ARBiT
it happens here...



Crunch, Cheese, and Celebration!

National Nachos Day is a fun-filled celebration of one of the world's most beloved snack creations. Crispy tortilla chips loaded with melted cheese, jalapeños, beans, guacamole, and other toppings make nachos a perfect treat for parties, movie nights, or casual snacking. Observed annually, the day encourages food lovers to get creative with their nacho recipes, exploring spicy, cheesy, and gourmet variations. Beyond being delicious, nachos bring people together, sparking joy and sharing at family gatherings or social events. National Nachos Day is a flavourful reminder to indulge, experiment, and celebrate the simple pleasures of good food.

राष्ट्रदूत
FRIDAY
06 November 2026
A-B

#ICONS

Old Monk Sold On Flavour, Not Advertising

Rich flavour, affordable price, and strong loyalty from customers. Friends recommended it to friends, and that word of mouth became its biggest strength



Old Monk is one of India's most iconic rum brands, and its story is as unique as its taste. The man behind it, Brigadier Kapil Mohan, never drank alcohol himself. Yet, he went on to build a rum empire that generations of Indians deeply connect with. Old Monk was first launched in 1954 and slowly became a household name.



What made Old Monk special was that it never spent money on advertising. There were no big billboards or celebrity endorsements. Instead, the brand grew through its rich flavour, affordable price, and strong loyalty from customers. Friends recommended it to friends, and that word of mouth became its biggest strength. Today, Old Monk is not just loved in India but also across the world. It is exported to 22 countries and has built an export market worth 10.3 million dollars. It proves that sometimes, the strongest brands are not sold loudly but shared quietly.

#FAMILIES

From Fury To Poetry The Mughal Line

In the middle of the seal is the name of Bahadur Shah Zafar. The calligraphy reads Abu Zafar Sirajuddin Mohammed Bahadur Shah Badshah Ghazi

This is the seal of last Mughal emperor Bahadur Shah Zafar. If we look closer, we find that the seal consists of his bloodline and not just his name. Generation after generation, the seal traces backwards through time, and then, it stops at one name, Amir Timur. So, let us break down all the names written on the seal.



In the middle of the seal is the name of Bahadur Shah Zafar. The calligraphy reads Abu Zafar Sirajuddin Mohammed Bahadur Shah Badshah Ghazi. Around his names are the names of his father and his father's father and so on. First, we have Mohammed Akbar Shah, who was the father of Bahadur Shah Zafar. Then, we have Badshah Shah Alam, and then, Badshah Alamgir. It should not be confused with Aurangzeb Alamgir. Then, we have Jahandar Shah, who is the son of Shah Alam, the first, who is also known as Bahadur Shah the first. Then we have his father Aurangzeb Alamgir, who was the son of Shah Jahan. Then, we have Badshah Jahangir and then the greatest Mughal emperor, Akbar. Then, we have Humayun and finally, Babur, the founder of the Mughal Empire. But this family tree doesn't end here.

We now have the father of Babur, Umar Sheikh Mirza, who was the son of Abu Saeed Mirza. And then, we have his father, Mohammed Mirza, and then, Miran Shah. And then, finally at the top, we have Amir Timur. So, this is how the Mughal Line, or the Timurid Line, began with the fury of Timur, and finally ended with a poet writing verses on the walls of a jail cell.



South Korean serials, which are equally popular among Indian audiences, have done something similar, albeit differently. The blockbuster series 'Crash Landing on You' became a huge hit partly because it offered a glimpse of ordinary North Korean life. North Koreans were shown as people who had enough food, could crack jokes, laugh and fall in love. Earlier, most serials were largely about the cruelty of the repressive North Korean regime, food shortages and abject poverty.

Why Pakistani Serials Are So Popular With Indian Audience



Asif Ullah Khan
A veteran journalist who has written for The Khaleej Times and The Brunei Times

When two countries are locked in hostility, political rhetoric and media narratives often blur reality, reducing entire populations to convenient stereotypes. The popularity of Pakistani serials in India can be attributed, in part, to the way they have challenged these preconceived notions. Indian audiences have discovered a society that is far more familiar and nuanced than the image they have been conditioned to associate with Pakistan.

The characters, their relationships, family dynamics, social conventions and everyday dilemmas strike a familiar chord, while the distinct cultural ethos, with its Muslim influences, lends the stories a different flavour. In doing so, these serials offer a more textured and human portrait of a society that is too often viewed through the narrow prism of political hostility.



The credit must be given to what was once called the "idiot box" which has brought a refreshing and pleasant change to these narratives.

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Pakistani serials have become 'Crash Landing on You' for the Indian audience. When Indian audiences began watching Pakistani serials, they encountered a picture of Pakistan quite different from the one they had in mind. The eye wanders over the lovely clothes the characters wear, their swanky cars, palatial homes, streets, markets, wedding festivities and every other detail of everyday life that makes viewers feel closer to people they had considered different and hostile.

