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Consumer Lab

INDIA'S
SWEET
LOVE STORY
GETS A HEALTHY TWIST

FESTIVE
SPECIAL



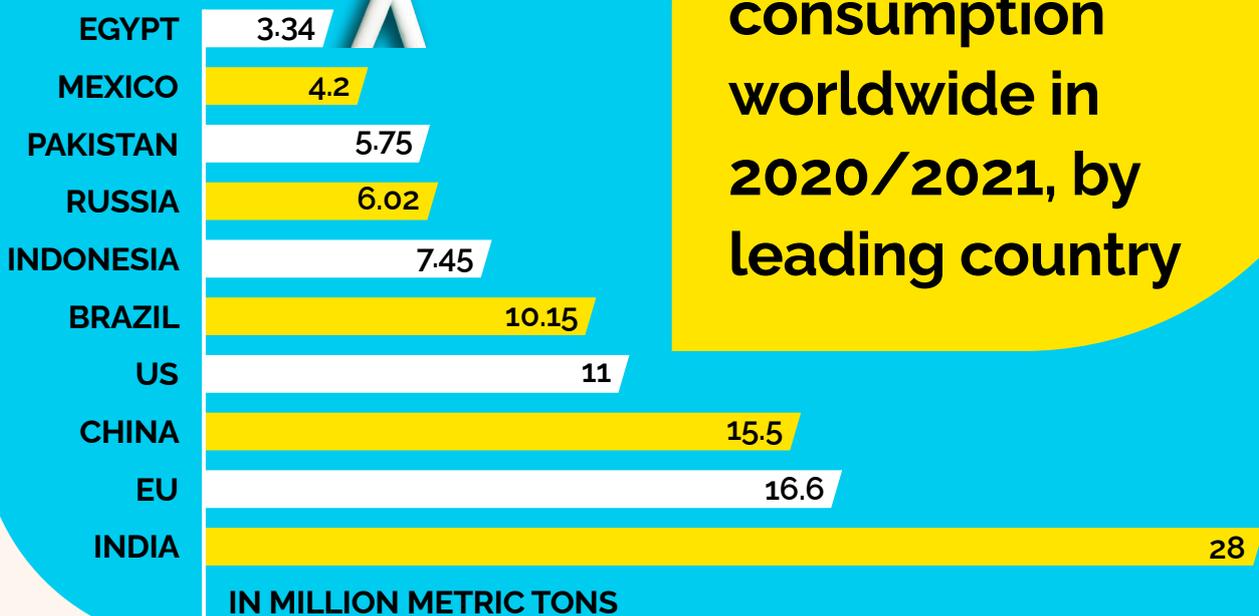
Red Lab brings you the conversations that are trending and what marketers need to keep an eye on, curating from the various resources.

INDIA'S UNDYING LOVE FOR SWEETS

“Muh toh meetha karwao”, or “Kuch meetha khane ka man hai” can easily be some of the most commonly used phrases in the Indian household. And while we think it would follow a marquee event, it can very easily follow a simple homemade meal. India is the largest consumer of sugar in the world.



Sugar consumption worldwide in 2020/2021, by leading country



LOVE HURTS

Our deep love for sweets has its repercussions. 80 percent of all deaths in India are caused by cardiovascular disease, type 2 diabetes, cancer, and other diseases caused due to the mindless consumption of refined sugars.

A country that can rejoice in sweet indulgence without a reason to celebrate, imagine how much its appetite for sweets could rise if festivities were around the corner.

What makes our festivals gastronomically unique is the array of regional mithais, rich Indian gourmet desserts, and dry fruit-filled hampers, consumed and distributed during our festivals. For India, festivities lose their essence without a sugar rush from their favourite sweets.



LOVE IS SWEET, SWEET IS LOVE



While Indian sweets have a special place in our hearts, we don't discriminate against western chocolates. The International Cocoa Organization recently described the country as the No. 1 potential market of the future.

