

FOOD SAFETY

Food safety is a critical aspect of public health and consumer well-being, encompassing the handling, preparation, and storage of food to prevent contamination and foodborne illnesses. In an increasingly globalized food supply chain, ensuring food safety presents multifaceted challenges. This article explores the importance of food safety, key principles, challenges, and strategies to promote safe food practices. Food safety is paramount for safeguarding public health and reducing the burden of foodborne diseases. Unsafe food can lead to a range of illnesses, from mild gastrointestinal discomfort to severe conditions such as food poisoning, infections, and even death. Vulnerable populations such as children, elderly individuals, pregnant women, and individuals with compromised immune systems are particularly susceptible to foodborne illnesses. Moreover, foodborne outbreaks can have significant economic repercussions, impacting industries, trade, and healthcare systems. Maintaining personal hygiene and sanitation in food handling areas is fundamental. This includes frequent handwashing, proper cleaning and disinfection of surfaces, and wearing appropriate protective gear. Proper storage, cooking, and reheating of food are essential to prevent bacterial growth and contamination. Adhering to recommended cooking temperatures and storage guidelines minimizes the risk of foodborne pathogens. Separating raw foods from ready-to-eat foods and using separate utensils and cutting boards for different food items reduces the risk of cross-contamination, where pathogens from one food item are transferred to another. Implementing robust traceability systems enables the identification and recall of contaminated food products, facilitating timely interventions to prevent widespread outbreaks. Adherence to food safety regulations and standards established by governmental agencies and international organizations ensures uniformity in food safety practices and promotes consumer confidence. The increasing complexity and globalization of food supply chains pose challenges in traceability, quality control, and regulatory oversight, making it difficult to monitor and mitigate risks effectively. Rapidly evolving pathogens and novel foodborne hazards necessitate continuous surveillance, research, and adaptation of food safety measures to address emerging threats. Limited resources, particularly in developing countries, may hinder the implementation of comprehensive food safety programs, exacerbating the risk of foodborne illnesses in vulnerable populations. Inadequate knowledge of safe food handling practices among consumers, coupled with misconceptions about food safety, can contribute to risky behaviors and practices that increase the likelihood of foodborne illnesses. Climate change-related factors such as extreme weather events, environmental contamination, and alterations in agricultural practices can impact food safety by affecting food production, water quality, and the spread of foodborne pathogens. Conducting comprehensive risk assessments and implementing risk management strategies tailored to specific foodborne hazards enable proactive identification and mitigation of potential risks. Investing in education, training, and capacity building initiatives for food handlers, producers, regulators, and consumers enhances awareness and compliance with food safety practices.

Historic Gains for Women Contestants in 2024 Lok Sabha Elections; Awareness and Empowerment



VIPUL SHARMA & TEHRAZ AHMED

Despite the Women's Reservation Bill yet to see the light of the day, the Lok Sabha elections marked a significant milestone for women in Indian politics, showcasing a notable rise in their participation and representation. The results declared on June 4 highlighted substantial progress.

25-year-olds Sanjana Jatav, Shambhavi Choudhary, and Priya Saroj mark historic wins in the 2024 elections.

West Bengal emerged as the leading state with the highest number of female MPs, totaling 11. Among the notable victories were the youngest newcomers All aged 25! Sanjana Jatav won from the Bharatpur constituency in Rajasthan, defeating BJP's Ramswaroop Koli by a margin of 51,983 votes. Shambhavi Choudhary won Bihar's Samastipur Lok Sabha seat, beating Sunny Hazari of the Congress by a margin of 187,251 votes. Priya Saroj won from the Machhlishahr seat by a margin of 35,850 votes.

Out of 8,360 candidates, 797 were women, representing 10% of the total-a first in India's electoral history. This election saw 74 women elected to the Lok Sabha, slightly down from the 78 women elected in 2019, but still a strong showing. Women MPs came from 14 different parties, with the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) leading with 31 female MPs, followed by the Congress with 13, and the Trinamool Congress (TMC) with 11.

In a historic first, three transgender candidates participated in this election, contesting as independents. However, none managed to win a seat or retain their security deposits.

The 2024 elections highlighted a positive trend towards greater gender inclusivity in Indian politics, with 43 of the elected women being first-time MPs. This percentage of newcomers is higher than the overall rate of new faces in the Lok Sabha, underscoring a growing acceptance and support for female leaders.

While the fight for equal representation in the Legislative Assembly continues, the increased participation and success of women candidates in this election reflect a significant step forward in India's democratic process.

(The writers are interns at PIB Jammu).

