

Annyeonghaseyo Beti: Korean woman visits Taj Mahal

CHENNAI: India is known for its culture and architecture. A Korean family too has validated this established fact by visiting Taj Mahal with her parents. Jiwon, who is an influencer, routinely documents her experience in India by sharing videos and pictures on social

media. The viral post features Jiwon wearing a pink Salwar and posing alongside her parents with the UNESCO World Heritage Site in the background. The post was shared 6 days ago by 'korean.g1'. Since being shared it got 27,580 likes. "Korean mummy papa ki Indian

beti. Today, I showed the Taj Mahal to my parents... and they fall in love with the Taj Mahal. I'm happy to show them Incredible India. And our guide said I speak Hindi and I wear kurti so I'm totally Indian. Khubsurat taj mahal ke sath sundar gulabi kurti, acha hai na? (Pink kurti

looks pretty with the beautiful Taj Mahal, right?)" the caption of the post read.

A user commented, "Indian and Korean beti". "Hope your parents too fall in love with this wonderful country" another added. "Happy family," said the third.



5 signs of a healthy menstrual cycle you shouldn't ignore

NEW DELHI: A healthy menstrual cycle is not only indicative of good reproductive health but also reflects overall well-being. It is essential for women to pay attention to their menstrual cycles and understand what constitutes a healthy and normal period. By being aware of the signs of a healthy menstrual cycle, women can better monitor their reproductive health and seek medical attention if any irregularities arise. Dr. Vishesh Kasliwal, MBBS, DEM and Founder, Medyseva shares five signs of a healthy menstrual cycle that should not be ignored.

Regular Cycle Length: A regular menstrual cycle

generally lasts between 21 to 35 days. While the length may vary slightly from woman to woman, consistency is key. Having a predictable cycle length suggests that the body is ovulating regularly and releasing an egg for potential fertilization. Irregular cycles, on the other hand, can indicate hormonal imbalances, stress, or other underlying health issues. If your menstrual cycle regularly falls outside the typical range, it is advisable to consult a healthcare professional to investigate the cause.

Normal Bleeding: The amount and duration of menstrual bleeding can vary from woman to woman.

However, a healthy menstrual cycle involves a moderate to heavy flow for an average of two to seven days. If you experience excessively heavy bleeding that requires changing sanitary products more frequently than every two hours or if your period lasts longer than seven days, it may be a sign of an underlying health condition such as uterine fibroids or hormonal imbalances. Likewise, abnormally light periods or spotting may indicate issues with ovulation or the uterine lining. Any persistent deviation from the norm should be discussed with a healthcare provider.

Minimal Pain and Discomfort:

While some degree of discomfort during menstruation is common, excessive pain or debilitating cramps may be a sign of an underlying problem.

Mild cramping caused by uterine contractions is normal, but severe pain that interferes with daily activities or requires the use of pain medication should not be ignored. Conditions such as endometriosis, pelvic inflammatory disease, or fibroids can cause intense menstrual pain. If you experience severe or worsening pain during your period, it is crucial to seek medical advice for an accurate diagnosis and appropriate treatment.

Consistent Cycle Length:

Consistency in cycle length is another essential sign of a healthy menstrual cycle. It means that the duration between the start of one period and the start of the next is relatively stable. Tracking your cycles on a calendar or using a period-tracking app can help identify any irregularities or changes in cycle length. Significant variations or sudden changes in the length of your menstrual cycle may indicate hormonal imbalances, stress, or other underlying health conditions. Consulting a healthcare professional is recommended if you notice persistent irregularities in your cycle length.

Balanced Mood and

Energy Levels:

Fluctuations in hormones during the menstrual cycle can affect mood and energy levels. However, a healthy menstrual cycle involves manageable mood swings and only slight changes in energy levels. Feeling excessively fatigued, experiencing severe mood swings, or struggling with persistent feelings of sadness or anxiety during your period may indicate hormonal imbalances or even conditions such as premenstrual dysphoric disorder (PMDD). If these symptoms significantly impact your daily life, it is important to seek medical support for appropriate management strategies.