SOURCE: BLOOMBERG.COM, APRIL 2021

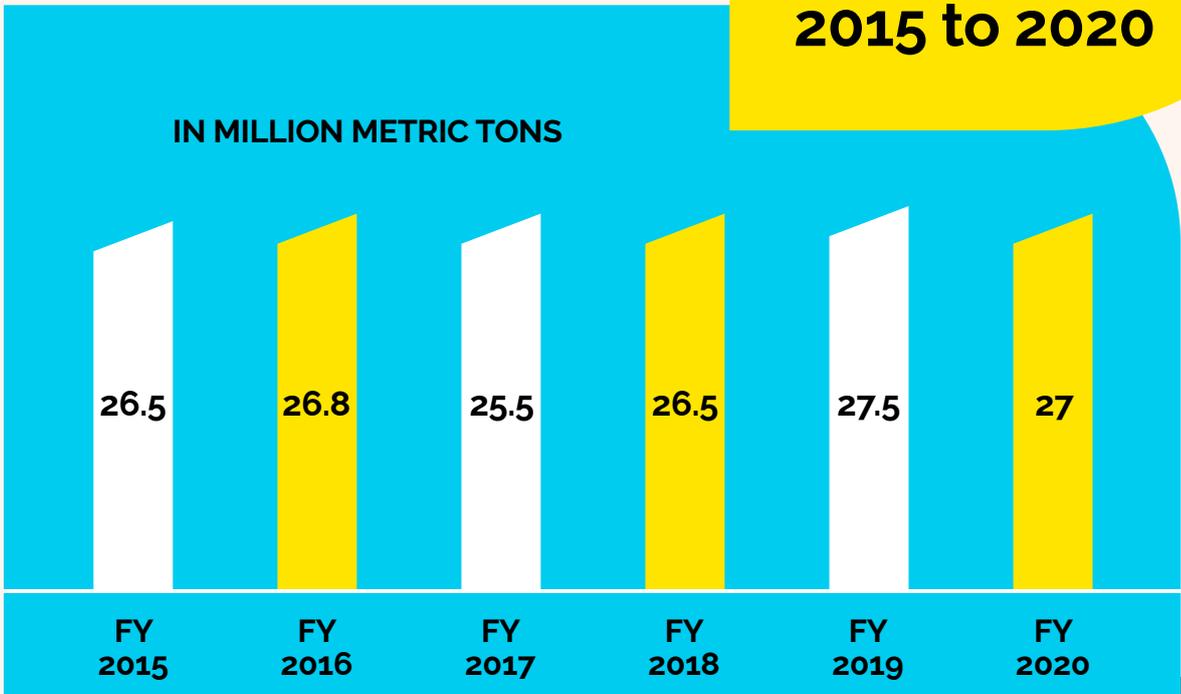


SOURCE: TIMES OF INDIA, JUNE 2018

REALIZATION OF TOXIC LOVE

Although the consumption of sugar is high, the numbers are stagnant, stuck between the 26-28 bracket, which could also hint at the growing health consciousness amongst Indians.

Consumption volume of sugar across India from 2015 to 2020



THE COVID CONSCIOUSNESSES

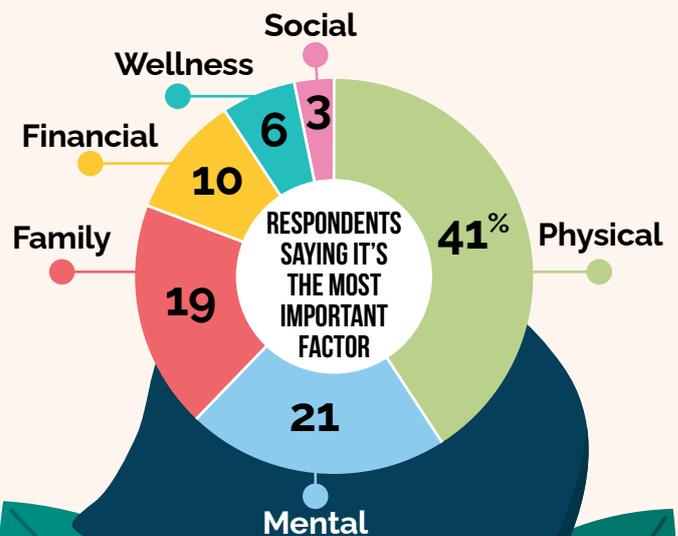


The pandemic put the average sweet loving Indian's willpower to the test. While the restrictions of the lockdown and the closing down of many sweet shops forced Indians to cut down on their sweet consumption. Many also avoided sweets to start eating healthy amid the pandemic terrors. Indians entered gyms, online yoga classes, to do everything in their power to avoid the virus. Sweet shops saw a 30% drop in sales during the festive season in 2020.

