

# MIST LGBTQ NEWSLETTER



August 2024

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## Mist LGBTQ Foundation Makes a Mark at IBM Pune's Career Carnival, Promoting Inclusion and Education

Mist LGBTQ Foundation, showcased its dynamic presence at the recent Career Carnival hosted by IBM Pune on August 1, 2024. The stall, featuring queer entrepreneurs and interactive learning games, drew significant attention and engagement.

Highlights included a flea market showcasing diverse talents, gaming and learning experiences, and a popular ring toss game educating participants about LGBTQ+ flags.

The event facilitated meaningful discussions and introduced the Eagle BRG, an internal Slack channel for community connection and allyship.

Team Mist extends gratitude to IBM Pune for the platform and to all who visited and engaged with the stall. This initiative marks a significant step towards building a supportive network and promoting a more inclusive future.





## QueerBazaar Shines at IBM Kolkata's Flea Market, Celebrating Diversity and Entrepreneurship



IBM Pvt Ltd Kolkata recently hosted a vibrant flea market on 8th August, 2024, providing a platform for the LGBTQ+ community to showcase their talents and entrepreneurial spirit.

Mist LGBTQ Foundation actively participated, showcasing a diverse range of products and services. The event fostered a sense of inclusivity and acceptance, allowing community members to connect and share their stories.

Team Mist appreciates IBM Kolkata's initiative in promoting diversity and providing a supportive environment. This collaboration marks a significant step towards empowering the LGBTQ+ community and celebrating their contributions to society.





## Movie Screening at **Stories Cafe** on Independence Day, Celebrating Intersection of National Pride and Community Identity

On August 15, 2024, Mist successfully hosted 'Freedom Reels', a special movie screening event at Stories Cafe, commemorating India's 78th Independence Day. The event aimed to celebrate the intersection of national pride and the diverse identities within the LGBTQ+ community.

The screening featured two thought-provoking films: 'Mumma's Boy' and 'Gulabi Aaina'. 'Mumma's Boy' told the poignant story of Aryan and Rudra, exploring themes of love, loss, and self-discovery.

'Gulabi Aaina', India's first film on drag queens, showcased a comic Bollywood-style romp about love, acceptance, and identity.

The event brought the community together, recognizing the ongoing struggle for equality and acceptance within the LGBTQ+ community.

Through 'Freedom Reels', Mist LGBTQ Foundation promoted inclusivity, diversity, and national pride, creating a memorable experience for all attendees.



The poster features the Mist LGBTQ Foundation logo at the top left and a film reel icon at the top right. Below the logos are two movie posters: 'GULABI AAINA' showing a woman in a yellow sari and 'Mumma's Boy' showing two men in silhouette. The main title is 'Freedom Reels: Celebrating Independence Day with Pride'. Below the title is the text: 'DIVE DEEP INTO THE LIFE OF QUEER INDIVIDUALS WITH THE MAGIC OF CINEMA AND CREATIVE STORY TELLING!'. There are logos for 'STORIES' and 'Solari PICTURES'. The event details are: 'Stories Cafe', Shop No. 9 & 10, Urban Homes, Kutwal Colony, Lohegaon, Pune -411047, and '15th August 2024', Start from 02 PM - 4.30 PM. A box says 'Free Entry & Snacks'. At the bottom, it says 'Check our website or social media for further information:' with social media handles '@stories\_cafe\_pune' and 'www.lgbtq.co.in'.







## Love Knows No Borders: Shyam and Ram's Journey to **Marriage Equality**

On August 16, 2024, Stories Cafe screened the heartwarming live wedding of Shyam and Ram, a couple who defied India's laws by getting married in Copenhagen.

Their love story highlighted the struggles faced by the LGBTQ+ community in India, where same-sex marriage still remains illegal.

Despite the distance, their wedding was a global celebration, with friends and family joining virtually. This powerful act of love underscores the need for marriage equality in India, where thousands are petitioning for legal recognition.

Shyam and Ram's journey is a testament to the human spirit, proving that love can bridge even the widest gaps.

As India grapples with legal reform, their story inspires hope for a future where love is recognized and respected, regardless of borders or biases. The screening at Stories Cafe was a poignant reminder of the triumph of love over adversity.





## Firdaus Shines at Mr. Gay World, Advocating for Mental Health Awareness and Inclusivity

Firdaus, India's representative at Mr. Gay World, has made a remarkable impact with his outstanding performance and dedication to promoting diversity, inclusivity, and empowerment.

His journey from facing bullying and abuse to becoming a beacon of hope for mental health awareness is a testament to his resilience and determination.