Decoded: Why is yawning so contagious



New York: Ever wondered why even if we are not tired, we yawn if someone else does?

It is because the human propensity for contagious yawning is triggered automatically by primitive reflexes in a brain area responsible for motor function, a research suggests.

Contagious yawning is trig-

gered involuntarily when we observe another person yawn it is a common form of echophenomena the automatic imitation of another's words (echolalia) or actions (echopraxia). The findings showed that our urge to yawn is increased if we are instructed to resist yawning. And no matter

how hard we try to stifle a yawn, it might change how we yawn but it won't alter our propensity to yawn. "This research has shown that the 'urge' is increased by trying to stop yourself. Using electrical stimulation we were able to increase excitability and in doing so increase the propensity for contagious yawning," said Georgina Jackson, a Professor at the University of Nottingham.

"The findings may be important in understanding association between motor excitability and the occurrence of echophenomena in a wide range of conditions linked to increased cortical excitability and/or decreased physiological inhibition such as epilepsy, dementia, autism, and Tourette syndrome," added Stephen

Jackson, a Professor at the varsity.

For the study, published in the journal Current Biology, the team used transcranial magnetic stimulation (TMS) to analyse volunteers who viewed video clips showing someone else yawning and were instructed to either resist yawning or to allow themselves to yawn.

"If we can understand how alterations in cortical excitability give rise to neural disorders we can potentially reverse them. We are looking for potential non-drug, personalised treatments, using TMS that might be affective in modulating imbalances in the brain networks," Jackson said.

Echophenomena isn't just a human trait, it is found in chimpanzees and dogs too.

AI outperforms standard risk model for predicting breast cancer: Study

NEW DELHI: Artificial intelligence (AI) algorithms outperformed the standard clinical risk model for predicting the five-year risk for breast cancer, according to a large study of thousands of mammograms.

A woman's risk of breast cancer is typically calculated using clinical models such as the Breast Cancer Surveillance Consortium (BCSC) risk model. This model uses self-reported and other information on the patient, including age, family history of the disease, and whether she has given birth, to calculate a risk score.

"Clinical risk models depend on gathering information from different sources, which isn't always available or collected," said lead researcher Vignesh A. Arasu, from Kaiser Permanente Northern California, US. "Recent advances in AI deep learning provide us with the ability to extract hundreds to thousands of additional mammographic features," Arasu said in a statement. The study, published in the journal Radiology, used data associated with negative -- showing no visible evidence of cancer -- screening 2D mammograms performed at Kaiser Permanente Northern California in 2016. Of the 324,009 women screened in 2016 who met eligibility criteria, a random group of 13,628 women was selected for analysis.

Additionally, all 4,584 patients from the eligibility pool who were diagnosed with cancer within five years of the original 2016 mammogram were also studied.

All the women were followed until 2021. "We selected from the entire year of screening mammograms performed in 2016, so our study population is representative of communities in Northern California," Arasu said.

The researchers divided the five-year study period into three time periods: interval cancer risk, or incident cancers diagnosed between 0 and 1 years, future cancer risk, or incident cancers

diagnosed from between one and five years, and all cancer risk, or incident cancers diagnosed between 0 and 5 years. Using the 2016 screening mammograms, risk scores for breast cancer over the five-year period were generated by five AI algorithms, including two academic algorithms used by researchers and three commercially available algorithms.

The risk scores were then compared to each other and to the BCSC clinical risk score. "All five AI algorithms performed better than the BCSC risk model for predicting breast cancer risk at 0 to 5 years," Arasu said. "This strong predictive performance over the five-year period suggests AI is identifying both missed cancers and breast tissue features that help predict future cancer development. Something in mammograms allows us to track breast cancer risk. This is the 'black box' of AI," the researcher added. Some of the AI algorithms excelled at predicting patients at high risk of interval cancer, which is often aggressive and may require a second reading of mammograms, supplementary screening or short-interval follow-up imaging. When evaluating women with the highest 10 per cent risk as an example, AI predicted up to 28 per cent of cancers compared to 21 per cent predicted by BCSC.

