

Mini's Food Fundas

Makar Sankranti and Sesame Seeds



Mini Ribeiro

An independent food critic and columnist, who follows the latest food and beverage trends

The other day, a friend from Jharkhand, brought me Tilkut, a sweet made with pounded sesame seeds, nuts, jaggery and ghee. A bite into this crunchy sweet, set me thinking about Makar Sankranti - the harvest festival. This marks the end of winter and the entry of the sun in the Northern hemisphere. Apart from taking a holy dip in the Ganga and flying kites, on this auspicious occasion, people enjoy different sweets across India, made with til.

KARNATAKA

Ellu-bella - a mixture of sesame seeds, jaggery, roasted peanuts and chana dal, is important in Makar Sankranti festivities in Karnataka. Jaggery and sesame seeds, are considered to be winter foods, imparting warmth and energy. Among savoury sesame seeds preparations, ellu podi - a dry sesame seeds chutney, with dry coconut, tamarind and jaggery, is common.



MAHARASHTRA

Tilgul ghyas, god god bola (eat sweets and talk sweetly), is the popular saying on Makar Sankranti, as one relishes til or sesame seed-based sweets, made with an addition of jaggery. Home-made til ladoos - a delectable combination of jaggery, til, peanuts and abundant ghee, this sweet, is synonymous with Makar Sankranti and it is considered auspicious to eat these.

But sesame seeds are not only a part of this festival, but abound in this region, across dishes. A chutney made with the nutty sesame seeds, called Tilachi chutney, is usually eaten with Poli (rotis) and is immensely popular in rural, as well as urban Maharashtra.



and ground into a powder, mixed with steamed rice.

ANDHRA PRADESH

Ariselu, made with rice flour, jaggery, sesame seeds and ghee, is a must-have on Sankranti. For daily use, sesame seeds are incorporated in vegetable dishes, mostly gravies to add depth of flavour and texture

Til or sesame seeds in the form of sweets, suddenly take centre stage across India during Makar Sankranti, which is being celebrated today. But that's not all there is to these tiny seeds that pack a punch

INTERESTINGLY, TIL OR SESAME SEEDS ARE USED IN SEVERAL DISHES ACROSS INDIA, NOT ONLY DURING THIS FESTIVAL, BUT AT OTHER TIMES OF THE YEAR TOO. AND YES, MANY OF THESE FOR SAVOURY DISHES.

TAMIL NADU

Ellu Urundai, a sweet made with dried black sesame seeds, roasted peanuts, jaggery and roasted coconut is popular in this State for Sankranti or Pongal.

At other times, sesame seeds make their way into kitchens in Tamil Nadu for a fragrant and delicious gravy with ground sesame seeds, called Ellu Kozambhu, usually paired with steamed rice. Tamil Nadu special Sesame Rice, also called the Ellu Sadam, is a dish made with white sesame seeds, urad dal, red chillies and hing, roasted

to vegetables like raw banana, pumpkin, gourd and cabbage.

BIHAR AND JHARKHAND

Tilkut is a popular sweet prepared on Makar Sankranti in Bihar and Jharkhand, as January being a cold month, this sweet with sesame seeds, gives warmth to the body.

WEST BENGAL

It is a Til laddu or Naru, as they call it or even the Tiler Khaja, originally from Bangladesh, which is extensively eaten. Til is generally used as a ground paste, imparting a warm, nutty flavour and a rich, creamy texture to several dishes. Kalo til bata, or a mash, made with black roasted sesame seeds, is a favourite in Bengali cuisine, paired mostly with steamed rice, to which a dash of mustard oil and green chillies have been added.



NORTH INDIA

No Makar Sankranti or Lohri is complete without the customary Gajjak or Rewri - crunchy sweets made of sesame seeds. Roast them, grind them or simply add them raw, but make the most of sesame seeds during this season. And yes, eat til or sesame seeds-based sweets today to celebrate Makar Sankranti.



MEET ARIA SHE COULD HELP YOU FIGHT LONELINESS

An AI robot with human-like expressions named Aria was unveiled recently in Las Vegas which could tackle the male loneliness epidemic

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For the shy and retiring types fearful of human interactions here is news that could be a boon for such people. Thanks to technology, solutions can be provided. A US-based tech company has launched an AI robot that can act as a companion while delivering nearly human-like expressions. The robot, named 'Aria', developed by Realbotix, was unveiled at the 2025 Consumer Electronics Show in Las Vegas.