For Indians, physical health most important factor behind wellness

Wellness Index Survey Results

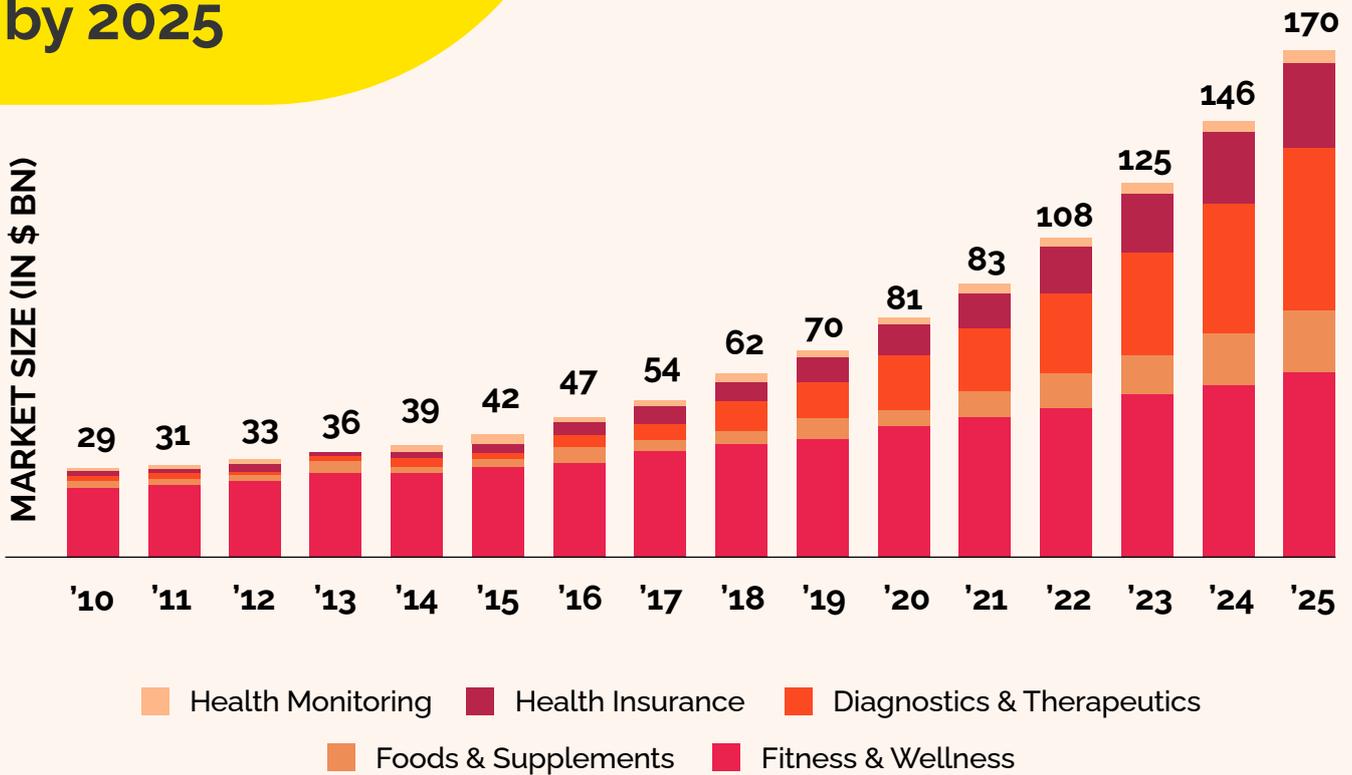
India Index Score (Max = 100)



Preventive Healthcare to reach market size of \$170 Bn by 2025

Higher adoption of fitness & wellness platforms as well as diagnostics will fuel the growth in preventive healthcare.

Note: Market size estimates are based on primary and secondary research.



SOURCE: DATA LABS, INC42 MEDIA, 2020



India is projected to have an addressable base of 120 Mn health-conscious individuals by next year, with nearly half of these coming from outside the metros and Tier 1 cities. The preventive healthcare segment is estimated to reach \$100 Bn in value, with healthy consumption accounting for 30% of this opportunity.

SOURCE: INC42 MEDIA, NOV 2021

OUR SWEET STORY GETS A HEALTHY TWIST



If Indians can so easily switch to digital payment modes and video calls to stay connected with family, a small change in ingredients is no hassle to save their precious mithais. Indians have found ways to feel less guilty about their indulgence by adding a healthy twist to their sweets.