Even AI algorithms trained for short time horizons -- as low as 3 months -- were able to predict the future risk of cancer up to five years when no cancer was clinically detected by screening mammography.

When used in combination, the AI and BCSC risk models further improved cancer prediction. "We're looking for an accurate, efficient and scalable means of understanding a women's breast cancer risk," Arasu said. "Mammography-based AI risk models provide practical advantages over traditional clinical risk models because they use a single data source: the mammogram itself," he added.

Watching TV for five hours may affect mobility in elderly

New York: Older people who watch more than five hours of television a day and indulge in three or lesser hours of physical activity in a week were at more than three-fold higher risk of being unable to walk or having difficulty walking, researchers warned. The findings showed that people who watched five or more hours of television per day had a 65 per cent greater risk of reporting a mobility disability, compared with those who watched television for less than two hours per day. Television viewing in the evening may be especially detrimental to health because it is not broken up with short bouts of activity, compared with sitting during the



day. "Television viewing is a very potent risk factor for disability in older age," said lead author Loretta DiPietro from the George Washington University. Younger people might be able to get away with sitting for long periods because they are physiologically more robust. But after age 50, prolonged sitting,

and especially prolonged television viewing, becomes particularly hazardous, DiPietro said.

"We've engineered physical activity out of our modern life with commuting, elevators, the internet, mobile phones and a lifestyle that often includes 14 hours of sitting per day," DiPietro

said. "Our findings suggest that older people who want to remain fit must ramp up their daily physical activity and reduce the amount of time they spend sitting," DiPietro added. For the study, published in the Journal of Gerontology: Medical Sciences, the team analysed data which kept track of men and women aged 50 to 71 from six states and two metropolitan areas, nearly 30 per cent of the previously healthy participants reported a mobility disability-having difficulty walking or being unable to walk at all. "To stay active and healthy as you age, move more and sit less throughout the day every day," DiPietro added.

People who try one cigarette become daily smokers

London, PTI: Over two-thirds of people who try their first cigarette go on to become daily smokers, at least temporarily, a study suggests.

The finding from over 215,000 survey respondents provides strong support for prioritising efforts to reduce cigarette experimentation among adolescents, researchers said.

"This is the first time that the remarkable hold that cigarettes can establish after a single experience has been documented from such a large set of data," said Professor Peter Hajek from Queen Mary University of London in the UK.

"In the development of any addictive behaviour, the move from experimentation to daily practice is an important landmark, as it implies that a recreational activity is turning into a compulsive need," said Hajek, who led the study published in the journal Nicotine & Tobacco Research.

"We have found that the conversion rate from 'first time smoker' to 'daily smoker' is surprisingly high, which helps confirm the importance of preventing cigarette experimentation in the first place," he said. The researchers searched the Global Health Data Exchange for relevant



surveys from the UK, US, Australia and New Zealand that included questions about ever trying a cigarette and ever smoking daily.

The team calculated that 60.3 per cent of respondents had said they had ever tried a cigarette, and among those, an estimated 68.9 per cent

said they had progressed to daily smoking. Given the high conversion rate found in all existing surveys, the researchers suggest that at least

some of the reduction in smoking prevalence observed over the past 20 years is likely due to reduced experimentation with cigarettes among adolescents. "Concerns were expressed that e-cigarettes could be as addictive as conventional cigarettes, but this has not been the case," Hajek added.

"It is striking that very few non-smokers who try e-cigarettes become daily vapers, while such a large proportion on non-smokers who try conventional cigarettes become daily smokers. The presence of nicotine is clearly not the whole story," he said.

YOUNG WORLD Through the critical glass



Students need to read between and beyond the lines to become reflective and independent thinkers.

A few days ago, I received this message on WhatsApp: "A loud thought: In 1945, USA attacked Japan with a nuclear bomb. Today, after 71 years USA cannot sell a needle in Japan. This is not due to trade policy. This is because the Japanese citizens do not buy anything which is made in the USA. This is called real patriotism and unity. We Indians can do it against China. We all need to unite. China is our number one enemy country. Do not purchase any Chinese product from today. Be Indian and buy Indian. Share this message with everyone."

