

#GAMING

Ready, Set, Switch

Why Nintendo Switch 2 could be India's next Big Gaming obsession!



What do you get when you mix nostalgia, next-gen tech, and a console that can travel with you from your bedroom to your balcony chai break? You get the



It's Bigger, Brighter, and Built for the Hustle

The Switch 2 doesn't just show up, it shows off. The first thing you'll notice is the stunning 8-inch edge-to-edge LCD screen. It's vibrant, it's sharp, and it's begging to be used for just one more round of Mario Kart before bed. Or during lunch. Or on your way to work (no judg-

ment here). The Joy-Cons, Nintendo's detachable controllers, have also had a glow-up. They're now magnetic (farewell, fussy slide-ins!) and slightly larger, which means they fit more snugly in Indian hands that have been used to gripping smartphones all day.

Under the Hood, It's a Beast

Nintendo didn't just sprinkle fairy dust over the old model, they went full-on makeover mode. With a custom Nvidia DRAKE processor, Ampere GPU, 8GB RAM, and 64GB of storage, the Switch 2 promises buttery-smooth gameplay. Think less buffering, more

boss fights. And here's the kicker, it's backward compatible. That's right. Your old Switch titles, whether digital downloads or cartridges, will work just fine on the new machine. That's value. That's respect. That's Nintendo knowing how to keep fans happy.

The Games? Straight Fire

At launch, we're getting a spicy mix of classics and new favourites. Mario Kart World with a new 'knockout' mode? Yes, please. Donkey Kong Banana? Let's go bananas. Plus, more hardcore titles like Elden Ring are join-

ing the party. It's not just a family console anymore, it's everyone's console. Upcoming titles like Metroid Prime 4: Beyond and Pokémon Legends: Z-A promise that the Switch 2 library will only get juicier as the months roll on.

A Console Made for Indian Lifestyles

The real magic of the Switch 2 lies in its flexibility. You can play it curled up in bed after a long workday, sneak in a session between classes, or turn a lazy Sunday afternoon into a full-on Mario Kart tournament with friends. No fancy

setup. No TV required. Just pick it up and go. It's the kind of console that fits effortlessly into the chaotic, ever-moving rhythm of Indian life, one that thrives in compact apartments, long commutes, and social hangouts.

Final Level: Why India Should Care

India's gaming industry is booming. Streaming, esports, mobile gamers, console converts, all part of a thriving digital playground. But there's still a gap when it comes to hybrid gaming, something that sits between mobile convenience and con-

sole power. That's where the Nintendo Switch 2 slides in, smooth as a power-up mushroom. So, whether you're a thriving digital playground. But there's still a gap when it comes to hybrid gaming, something that sits between mobile convenience and con-



Playing With Royalty



Dr. Goutam Sen
CTVS Surgeon
Traveller
Storyteller

When we were youngsters, the summer, which sometimes began in early April and extended to the end of October, was a troublesome time for our parents. The days were long. School was limited to the morning. Later, there was a two-month long vacation also. The afternoons were prohibitively hot to go out and play. The parents had to devise means to occupy us indoors. This was particularly difficult when the extended family visited in large numbers on their railway passes. The cousins were always keen to explore the huge compound full of gardens and groves, ideally suited for hide and seek. There was even a largish tank where swimming was possible. Dunking each other and jumping from the overhanging tree branch was a favourite pastime. In the process, we did learn 'doggy paddling' too. Although we were allowed to roam around and do as we willed, the rule was to stay indoors after the afternoon. Sleep was advised but rarely happened as our young minds were awake and always looking for diversions.

The earliest effort to divert was to play board games. Initially, it was Ludo or Snakes and Ladders. A single foldable card-board piece, about a foot square, was stuck with coloured pictures of the games on either side. A set of dice, a small plastic glass and four varieties of coloured round tokens completed the set. Strong battles commenced with players being supported by the non-combatants. Since the numbers of kids were more than the playing sets, soon more board games were introduced. In came Chinese Checkers, Tic-Tac-toe and some glass marble based games. For the more serious players, Chess too was arranged. For some reason, playing cards were not provided and discouraged. I think the association of gambling with them may have been the cause!

As we grew older, we did start playing cards in a clandestine manner. The immense variety of games that could be played was a challenge. From basic 'Rummy' and 'Bluff' to more complicated 'Teen Patti' with huge variations were the common games played.

Bridge was for the serious ones. Carrying packs of cards were much easier than carrying the board games along, when going to a picnic or in the back benches of a hall during boring lectures.

For long, the domains of board games and playing cards remained separate. Recently, I was introduced to a board game, also called 'Rummy,' where the cards were replaced by numbered tiles. The rules were similar. It was fun to play. Another new board game, called 'Sequences,' has been introduced in the market. It has a huge board with all the cards displayed. A set of playing cards distributed decides how to play the game. The rules were complicated and I am not going to explain them. What fascinated me was the attention it brought to the King, Queen and Jack. I had never paid too much attention to the pictures and did not realise that there were such variation in each set. The king in each set looked different.