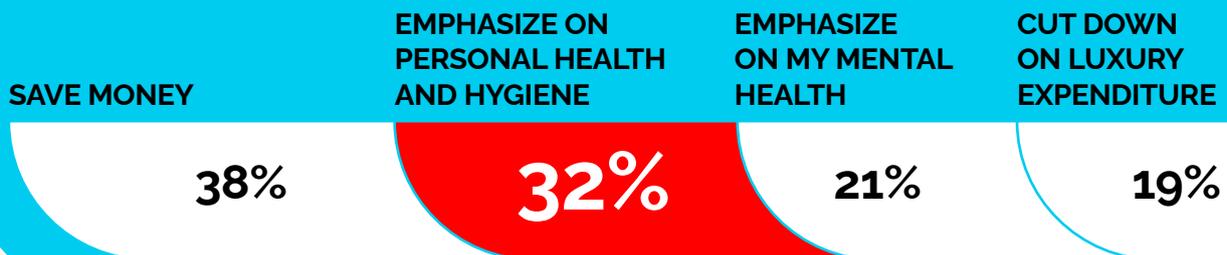
Multiple recipes for baked gujyas for Holi, multigrain malpuas, oats, and strawberry kheer allowed India to indulge freely and gorge on the variety of Indian sweets that each occasion has to offer.



Many brands have sprouted in the past couple of years to piggyback on this trend. They are taking popular sweets such as besan laddoo, kaju katli, and khoya barfi, and swapping their ingredients for healthier ones. Brands like Gur Chini, focus on using healthier sugars for all their offerings.



Thinking about how the pandemic has changed our lives, which, if any, of the following will be your resolution for you?



A HEALTHY REBOUND

Top 5 trending videos on Youtube 2020

1	CarryMinati	Stop Making Assumptions YouTube vs Tik Tok: The End
2	Jkk Entertainment	Chotu Dada Tractor Wala
3	Make Joke Of	The Lockdown
4	TRT Ertugrul by PTV	Ertugrul Ghazi Urdu
5	Bristi Home Kitchen	Chocolate Cake Only 3 Ingredients In Lock-down Without Egg, Oven, Maida

SOURCE: GADGETS 360. DEC 2020

In an interview with Indian express, Salaluddin Ahmed, the chef with Namaste Dwaar, shared that there has been a 30-40 percent shift in food consumption pattern with healthy food, especially healthy sweets, becoming a top priority. The most sought after alternatives to sugar are jaggery and palm sugar. Palm sugar is low on glucose content and hence poses as a healthier alternative.

Indians haven't entirely left it up to brands to come up with ways in which they can eat clean and healthy. While the world was shut down, many took to the kitchens themselves and tried their hand at making healthier and clean food.

SOURCE: THE PRINT, SEPT 2021

They didn't hold back, even when it came to sweets. Making cake without maida, egg and oven was one of the top five trending videos on Youtube in 2020.

Dhara, the edible oil brand used this trend as their foundation for their new film used it to rejuvenate the age-old Indian tradition of making the sweets at home instead of just purchasing them from shops. While cooking at home, one would ensure the usage of clean, organic ingredients, without any preservatives that already make the sweets a lot healthier.



Sweets that can't be made healthily are losing popularity. While Indians want to retain the essence of their festivals, they want to do so guilt-free.

Even the mighty Rosogolla has fallen!

The following article talks about how the Bengali heartthrob Rosogolla is slowly moving out of their plates.

ADDED SUGAR IS PUTTING BENGALIS OFF ROSOGOLLAS



Shantanu Guha Ray

Sept 4th, 2021

Shantanu Guha Ray is a Wharton-trained, award-winning journalist who specializes in reporting on investigative news features, business features, and human interest reports.

India is home to over 77 million diabetics. This is starting to change how we eat.

Bengal's love of rosogollas, spongy balls of ricotta soaked in sugar syrup, is almost 150 years old. But many are stepping aside now, citing health reasons.

The sugary treat has its roots in Portugal, and is preserved in family recipes passed down the generations. Yet it is not exactly the most favoured one in sweet shops across Kolkata and Bengal today.

This does not mean that the rosogolla is off the plate. But there is a clear divide on whether to include these sugar syrup-laced cheese balls on the menu at home or for guests. Many are, actually, avoiding it.



Why?

The spongy balls aren't the problem, it is the syrup with high sugar content which is causing problems for people trying to control their blood sugar levels.

Health statistics from the National Urban Diabetes Survey show nearly 12 percent of Bengal's population is diabetic. A study at IIT Kanpur showed high prevalence of diabetes in the three districts of Howrah, Burdwan and Kolkata.