Out of curiosity, I shared this message with ten of my friends to know how they would react to it. Later, when I checked with them, I found that nine of them had shared the message with their friends. A similar experiment was carried out in a classroom in a college and the majority of students said that if they had received the message they would have just shared it. Many said that they accepted the message without questioning and analysing it; some said that they were carried away by the word 'patriotism' and a few said that China was a great threat to India.

When I received the message from a friend, a highly qualified academic, I sent these questions as my response: Is it an authentic message? Is it true that Japanese people do not buy products from the USA? Are those Japanese people who buy US-made products unpatriotic? What is patriotism? Is China really a number one enemy to India? Who is the author of the message? What is his/her real intention? Fact-check

How accurate is the message? Three years ago, I attended an international conference in Ahmedabad. About ten delegates from Japan too attended the conference. Most of them had Apple iPhones/laptops. One of them had received his master's degrees from a U.S. university. According to the Economic Complexity Index (ECI), the United States is the second largest export economy in the world and Japan is its third top export destination. What can be deduced from these facts is that Japanese people do use American products. It seems that the one who created the message has pathological hatred for China. This message can poison the minds of those who lack critical reading skills.

In the 21st century media mediated society, social media is flooded with such posts. Without checking the authenticity of the posts, many form opinions, generate views and share the same with everyone they know. What is the outcome? We create a society where post-truth dominates our political and social discourse. The fact that all news, messages and posts are constructed the way the authors want them to be constructed, invites us to be critical readers of such texts. A month ago, the following message purportedly written by Google CEO Sundar Pichai was making the rounds on social media:

"I'm not interested in politics but I'm worried about India's unemployment and millions of youngsters losing their jobs. India must concentrate on people's welfare not on their food habits. Eating Beef or any food is purely personal freedom. No one has right to ban it. We don't live in Dark Ages where King decides on People's Freedom. Great Country like India must move towards Science and Technology but not Religions..." — Sundar Pichai, CEO, Google

It came as a big surprise to me when I noticed that the quote was circulated even by academics. No wonder many Indians took to Twitter and hurled abuse at the Google CEO. If people had read the message critically, they would have realised that it was a fake quote. The misspelling of Sundar Pichai's name, his background, his current position, and incorrect grammar and punctuation in the text should have helped them to dismiss it as a fake quote.

It is true that educational institutions in India have failed to promote critical reading among students. The myth that authorities, teachers and textbooks should not be questioned has been so firmly established in our consciousness and perpetuated for centuries that very few dare to puncture it. Developing learners' critical reading skills is essential in the 21st century, and without this, education is incomplete.

Critical reading is an extension and application of critical thinking. It can be defined as a process of questioning, analysing, interpreting and evaluating a text. It is a deeper engagement with the text. It is not merely seeing the surface structure (sentences) but looking into the deep structure (meaning). It is reading between the lines and beyond the lines. When critical readers read between and beyond the lines, they know what is implied in the text, discover the intention, tone and attitude of the author and bring out the truth with their deeper analysis and synthesis.

Students must be taught to look at any text through critical glasses. The following questions will help them become critical readers: What is the intent (motive, purpose) of the writer? What is the tone of the text? What is the author's background? Are the sources reliable? Do you believe what you have read? Do you agree with the author? Is there anything in the text that does not make sense to you? What are the claims and supports in the arguments in the text? Are the arguments convincing? Why has the writer used certain words and phrases in the text? What are the connotations of the words and phrases? Has the author failed to include certain facts, details and examples? What is my personal response to what the writer has written?

In the post-truth era, we are bombarded with messages that contain half-truth or no-truth and posts that are propagandistic. Certain news reports contain not just news but views too. It is presented in such a way that readers are made to believe the reports. It is high time that the educational institutions took steps to help students become reflective, independent and critical thinkers.

While I was typing this article, I received this tweet from a friend: "The thing about quotes on the Internet is that you cannot confirm their validity." — Abraham Lincoln