Some had a beard, while in others, they were missing. This was true for the queens too. Their regalia changed and even the expression varied from deck to deck. The Jacks were one-eyed or two eyed. Such variations aroused my interest in their origin.

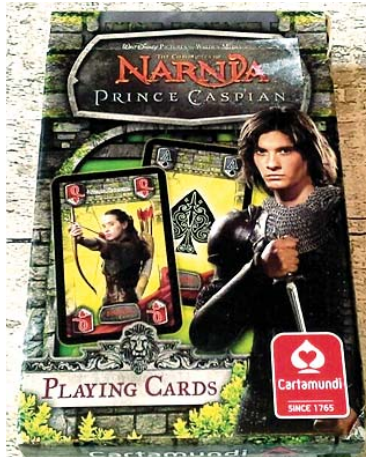
One of the most interesting aspects of playing cards is the artistry and symbolism found within the pictorial cards, specifically the jacks, queens and kings. Variations in these figures, such as one-eyed and two-eyed jacks, kings with or without mustaches and differences in the portrayal of queens, can often reflect deeper cultural influences and historical changes. These variations are not mere decorative choices but can tell us much about the era in which the cards were designed, the region from which they originated and the artistic trends that

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influenced them. Let us explore how playing cards influenced board games and what the significance of these variations might be. The connection between playing cards and board games can be



#GAMES



players drawing cards to advance or influence outcomes. The adaptation of playing card mechanics into these types of games allowed designers to incorporate randomness, strategic depth, and variety into the experience.

In many card games, especially traditional European ones like Tarot, the face cards (jacks, queens, and kings) play crucial roles in the game's outcomes. These cards often carry symbolic weight, representing various aspects of society, mythology or history. As a result, board games, that incorporated playing cards, also absorbed these symbolic meanings, adding layers of complexity to the game's theme or narrative. The unique characteristics of these figures, such as their expressions and attire, can evoke certain emotions or connections to historical events, enhancing the thematic experience of the board game.

The face cards, jacks, queens, and kings, are often the most visually distinctive cards in a deck. They have undergone several variations across time, geography and artistic style. These variations are not just aesthetic but can also carry significant symbolic meaning. The jack is a particularly interesting card in terms of its

In the context of board games, the depiction of queens can be more than just an aesthetic choice. For example, in games where players take on the roles of different factions or nations, the queen's portrayal might symbolize power dynamics, gender roles, or even the game's overall thematic exploration of authority and politics.

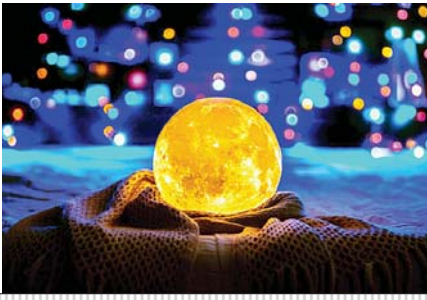
variations, especially the depiction of one-eyed and two-eyed jacks. In traditional decks, the jack of spades and the jack of hearts are frequently illustrated as one-eyed figures, while the jack of diamonds and the jack of clubs are depicted with two eyes.

The reason for this peculiar difference lies in the historical evolution of card design. One explanation is that card manufacturers and illustrators used a stylistic choice to distinguish between the jacks of different suits. The one-eyed jacks are often presented in profile, which allows for only one visible eye, while the two-eyed jacks are shown from a frontal or three-quarter angle. This stylistic variation has persisted in many modern decks, including those used in popular board games that incorporate playing cards.

Symbolically, the one-eyed jack is sometimes seen as a figure of deception or trickery. Since he

You Weigh Less During a Full Moon- Seriously!

Ever feel a bit lighter during a full moon? It's not just your mood, it's physics! The moon's gravitational pull doesn't just move oceans, it subtly tugs on you too. When the moon is directly overhead, its gravity slightly counteracts Earth's pull, reducing your weight by a tiny fraction, about 0.5 milligrams if you weigh 70 kgs. It's not enough to skip the gym, but it's a quirky reminder that celestial bodies influence us more than we realize. So, next full moon, step on the scale, and just don't expect a miracle!



One of the most interesting aspects of playing cards is the artistry and symbolism found within the pictorial cards, specifically the jacks, queens and kings. Variations in these figures, such as one-eyed and two-eyed jacks, kings with or without mustaches and differences in the portrayal of queens, can often reflect deeper cultural influences and historical changes. These variations are not mere decorative choices but can tell us much about the era in which the cards were designed, the region from which they originated and the artistic trends that influenced them. Let us explore how playing cards influenced board games and what the significance of these variations might be.

is only partially visible, he may represent hidden motives or actions, a fitting theme for games that involve bluffing or strategic misdirection. In contrast, the two-eyed jack is often associated with a more balanced and upright figure, symbolizing clarity and fairness. The difference between these jacks can therefore add layers of meaning to a board game, depending on the context in which they are used. Another interesting variation in the card deck involves the depiction of kings with or without mustaches. This variation, which is particularly noticeable in historical and traditional European decks, reflects evolving fashion trends and artistic interpretations.

