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DIGITAL ARREST

Traumatised minds, shattered peace

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Digital arrest: Traumatized minds, shattered peace

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The cybercrime landscape never fails to amaze us! As we work to protect our information online through regular measures such as two-factor authentication and a unique difficult password, cybercrime progresses towards refining its tactics and finding new ways to breach our defences. One of the emerging modern threats to the encyclopaedia of cyber threats is DIGITAL ARREST. A phenomenon in its nascent stage, perpetrators posing as high-ranked officials, mostly police, bank, or telecom, call unsuspecting victims, and very authoritatively, press allegations of serious crimes. In most cases, these are related to a sim card issued in the victim's name being used for criminal activities, some confiscated parcel with drugs, bearing their address, or money laundering for terrorist activities.

Panic is natural, and victims apprehend arrest due to these serious charges. So, they do as told. Thus starts the trauma of Digital Arrest! From hours to days, people are asked to sever all communication with the world, including their immediate family. Imposters even dress as police officials and share fake CBI arrest warrants and reports to intimidate their targets.

This is what digital arrest means and does— a blend of authority, technology and fear. Such scammers are well-versed in human psychology and use it to extort money. A scientist from Indore received a call from an individual claiming to be an official from the Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI), accusing him of using a SIM card involved in harassing messages and activities. He kept him engaged on WhatsApp video call and warned him against disconnecting, which would hamper the investigation process. An individual appeared in police uniform, claiming to be a CBI official, informing the scientist that he was under 'Digital Arrest.' Ultimately, the situation led to the scientist transferring an amount of 71 lakh to these fraudsters.



In May 2024, Vijay Pande, a Bank employee in Lucknow, received calls supposedly from a police station that his brother had been arrested. He was forced to stay on call for hours and was demanded online money transfer for bail. The scammers used AI-based voice-cloning technology to mimic the voice of the victim's brother. Scammers use high-pressure tactics to overwhelm victims emotionally and mentally. According to Cyber Cell data, Indians have lost more than Rs 120 crore to digital arrest scams with officials blocking more than 6 lakh suspected phone numbers and freezing 3.25 lakh bogus bank accounts. They usually target people like senior citizens or people who are employed in the private sector.

Upon receiving such a call, you should lodge a complaint on 1930, gather

evidence such as call recordings and messages, and send to the authorities to help aid investigations. Currently, laws like IPC Section 419 (cheating by impersonation) and IPC Section 420 are used to prosecute scammers. However, there are no specific regulations against such digital arrest scams.

Always remember! Law authorities such as police and CBI never threaten to arrest over phone calls and never ask for money to be transferred. When in doubt, hang up the phone and walk right into a police station.

Digital scams are scary but they are also very predictable. Once you know their tactics, you can see right through them. Remember, don't let your money and years' worth of hard work vanish in minutes of panic. ■



Danish Mahal

Picture: RICHA GOEL

An effort to keep Urdu literature alive

RICHA GOEL

Master of Journalism & Mass Communication

In the middle of Aminabad's crowded streets, where traffic and the market continuously roar, Danish Mahal serves as a refuge for lovers of Urdu literature. Founded in 1939, this iconic bookstore—often described as a 'Palace of Wisdom'—has witnessed decades of change, yet it remains there, standing proud for scholars, poets, and readers.

For Naeem Ahmad, the current caretaker and owner of Danish Mahal, it's not just a family business, but a special inheritance. "My father, Naseem Ahmad, always said, "Beta (son), even if you don't read these books, open the pages and take a whiff of them just once... even that is nourishing."

The story of Danish Mahal began when Naseem Ahmad transformed a small franchise of the Maktaba chain into an independent bookstore. Inspired by Maulvi Abdul Haque, the 'Father of Urdu,' Naseem nurtured Danish Mahal as not just a shop, but an adda—a

“

It hurts to see a language so graceful being sidelined. Even wedding cards and nameplates are in English now

”

meeting place for poets, critics, and intellectuals.

"It wasn't just about buying books," Manzoor Parwana, Naseem's childhood friend, recalled. "It was about the exchange of ideas. Writers like Ehtesham Hussain, Abid Sohail, and Ratan Singh were regulars here, always sharing thoughts on art, culture, and society."

However, the changing times have taken a toll. The popularity of Urdu has declined, with many now considering it outdated. "It hurts to see a language so graceful being sidelined. Even wedding cards and nameplates are in English

now," Manzoor complained. For Naeem, Danish Mahal is not to do with profit, but about preserving his father's labour of love. "I get only a handful of customers in a month—not a significant financial benefit, but enough to pay the staff," he revealed.