Brain Tumors: A Formidable Foe but Not Unconquerable

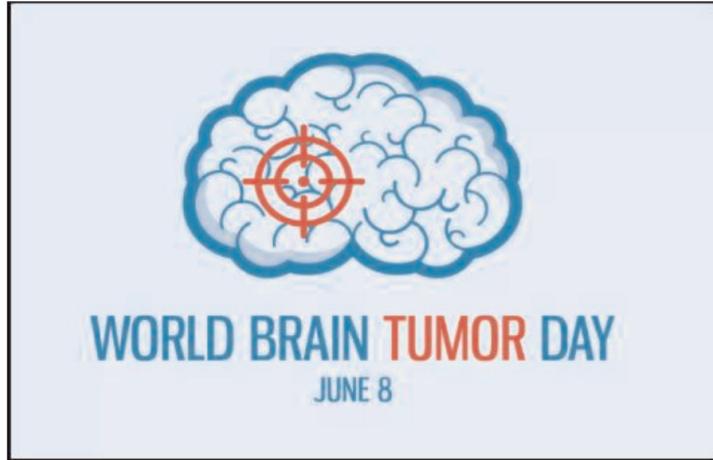
DR SHAURYA DARBARI

"You have a tumor in the brain" can be one of the most harrowing phrases a patient can hear from their doctor. "How much time do I have?" and "Will I lose my mind?" are some of the questions that often pop up. Scores of estranged family members are informed, wills are made, and people tend to right the wrongs they did in the time they have left. And they are not factually wrong, as about two decades ago, the diagnosis of a brain tumor invariably meant a death sentence for someone. The collective psyche of society regards brain tumors as some reminder of the finality and inevitability of death. As we approach World Brain Tumor Day on June 8th, 2024, it's time to shed light on a condition that has long been shrouded in fear and misconceptions. Brain tumors, once considered a death sentence, are now being understood and treated with remarkable advancements in medical science.

Contrary to popular belief, not all brain tumors are created equal. While some are indeed aggressive and life-threatening, some of the most common types are benign and slow-growing, often treatable with timely intervention. It's crucial to understand that brain tumors encompass a wide range of types, each with its unique characteristics and prognosis.

One of the most common misconceptions is that every headache or seizure is a harbinger of a brain tumor. These symptoms can arise from various causes, and a thorough medical evaluation is necessary to determine the underlying condition. However, it's essential to remain vigilant and seek professional advice if you experience worsening or new neurological symptoms.

Among the various brain tumor types, glioblastoma stands out as one of the most aggressive and challenging to treat. This deadly form of cancer has long been



a subject of intense research, with scientists and clinicians from around the world tirelessly working to develop new and innovative treatment regimens.

While the statistics may seem daunting, the average survival time for a patient with glioblastoma is 12-18 months, which means only 25% of the individuals with the diagnosis are alive after a year. However, it's important to remember that although statistics can help clinicians, they are useless to an individual. Every patient's journey is unique, and with the best available treatments and timely intervention, an individual can live the rest of their life in a fulfilling way. Countless stories of remarkable resilience and miraculous recoveries remind us that hope should never be abandoned.

The battle against brain tumors is being waged on multiple fronts, with groundbreaking therapies emerging on the horizon. New chemotherapy and radiation treatment regimens are being developed as we learn more about the molecular

makeup of these tumor cells. Immunotherapy, which harnesses the body's immune system to combat cancer cells, has shown promising results in clinical trials. Additionally, vaccines for glioblastoma are in development, which may stop the tumor from appearing again. Transcranial magnetic stimulation is being explored as a potential treatment modality for improving the quality of life, offering new avenues for hope.

While innovative therapies are crucial, surgery remains the cornerstone of brain tumor treatment. However, the goal extends beyond mere tumor removal; it is a delicate balance between eradicating the malignancy and preserving the patient's brain function, ensuring they can continue living their lives with minimal disability.

Neurosurgeons now have access to cutting-edge tools that enable them to navigate the intricate landscape of the brain with unprecedented precision. Advances like neuromonitoring help surgeons avoid

critical areas of the brain during surgery, even under anesthesia. Neuronavigation helps them to pinpoint the exact location of the tumor during surgery. Perhaps the most well-known tool available to surgeons is an awake craniotomy, where patients are awake during surgery but feel no pain so that the surgeon can monitor their functions in real-time while removing the tumor. These advancements have revolutionized the surgical approach, maximizing tumor removal while safeguarding the patient's cognitive and functional abilities, in short, preserving what makes them human.

As we conclude this journey through the world of brain tumors, it's essential to highlight the invaluable resources available right here in our community. The Neurosurgery Department at AIIMS Jammu will be well-equipped with state-of-the-art facilities and a team of dedicated professionals committed to providing the highest standard of care.