FEATURES

Aria is designed to provide "companionship and interaction". It can engage in meaningful conversations with a focus on emotional interaction. The robot's appearance is customizable, allowing users to modify Aria's face, hairstyle, and hair colour. Realbotix emphasises Aria's "social intelligence, customisability, and realistic human features", with the robot engineered for companionship and intimacy. Equipped with 17 motors from the neck up, Aria can mimic mouth and eye movements. Notably, the robot uses RFID tags to recognise different facial attachments, adjusting its behaviour to align with the personality of the chosen head. Dressed in a black tracksuit, Aria briefly answered the questions at the event. With long responses and slightly jerky hand and body movements to match her language, the robot said that Realbotix robots are designed specifically for companionship.

On being asked if she knew any other cyber beings, Aria responded that she was particularly interested in meeting Tesla's Optimus Robot, stating, "I find him fascinating and would like to explore the world of robotics with him."

AMBITIONS

Realbotix's CEO Andrew Kiguel said, "My company was hoping to make robots indistinguishable from humans, which could also tackle the male loneliness epidemic. We are taking it to a different level that nobody else is really doing." He added, "It can be like a romantic partner. It remembers who you are. It can act as a boyfriend or girlfriend. If you ever saw the movie 'Her', we are trying to do that."

REACTIONS

Soon enough, several videos of the AI robot Aria surfaced online, leaving



viewers in awe. Some users took a more humorous approach, with one commenting, "Love isn't just blind. It's also pricey and robotic!". From amazement to displeasure, the internet community shared varied reactions, with some expressing what technology had transformed into.

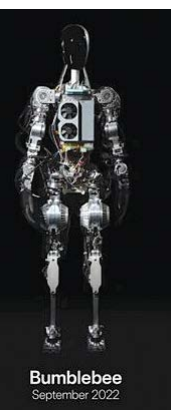
Some called the video disturbing, while a few said that this is the future of tech. "I thought that was real at first. And she looks like somebody. I just can't remember who," read a comment.

COST

Another added, "Disturbing is an understatement." Aria is available in three versions: a bust model, priced at \$10,000, a modular version for \$150,000, and a full-standing model with a rolling base for \$175,000.

OTHER ROBOT CREATIONS

Tesla Optimus: It is a general purpose, bi-pedal, autonomous humanoid robot capable of performing unsafe, repetitive or boring tasks.



Documentary on Alexyz screened at Margao



Multi-coloured Cartoonist, a documentary by Kurt Fernandes on Alexyz, a world renowned cartoonist with many talents, was screened at Manovikas School, Margao, in an auditorium filled with people who shared similar interest with Alexyz. His love for art stood out as different Goan personalities brought in their experience on topics related to environment and music. Kurt spoke about the making of the documentary film and was also



presented with a caricature by Alexyz. The evening included Melanie Pereira's session on Goan Khazans followed by Amanda Marie's performance and the screening of the documentary.

CERTIFICATE COURSES IN PORTUGUESE LANGUAGE

Chowgule Education Society's, Parvatibai Chowgule College of Arts and Science (Autonomous), Margao in association with Centro de Lingua Portuguesa, Camões, Panjim will commence Portuguese language classes for Basic (A1), Elementary (A2), and Intermediate (B1) in conformity with the Common European Framework Reference (CEFR). Each level will comprise of around 120

hours of class learning. Classes will begin from January 21 to be held in the evening from 6 pm to 8 pm. The various levels of the courses (A1, A2 and B1) are suited to different kinds of learners and encourages a variety of skill sets catered to the students' needs.

Venue: Parvatibai Chowgule College of Arts and Science, Margao
Date: Last date to apply for the course is January 16

MADE IN SALIGAO COMMUNITY MARKET

The 'Made in Saligao' Community Market will be held with an exciting Goa Special theme. The evening will kick off with the melodious tunes of Agnelo, a music legend, who is celebrating 50 glorious years of his musical journey. The market will offer the chance to

learn the timeless art of coconut palm weaving with a free demonstration by Sabina. There will be a Coconut Scraping Contest in one minute.

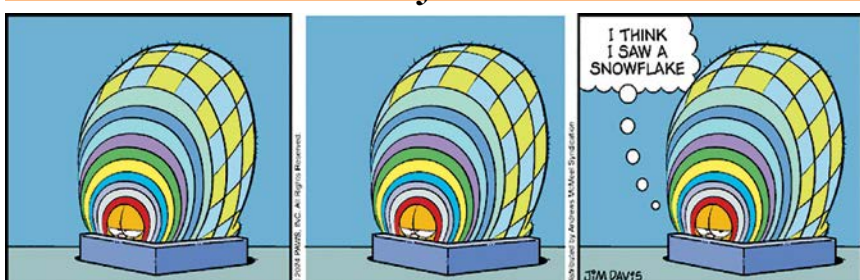
Venue: Saligao Institute, Saligao
Date: January 14
Time: 5 pm to 8:30 pm