Topping the cake are the Urdu dialogues, which have become less prominent in mainstream Hindi films and television serials. At a time when profanities have become commonplace in shows like Mirzapur, Pakistani dramas offer something that families can watch together.

There is also the pleasure of listening to Urdu as a living language rather than merely encountering it in film songs, poetry or occasional dialogue. Its expressions of affection, anger, courtesy and longing give conversations a particular texture. For Hindi-speaking viewers, much of it is immediately intelligible, yet, the vocabulary and cadence can still feel like a rediscovery of something familiar.

The influence has spilled over into everyday conversations and Instagram reels. Young Indians are picking up expressions such as Ammi Jaan, Abba Jaan, Janaab, Meherbani and Beshak, often imitating the way characters speak in Pakistani dramas. A son suddenly addressing his mother as "Ammi Jaan" instead of Mummy has become a source of amusement, particularly when the bewildered mother has no idea where this new vocabulary has come from. What is interesting is that viewers are not merely watching Pakistani entertainment; they are borrowing its language and mannerisms. Pakistani television has become an unlikely Urdu tutor for a generation of Indian youngsters.

The popularity of *Dar-e-Nijaat*, starring Sheheryar Munawar, Durefishan Saleem and Nameer Nawaz Khan, is the latest example of this fascination. Indian viewers have followed the characters and their relationships, discussing plot developments and sharing scenes on social media. The drama even provided an unexpected moment of cross-border recognition when viewers spotted a shopping bag bearing the logo of Indian jewellery brand Malabar Gold & Diamonds during Abu Bakar and Zaryab's nikah scene. It was an incidental detail, but an amusing one: an Indian brand had found its way into a Pakistani wedding sequence watched by audiences on both sides of the border. Such small details perhaps capture the cultural connections between the two countries better than grand declarations about shared heritage.

Fed up with seemingly endless, exaggerated saas-bahu sagas, Indian viewers have found a refreshing alternative in serials that centre on marriage, family relationships, betrayal, sacrifice and social expectations. Truly, we are sick of the *saas bahu*.

Underlying this domestic appeal is a shared, deeply entrenched South Asian reality: the mechanics of patriarchy. While political rhetoric projects a civilisational divide, these dramas reveal that women on both sides of the border navigate strikingly similar social pressures. Family honour (izzat), expectations of female compromise, complicated mother-in-law relationships and the constant negotiation for personal agency are familiar themes across the subcontinent. By showing how ordinary women endure, resist or manoeuvre within these family structures, the serials reveal a shared social reality that transcends the border.

Another departure is the portrayal of Muslim culture. Although India has more than 21 crore Muslims, Hindi films and serials have often presented stereotypical images of them. Earlier, there used to be Inspector Khan or Ali, a friend of the hero, or a street urchin in a skullcap and mesh vest, chewing paan.

Nowadays, political polarisation has made the Muslim character a villain, an extremist or a perpetual outsider in many popular narratives. What has been steadily erased in this process is normalcy, the everyday lives of Muslim families navigating work, aspiration, compromise and survival, like millions of others. Pakistani serials have brought back this sense of normalcy. Of course, like Indian serials, poverty and slums have largely disappeared from Pakistani dramas, even in cases involving class conflict.

Many people argue that shared culture, language, family structures, customs and social settings make these stories appealing to Indian audiences. This is correct, but it tells only part of the story. A large section of the Indian population is unfamiliar with many Muslim cultural practices. They may recognise the words "qubool hai" without knowing much about the nikah ceremony in which they are spoken. Similarly, like the sangeet ceremony in India, the mehndi ceremony in Pakistan has become an elaborate affair.

What makes this cultural encounter interesting is that Pakistan is neither entirely unfamiliar nor exactly like India. An Indian viewer can recognise the anxieties of a mother worried about her daughter's marriage, the tensions between a daughter-in-law and her in-laws, or the excitement surrounding a wedding. Yet, the way these emotions are expressed, the language in which family members address one another, and the rituals accompanying marriage offer something different. It is a curious combination of recognition and discovery: the people seem familiar, but their world has details that the viewer is only beginning to understand.

Lastly, given the popularity of Pakistani serials in India, their makers have largely kept political enmity and contentious issues like Kashmir out of their narratives. Instead, they focus on the everyday concerns of people on the other side of the border, allowing viewers to look beyond the political hostility that dominates relations between the two countries.

Like 'Crash Landing on You,' Pakistani serials offer a tantalising glimpse of life across the border. They may not present the whole truth about Pakistan, but they show something that political rhetoric often obscures: people who love, laugh, quarrel, celebrate and worry about the same ordinary things as everyone else. Sometimes, seeing those everyday details is enough to make the people across a hostile border seem a little less distant. And that is the power of culture, because it can bring people closer.