From cutting-edge diagnostic tools to advanced surgical techniques and comprehensive post-operative support, AIIMS Jammu is poised to serve as a haven for those affected by brain tumors. The institute's unwavering dedication to patient-centered care ensures everyone receives personalized attention and a compassionate approach tailored to their unique needs.

As we commemorate World Brain Tumor Day, let us embrace the progress in understanding and treating this formidable condition. While challenges undoubtedly remain, the collective efforts of researchers, clinicians, and support networks worldwide are paving the way toward a future where brain tumors are no longer a death sentence but a battle that can be won through resilience, hope, and unwavering determination.

(The writer is Assistant Professor and Faculty in-charge, Department of Neurosurgery, AIIMS Jammu).

India opportunity showcased at the IPEF Clean Economy Investor Forum

On the sidelines of the inaugural Indo-Pacific Economic Framework for Prosperity (IPEF) Clean Economy Investor Forum, the Department of Commerce and Invest India organised a meeting to showcase various investment opportunities in India.

In his inaugural address Secretary, Department of Commerce, Sunil Barthwal, stressed on how India's growth rate is nearly double that of other emerging market economies.

He remarked on how this strong growth is also leading to a trend of 'reverse flipping', where Indian start-ups that once moved abroad for capital access and tax benefits are now returning home. He emphasised how the digital economy along with emerging technologies like AI and rise of data centres were key to future Indian growth.

The meeting held at Marina Bay Sands, Singapore, attracted over 60 participants, including global investors from the US, Singapore, Japan, Australia, Korea, and other countries, as well as India's private sector and government officials.

The event brought together investors and financial institutions from IPEF Member countries like that of Temasek, Global Infrastructure Partners, GuarantCo, Private Infrastructure Development Group (PIDG), Goldman Sachs, I Squared Capital, Mizuho Bank Ltd, Advantage Partners, Nomura, DBS Bank and Citi Bank. The Indian infrastructure and climate tech companies showcased their solutions and engaged with international investors to tap into global markets.

Indian High Commissioner to Singapore, H.E. Dr. Shilpak Ambule, focused on the fundamentals that are driving Indian growth.

He said that the investment in physical and digital infrastructure will have multiplier effects on the Indian economy, and that the legislative and regulatory changes have created a pro-market field, providing conducive and predictable policy environment.



He stressed on how shifting global supply chains and Indian efforts modernization of infrastructure will enable India to participate in them.

This was followed by an India opportunity presentation in which Invest India showcased the India's through various government flagship initiatives like a flourishing startup ecosystem, a sizable pool of skilled and talented professionals across diverse industries, a push for investments in infrastructure projects, policy reforms aimed at streamlining regulations, enhancing transparency, and improving Ease of Doing Business.

MD and CEO of Invest India, Nivruti Rai highlighted that India is keen on collaborating with investors, clean economy firms, and innovative startups to drive sustainable infrastructure, climate technology, and renewable energy projects to meet Net Zero targets.

Speaking during the fireside chat titled the Charting India Opportunity, Radhika Rao, Senior Economist and Executive Director, mentioned that India strength is in 4C's - Consistency & Continuity in Policy and reforms; Increasing Capex through government, household spending and private sector; Composition of trade shifting towards manufacturing sectors; Increasing consumption over the next 5 years.

Sonal Varma, Managing Director, Nomura spoke in detail about the Nomura India report.

YOUR COLUMN Real life vs Virtual Relationships

Dear editor,

The tendency to talk arbitrary about people's public and private life has now become a cause of trouble for common people too. In our social and family environment, the habit of commenting on a person's wrong or right thoughts and behavior has always made life difficult. Not only others, but even our own people do not miss the opportunity of hurling taunts and accusations without knowing all the aspects of any incident. Hurt a person or family who is already suffering circumstantial pain.

This behavior of delivery has now been further expanded by technical platforms. It is seen that even simple incidents are made controversial and are turned into satire to a great extent in the dialogue taking place on virtual mediums. This behavior called 'trolling' in the virtual world is leading people to the point of committing suicide. Recently, an IT professional mother committed suicide due to trolling in Chennai, the capital of Tamil Nadu. It is noteworthy that the daughter of a thirty-three year old woman slipped from her lap and got stuck on the balcony, the neighborhood. These people saved the girl after fifteen minutes of effort, but the video of that incident got circulated on social media. After that, people in the virtual world started criticizing the woman. Her trolling started. Someone called her a careless mother, while someone gave harsh words of advice to take proper care of the child. The situation was made such that the woman went into depression after the incident. Whereas this incident was not the result of any deliberate mistake. Why did people not understand that an educated, alert mother takes care of her child?