"Any intake of sweets is not good for your health. Of all sweets in Bengal, those laced with sugar syrup are the most dangerous. It is good that people are trying their best to stay away from rosogollas or rajbhogs because of their very high sugar content," says Dr. Mahua Sikdar, counted among Kolkata's top diabetologists.

Dr. Sikdar says sweet preferences are changing in the city, and also in other parts of the state because of higher awareness. "Barring one or two big sweet stores, the rest will not showcase rosogollas as their best offers. People are getting conscious about their food patterns."



Dr. Sikdar

GI ROSOGOLLAS

Bengal's tryst with rosogollas is indeed unique. The sweet is now slowly - yet steadily - moving away from stores in Kolkata and elsewhere in the state.

Yet, in arguments, Bengalis take immense pride in saying that the rosogolla was first created - they actually call it an invention - by one Nobin Chandra Das at his Baghbazar residence in northern Kolkata.

Odisha residents contest this vociferously, arguing that their experiments with the cottage cheese dumpling dates back to the 12th century when rosogollas were offered at the temple of Lord Jagannath in Puri.

Ancient temple scrolls say Lord Jagannath offers rosogollas to his consort Goddess Lakshmi on his return from the annual nine-day-long Rath Yatra.



Nobin Chandra Das



"Both states are very fiercely protective about their own brand of rosogollas," says one of Bengal's top food exponents, Pritha Sen.

Bengal got the GI tag for its brand of rosogollas in 2017 and then Odisha got it for its brand of rosogollas in 2019. The GI is a distinctive sign used on a product generally collectively owned and can be used to differentiate goods on the basis of its geographic region and unique characteristics.

"Rosogolla is no longer top of the minds of Bengalis. Health-conscious people want to avoid it... The syrup is sticky, unlike a sandesh (a cheese and jaggery based sweet, generally shaped like a carrom board striker) which you can handle with a tissue paper. All sweets have gone through some great experimentations in Bengal, except rosogollas," adds Sen.

It is a pity, says Sen, because rosogollas - for long - were Bengal's sweet signature to the whole of India.

**A ROSOGOLLA
CAN NEVER BE
COMPARED WITH
SANDESH, IT IS
LIKE COMPARING
STARBUCKS COFFEE
WITH KOLKATA'S
COLLEGE STREET
COFFEE HOUSE.**

DHIMAN DAS

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR,
KC DAS GROUP



SIGNATURE SWEET

Food experts say Bengalis have never liked too much experimentation with rosogollas - as a result, the sweet hasn't changed much in 150 years. The few attempts to remake the sweet, as Maggi rosogollas, and black currant, strawberry, or green apple flavoured rosogollas, too haven't found favour with Bengalis.

There are interesting stories about rosogollas. Once, the then Indian PM Rajiv Gandhi walked into a Bengal stall at the Delhi Trade Fair and enjoyed rosogollas with Nicaraguan President Daniel Ortega. The owners of the store, the Mukherjee family of Old Delhi, even exported rosogollas to far flung Latin American nations.



Shri Rajiv Gandhi

Mr. Daniel Ortega
President, Nicaraguan

ROSOGOLLA
IS JUST NOSTALGIA,
NOTHING MORE.
PEOPLE... DO NOT
WANT TO HANDLE
THE SUGAR SYRUP.

- ABHIJIT SEN, CATERER

Not anymore.

"I agree it is no longer on top of the minds of people but there is a sizeable section of people in Bengal who swear by rosogollas and nothing else," says Dhiman Das, great grandson of K.C. Das and executive director of KC Das group that markets rosogollas in its trade-marked red coloured sealed tin boxes.

Traditional rosogolla should never be experimented with. "I cannot teach people how to eat it after more than 100 years. A rosogolla can never be compared with sandesh, it is like comparing Starbucks coffee with Kolkata's College Street Coffee House. You are actually going nowhere. And yes, do not tell me someone has invented Maggi rosogollas. If K.C. Das was alive, he would have died instantly," Das says.



But Das agrees there is a shift, he calls it a drift which is both sad and painful. He says it is up to Bengalis to retain their love for rosogollas.



WEDDING FEAST

Once both big and small weddings in Bengal would have thousands of rosogollas in earthen pots, and there would be rosogolla eating competitions among the groom's side and bride's side. But today, big or small wedding caterers are told to keep rosogollas off the menu.