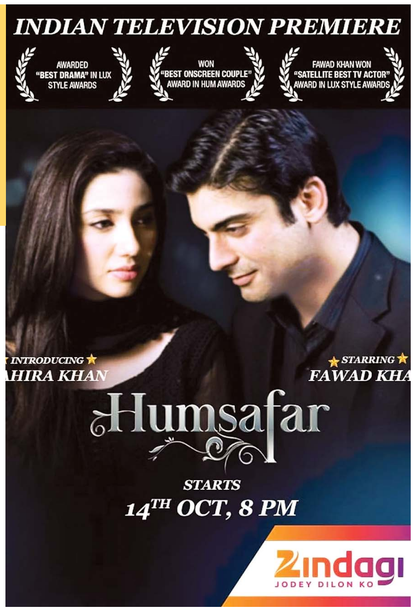
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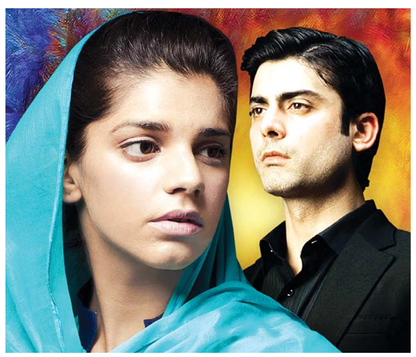
#CRASH LANDING ON YOU





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#BONDING

Sing To Your Baby

The powerful impact of singing during pregnancy on baby's brain and emotional development



When a pregnant woman sings, it does far more than simply pass the time or provide comfort, it plays a significant role in supporting her baby's brain health, emotional development, and early bonding, even while still in the womb.

Fetal Hearing and Early Auditory Stimulation

Babies begin developing the ability to hear sounds from the external environment around 16 to 18 weeks of gestation. By 24 weeks, the fetal auditory system is more developed, allowing the baby to perceive sounds such as the mother's voice, heartbeat, and environmental noise with increasing clarity. When a mother sings, her voice becomes a consistent and rhythmic auditory stimulus, providing the fetus with opportunities to practice sound discrimination and voice recognition. Repetition of melodies and tones helps train the fetal brain to identify patterns in sound, laying a foundation for auditory processing skills that will be essential after birth.

Boosting Brain Development and Language Skills

Scientific research has shown that prenatal exposure to music, particularly the mother's singing, is associated with enhanced neural encoding of speech sounds in infants (PMID: 37081418). This suggests that musical stimulation in the womb may support early language development, enabling the infant brain to process speech more efficiently once born. Singing also stimulates the fetus's auditory cortex, enhancing its neuroplasticity, the brain's ability to form and reorganize neural connections. Low-frequency rhythmic components of music, which are particularly soothing and easily transmitted through the womb, play an essential role in organizing these neural pathways.

Emotional Regulation and Reduced Stress in the Womb

Beyond cognitive development, music has a powerful emotional impact on both mother and baby. When a pregnant woman sings, it triggers the release of oxytocin (the "bonding hormone") and serotonin (the "feel-good hormone") in her body. These chemicals cross the placenta, potentially promoting a sense of calm, security, and well-being in the fetus.

Studies indicate that fetuses who are exposed to regular singing and music show more stable heart rates, reduced fetal stress indicators, and improved behavioural responses after birth, including better orientation and habituation abilities (PMID: 32776296). These are early signs of emotional self-regulation and cognitive attention, skills that support lifelong mental health and learning.



Postnatal Benefits: Soothing, Bonding, and Lower Stress

The benefits of prenatal singing extend into the newborn period. Infants who heard consistent melodies in the womb often recognize and respond to those same melodies after birth. Familiar songs serve as a soothing mechanism, helping the baby calm more easily in stressful or overstimulating situations. This not only supports the infant's emotional regulation but also strengthens the bond between mother and child.

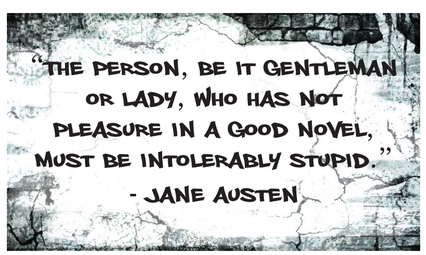
Moreover, research has shown that mothers who sing lullabies regularly during pregnancy report fewer episodes of infant crying and reduced occurrences of colic in the first month of life. These mothers also tend to experience lower levels of postpartum stress and anxiety, suggesting that singing offers psychological benefits for both mother and child.

Conclusion: A Simple, Natural, and Powerful Tool

Singing during pregnancy is a simple, natural act with profound developmental and emotional benefits. It promotes early brain development, helps regulate the baby's emotional state, and lays the foundation for language learning and secure attachment. For expectant mothers, singing can become a meaningful ritual, offering comfort, joy, and connection in the months before birth and beyond.

Whether it's a lullaby, a favourite song, or a spontaneous tune from the heart, a mother's voice is the first music her baby will ever know, and one that carries lifelong impact.

THE WALL



BABY BLUES By Rick Kirkman & Jerry Scott



ZITS By Jerry Scott & Jim Borgman