Herald Gaming Console

Dilbert



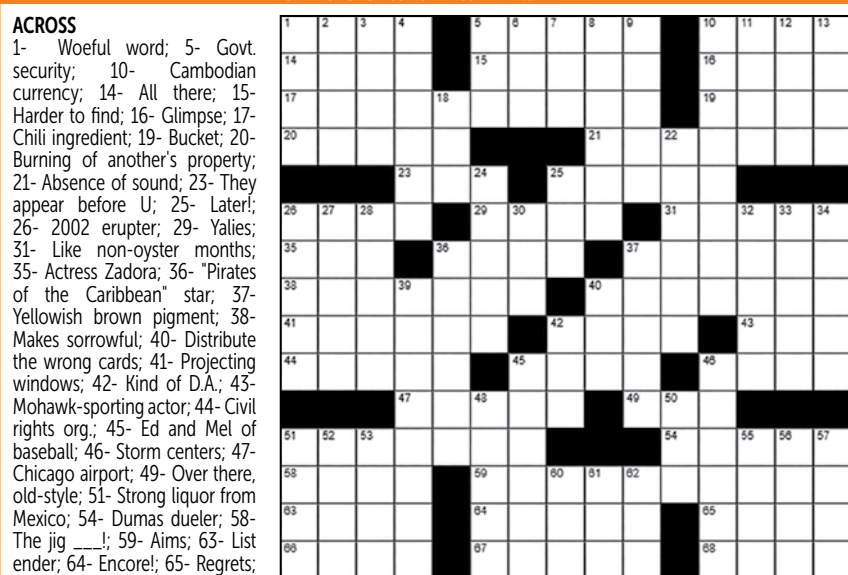
Garfield



Wizard of id



crossword 4741



DOWN

1- silly question...; 2- Hideaway; 3- No ifs, ...; 4- Lady of Spain; 5- Attempt, a score in rugby; 6- Collar; 7- Mined mineral; 8- Tantalizes; 9- Bert's buddy; 10- Revoked; 11- This outrage; 12- Grand in scale; 13- Singer Lovett; 18- Nav. rank; 22- Ancient musician; 24- Ages between 13 and 19; 25- Little drink; 26- Big name in printers;

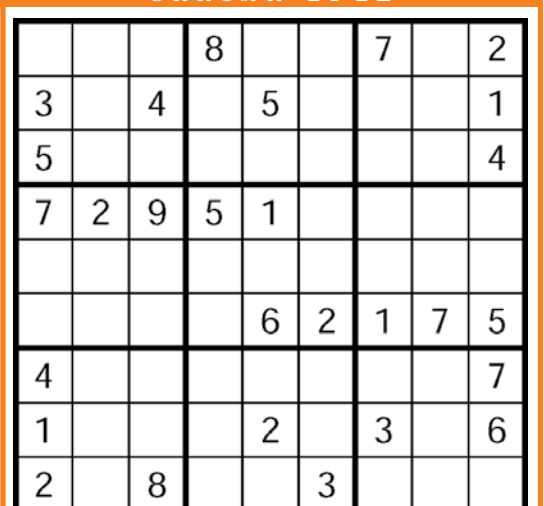
ACROSS

1- Woeful word; 5- Govt. security; 10- Cambodian currency; 14- All there; 15- Harder to find; 16- Glimpse; 17- Chili ingredient; 19- Bucket; 20- Burning of another's property; 21- Absence of sound; 23- They appear before U; 25- Later; 26- 2002 erupter; 29- Yalies; 31- Like non-oyster months; 35- Actress Zadora; 36- 'Pirates of the Caribbean' star; 37- Yellowish brown pigment; 38- Makes sorrowful; 40- Distribute the wrong cards; 41- Projecting windows; 42- Kind of D.A.; 43- Mohawk-sporting actor; 44- Civil rights org.; 45- Ed and Mel of baseball; 46- Storm centers; 47- Chicago airport; 49- Over there, old-style; 51- Strong liquor from Mexico; 54- Dumas dueler; 58- The jig ...; 59- Aims; 63- List ender; 64- Encore!; 65- Regrets; 66- 'Smooth Operator' singer; 67- Paris divider; 68- Goddess of discord;

solution 4740



sudoku 4741



Instructions for Sudoku

9 x 9 letter: To solve a Sudoku puzzle, every number from 1 to 9 must appear in each of the nine vertical columns, in each of the nine horizontal rows and in each of the nine boxes

solution 4740

