment to representation and inclusivity has also paved the way for more diverse storytelling, inspiring a new wave of creatives to share their stories and perspectives.

"Talking about Moonlight, what set it apart was how the production focused on an authentic portrayal of life in Miami, avoiding the typical Hollywood gloss. Barry Jenkins was given the freedom to use non-professional actors and shoot on location in Liberty City, adding to the film's authenticity and rawness. The authenticity in the portrayal of African American life and the exploration of themes like identity and sexuality are handled with sensitivity and depth, reflecting A24's emphasis on meaningful, human stories," says Priya Sharma, studying MSc from Amity University, Lucknow.

She further elaborated that, "The

marketing for 'Everything Everywhere All at Once' was innovative and engaging, often utilizing social media and viral content to build excitement. A24's campaigns were tailored to the film's unique tone and style, appealing to both mainstream audiences and niche markets. Such distinct and efficient strategies sets A24 apart in the industry."

What's behind A24's remarkable success? Founder Daniel Katz says it's all about prioritizing artistic expression and creative freedom. "We want to give filmmakers the freedom to tell the stories they want to tell, without compromise," he says. "We believe that the best films come from a place of passion and creativity, not from a formula or a marketing strategy," he adds.

This approach has attracted some of the most innovative and daring filmmakers in the industry, from Barry Jenkins to Ari Aster. "A24 is the only studio that truly understands the value of artistic expression," says Jenkins. "They gave me the freedom to make the film I wanted to make, without compromise. That's a rare thing in this industry."

So, whether you're a film buff, a music lover, or simply someone who appreciates innovative storytelling, A24 is a studio that's worth watching. ■