Why would you be careless? Why did people not even have time to think about the reason for this incident in their blind race to curse him?

It is worth considering that such an accident can happen to anyone. The most painful aspect of this incident is that the taunts and reproaches given as a punishment for no fault of hers took away her mother from an innocent girl. Although joint efforts are being made for the welfare and safety of this innocent child, there are countless questions regarding such thinking.

In recent years, most of the virtual media have become a hotbed of insinuations, accusations and ridicule. Common people also fall prey to 'trolling' in the name of unnecessary advice due to some life-related incident or accident. This behavior of making a big deal out of things is really making life difficult. Such a combination of insult and ridicule can shatter anyone's mood. Be it a simple picture or a family event, an incident related to social life or a personal thought, 'trolling' on social media platforms that have come into existence for mutual connection has become a sad problem.

Some time before Uttar Pradesh 10th board exam A girl who came first was 'trolled' a lot on social media because of the hair visible on her face. It would be unfortunate that instead of paying attention to the marks obtained by a student, the year's hard work and academic commitment, a large section of the society wrote strange things on social media platforms. People started criticizing the girl who should have been praised for her success. Pictures and comments making fun of the hair visible on his face were viral on social media, someone's person Why and how is this inhuman behavior of commenting on life taking root? Why have technological facilities made people engrossed in the virtual world so unconscious that they have started making mistakes not only in the famous faces but also in the personal lives of common people?

Now, there is neither a feeling of understanding anyone's suffering nor acceptance of any happy outcome

The report shows that highest number of companies are looking at India than any other geography during their "Bottom's up" study, a survey of around 130 companies mapping their investments in sectors and country. India is attracting investments in broad based sectors ranging from semiconductor assembly to testing, automobiles to capital goods.

Kunal Agarwal, Managing Director, I Squared highlighted that India is going through Infrastructure Supercycle, which is an enabler for digital revolution and India is viewed as a secular investment opportunity.

During the event, members of the industry expressed highlighted that the inaugural forum was a significant step forward in promoting economic cooperation in the Indo-Pacific region.

They emphasized the importance of industries working together to address the challenges they faced and create new opportunities for growth.

The forum also underscored the crucial nature of a clean economy and supply chain resilience.

The Indo-Pacific Economic Framework for Prosperity (IPEF) was launched in May 2022 and currently includes 14 partners - Australia, Brunei Darussalam, Fiji, India, Indonesia, Japan, the Republic of Korea, Malaysia, New Zealand, Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, United States and Vietnam.

The IPEF, comprising four pillars of cooperation, namely Trade, Supply Chain, Clean Economy and Fair Economy, provides a platform for countries in the region to collaborate on advancing resilient, sustainable, and inclusive economic growth and aims to contribute to cooperation, stability and prosperity in the region.

The IPEF Clean Economy Investor Forum, one of the initiatives under the IPEF, brought together the region's top investors, philanthropies, financial institutions, innovative companies, start-ups and entrepreneurs to mobilise investments into sustainable infrastructure, climate technology and renewable energy projects.

that emerges from simple situations, due to which meaningless squabbles are resulting in horrific circumstances of snatching someone's life. In fact, the meaningful meaning of 'online' discussions is lost somewhere.

Meaningful dialogue has been replaced by a distorted mentality of insensitivity and hatred. What is also sad is that all this is happening in shared communication between strangers. Most of the unknown and unseen faces are made victims of this mentality of hatred and unnecessary abuse. An anonymous person who deliberately starts a debate with the purpose of provoking a response from an individual or group. Not only this, by giving inflammatory or aggressive comments, a crowd becomes a part of this dialogue in the virtual world.

In recent years, whether common or special, everyone has started becoming the target of such people with negative mentality. Comments and reactions aimed at making someone angry, self-deprecating or instilling guilt are now seen on social media every day.

The irony is that this online Abuse also increases the difficulties of its victims in the real world. Many people, distressed and disturbed by this irrational behavior of the mob which causes emotional injury, take steps like suicide.

Women are made victims of 'trolling' in every matter. Sometimes taunts are made regarding physical appearance and sometimes a woman is criticized for her thoughts. Overall, this circle of virtual harassment creates an uneasy environment for the targeted person. In such a situation, before saying anything about any subject, incident or accident, it is necessary to understand it with pause. It is very important. It has happened that people should not turn the facilities provided by technology into a craze.

Through your esteemed daily, I would appeal all to think before we speak and we must understand that only human understanding and concerned thinking can stop this evil.

Vijay Garg