In many early European decks, kings were depicted with full facial hair, often with a mustache and beard. This was in line with the historical reality of kings and nobles during the Middle Ages and Renaissance, where facial

hair was often a symbol of masculinity and authority. Over time, as grooming styles changed, artists began to depict kings without mustaches, reflecting the shift in societal norms. The mustache, or lack thereof, can thus provide subtle insight into the time period in which a particular deck was created.

In the context of board games derived from playing cards, the presence or absence of a mustache can alter the perception of a king's character. A king with a mustache might evoke a more traditional, authoritative figure, while a clean-shaven king could be seen as more modern or progressive. This subtle detail can contribute to the thematic tone of a game, particularly if the board game is set in a specific historical period or involves the dynamics of power and royalty.

highly stylized, elegant clothing, with a crown and scepter as symbols of their royal status. However, the portrayal of queens has evolved over time, with some modern decks depicting them in more casual or even ambiguous attire.

One of the most striking aspects of queen depictions is the way they reflect the changing roles of women in society. In earlier decks, queens were often shown as distant, regal figures, with little personal expression or individuality. In contrast, modern card designs might depict queens with a wider range of emotions, from 'confident and assertive' to 'serene and contemplative.' This shift mirrors the growing recognition of women's agency and influence, especially in the 20th and 21st centuries.

In the context of board games, the depiction of queens can be more than just an aesthetic choice. For example, in games where players take on the roles of different factions or nations, the queen's portrayal might symbolize power dynamics, gender roles, or even the game's overall thematic exploration of authority and politics. A queen depicted as an assertive leader might suggest a more equalized or progressive society, while a more passive portrayal might evoke traditional gender norms.

The variations in the figures of the pictorial cards, jacks, queens, and kings, serve not just as artistic embellishments but also carry cultural, historical, and symbolic significance. These cards, which have been a source of fascination for centuries, provide insight into the evolving notions of power, authority and identity. When these variations are incorporated into board games, they add layers of depth and complexity, enhancing the thematic experience and offering players a glimpse into the world in which the cards were designed. As board games continue to evolve, many still retain the influence of playing cards, with designers drawing upon the symbolism, mechanics and imagery associated with these cards. The variations in the depiction of jacks, kings and queens are not mere aesthetic choices but reflect deeper cultural shifts and historical developments. Whether in the playful world of strategy games or in historical simulations, these variations remain a testament to the enduring legacy of playing cards, in shaping both our entertainment and our understanding of the world around us.

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#PETS

The Colourful Curiosities of Calico Cats



Because these patchwork queens are way more than just a pretty face!

Ever seen a cat that looks like it walked through an autumn leaf pile and came out wearing it? That's probably a calico! With their wild mix of orange, black, and white fur, calico cats are born to turn heads, and they've got plenty of personality to match. But did you know there's a whole world of science, superstition, and just plain cool trivia behind those multi-coloured coats? So, grab your coffee (or your cat) and curl up. These fun facts about calico cats might just make you love them even more, or send you running to adopt one.



Calico means colour, not breed

Let's start with a common myth-buster! 'Calico' isn't a breed, it's a wardrobe choice. Think of it like a fashion statement, not a bloodline. Calico cats can belong to many breeds, Persians, Maine Coons, Japanese Bobtails, you name it. If they've got the colours, they qualify.

Most calicos are girls

Here's a twist of feline genetics, why? Because the orange and black fur colours come from the X chromosome. Females have two Xs, which give them the perfect combo. Males, who only have one, miss out, unless there's a rare genetic mutation involved.



They're lucky cats around the world

In Japan, calicos are believed to bring good fortune and are often represented in the famous beckoning cat statues (maneki-neko) that you see in stores. Sailors used to keep them aboard ships for protection. In other parts of the world too, people have long seen calicos as furry good-luck charms.

Cloning? Not happening

While scientists have successfully cloned cats before, calicos can't be copied. Their signature colour patterns come from a random genetic process called X-chromosome inactivation, which means no two calicos are ever the same. They're the definition of one of a kind.

They go by fancier names too

In the scientific world, calicos are sometimes called 'tortoiseshell-and-white' or 'piebald.' It sounds fancy, but it's just a technical way to describe their patchwork fur. We still think 'calico' has the best ring to it.

They come with extra 'cattitude'

Ask anyone who lives with a calico and you'll hear stories. They're opinionated, bold, dramatic, and totally unforgettable. There's no scientific proof that coat colour affects personality, but calico fans will swear otherwise. These cats know how to take center stage.



By Rick Kirkman & Jerry Scott

ZITS

By Jerry Scott & Jim Borgman

BABY BLUES

THE WALL