Das says his forefather worked hard to make the cheese balls popular in India and abroad. His grandfather, Sarada Charan Das, a physicist, worked under Dr C.V. Raman in Rajabazar Science College. Sarada Charan Das, he says, created India's first steam machine for sweets in 1945 in British-ruled India. His company has now modified momo-making machines from South Korea to churn out over 8,000 rosogollas in less than ten minutes.

"I know sugar is a problem, we are trying to reduce the sugar content and offer sugarless and sugar-free rosogollas," says Das.



Dr. C.V. Raman





“Some people are still consuming it, but it's on a 10:80 ratio. Sandesh, curd, and a few other sweets are now filling the menu cards like never before,” says Abhijit Sen, a top caterer in Kolkata. “Rosogolla is just nostalgia, nothing more. People are very conscious of what they want. They do not want to handle the sugar syrup.”

A top official of Balaram Mullick & Radharaman Mullick, one of the top sweet chains across Bengal, said it would be wrong to write off rosogollas altogether.

Sudip Mullick, head of the company, says he noticed how rosogollas were falling off the map and has made a few changes. “We have reduced the sugar content to a great extent. We have different varieties of rosogollas. Well, rosogollas hit the headlines with the news of the GI tag for Bengal but then Odisha also got their tag. So there was no exclusivity factor. So it is up to us to start experimenting and keep interest levels high,” Mullick says.



Mr. Sudip Mullick

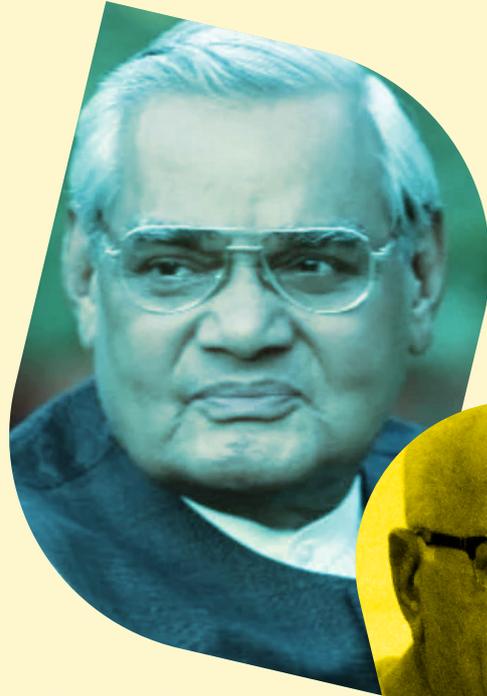
IN POLITICAL CIRCLES

Old-timers in Delhi remember Atal Behari Vajpayee and Lal Krishna Advani's love for rosogollas. Both had unique ways of eating them.

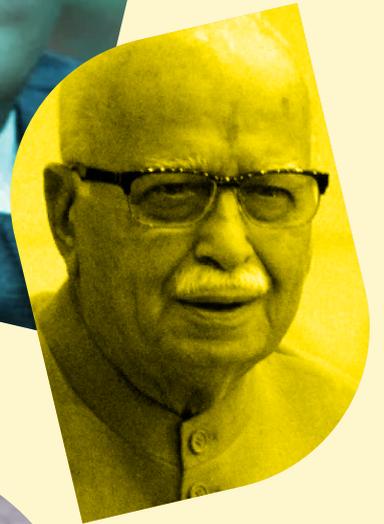
Vajpayee would have them with the full syrup while Advani would seek rosogollas of smaller size and then cut them up in six to eight pieces and consume just one.

Now, rosogollas are no longer sent as gifts by politicians from Bengal who are, otherwise, very protective about sweets produced in the state.

In north Kolkata, partners in the century-old sweet shop Girish Chandra Dey and Nakur Chandra Nandy, say their favourite sweet is not rosogollas but hard-baked sandesh. "Rosogolla did not appeal to our forefathers," says Prajesh Nandy, whose shop has sweets named after cricketers Saurav Ganguly and Sachin Ramesh Tendulkar.



Shri Atal Bihari Vajpayee



Shri L.K. Advani



Irrespective of the big divide, the tradition of rosogollas continues. Nitai Ghosh of Chittaranjan Sweets, which specialises in producing rosogollas, says: "Rosogolla, for us, is like offering a slice of civilization... Hundreds of people come to our stores to buy rosogollas, they do not check the sugar content of our products."

A REPORT BY



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