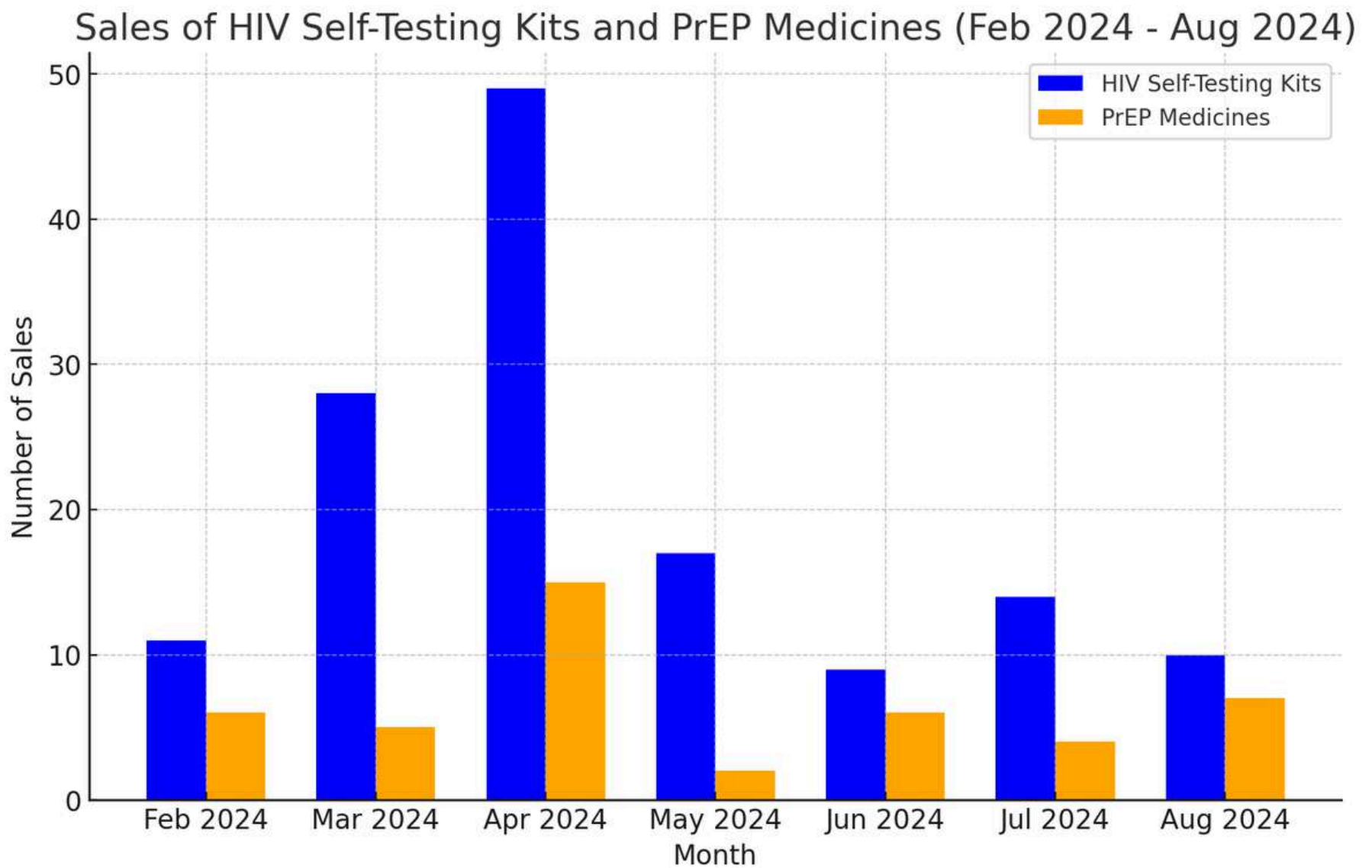
As a fashion content creator and advocate for inclusivity, Firdaus breaks down barriers and challenges societal norms. His efforts aim to spread positivity and promote mental wellness, inspiring countless individuals worldwide.

We commend Firdaus for his passion and commitment to self-expression, recognizing his valuable contributions to the LGBTQ+ community.

His participation in Mr. Gay World has elevated his message, fostering a more inclusive and accepting environment for all.



## Mist LGBTQ Foundation Sees Steady Uptake of HIV Prevention Measures



Mist LGBTQ Foundation's efforts to promote HIV awareness and prevention have yielded promising results. Between February and August 2024, the organization sold a total of 138 HIV self-testing kits and 45 PrEP medicines.

While sales fluctuated month-to-month, the overall trend indicates a growing interest in HIV prevention measures. The foundation's initiatives aim to reduce exposure to HIV/AIDS, and these numbers suggest a positive impact. By providing accessible resources and education, Mist LGBTQ Foundation is helping individuals take control of their health and make informed decisions about their well-being.





## US Consulate Engages with Mist LGBTQ Foundation to Support Community Efforts

Mist LGBTQ Foundation, represented by Suraj Raut, HR and Finance Manager, and Aakruti Patel, Outreach and Advocacy Manager, met with Priyanka Chaturvedi, Digital Strategy Director for the US Consulate, to discuss our operations, mission, and current challenges.

The foundation aims to bring queer and ally communities together through various events and initiatives, including HIV awareness, testing, and prevention. We also operate QueerBazaar, a merchandise and clothing store, and Stories Cafe, a safe space for the LGBTQ community.

During the meeting, Team Mist highlighted the challenges faced by the community, including inadequate medical facilities for trans individuals in government hospitals,



leading to exploitation by private hospitals. Other issues include limited employment opportunities, ragging, and accommodation and housing problems. Priyanka Chaturvedi engaged with the team to understand the foundation's efforts and the community's struggles, demonstrating the US Consulate's commitment to supporting LGBTQ initiatives. The meeting fostered a collaborative environment, paving the way for potential future partnerships and support.