He continues to organise literary meets like Sham-e-Awadh, to revive interest in Urdu. When asked why he continues to do so, Naeem explained, "We want young people to re-connect with Urdu and it's not just about selling books. It's about preserving a culture, a language, and a history. My father dedicated his life to this, and I will do everything I can to keep it alive."

Visitors describe Danish Mahal as magic. "You step in, and the outside world just disappears," says Shadab Hussain, a regular visitor. "The scent of old books and such deep respect for literature make this place magical."

Danish Mahal may no longer be as packed with visitors as it once was but the legacy continues to live on. The store's existence is a promise to keep Urdu alive, no matter how small the reader base. ■

Meditating and spiritual healing

The Brahma Kumaris way



Picture: SUPRIYA SRIVASTAVA

SUPRIYA SRIVASTAVA

Bachelor of Journalism & Mass Communication

We live in a fast-paced society where worry, anxiety, and uncertainty are commonplace. Feeling overburdened, disengaged, and lost are common reactions to the continual pressure to perform, produce, and meet the demands of contemporary life.

Founded in India, in 1937, Brahma Kumaris is one such organisation that has spread to over 110 countries across all continents. As an international NGO committed to helping individuals transform their perspective of the world from material to spiritual, it has had an extensive impact in many sectors.

"We have a meditation hall for common people, saatvik food for participants, a playground, and a Baba Room for Atma Gyaan," BK (Brahma Kumari) Vandana, a volunteer at the Brahma Kumaris

Aashram, stated in an interview with Expressions. She added, "Both married and single women in this organisation must adhere to celibacy to maintain the purity of their souls."

Meditation is not just for the elderly, it's for anyone who seeks calmness and clarity in a chaotic world. "I was about to give up on my life when I saw this video of BK Shivani, on YouTube," shared philosophy student, Aman Mishra. "I've been practising meditation at home ever since, and as a result, my personality has changed and I've become a better person." We've long celebrated 'Vande Mataram', but it's time to turn those words into reality. These women unite to create a better society, making India's truth shine brighter.

BK Suman, a senior practitioner of the Rajyoga Meditation Centre in Jankipuram,

1. Positive stress (eustress) exists:
Not all stress is harmful.

Eustress can motivate you, increase your focus, and help you perform better under pressure.

2. You might fall asleep (and that's okay):
One of the most common "side effects" of meditation is a good nap!

3. Meditation can relieve physical pain: Research has shown that meditation can significantly reduce chronic pain perception.

expressed, "Many relationship problems and male ego issues can be solved if we go beyond roles and identities and recognise each individual as a pure soul, just like ourselves."

These meditation programs, particularly Raj Yoga meditation, have yielded remarkable results, transforming lives across all age groups.

Vineeta Singh, 59, told Expressions, "I was the breadwinner for my kids since I was divorced at a young age. I struggled with a lot of anger and stress, but meditation has changed my life. Now that my children are married, I live contentedly alone and understand my life's purpose."

Such stories of perseverance and change demonstrate that this spiritual practice continues to inspire people of all ages, causing a ripple effect of positivity and self-awareness across society. ■

From ancient rituals
to modern bio hacks

THE FASTING EVOLUTION



MOLLY SINGH

Bachelor of Journalism & Mass Communication

Fasting- a practice as old as time itself, has undergone major shifts. What once was a religious practice is now a modern bio hack or a transformed way of living acknowledged and followed by wellness coaches, fitness enthusiasts, and health-conscious individuals. The methods and procedures might have changed over the years, but the core idea-that it is voluntary abstention from food for some time to attain certain physical, mental, cultural and spiritual benefits- stayed the same.

"Fasting isn't just for religious people anymore. It's for anyone who wants to feel healthier and more in control of their body," says Arun Khatwani, a wellness coach.

In ancient times, it was considered a practice of devotion and a path of spiritual connectivity. In modern times, fasting has evolved into a wellness practice, self-control and discipline, complete with various fitness applications and technological aspects.

"Religious fasting teaches us patience, and modern fasting trains us for self-control. Both have value, and it's great to see how the idea has grown," says Anjali

Religious fasting teaches us patience, and modern fasting trains us for self-control. Both have value, and it's great to see how the idea has grown.



Joshi, a Mindfulness Coach. From Upwas and Ramadan to the 16:8 intermittent cycle, the fasting trend has transformed from spiritual purity to health benefits and metabolic importance. There are various intermittent fasting methods, one of the most popular versions of which is the 16:8 method, where people fast for 16 hours and eat within the 8-hour eating window.

The 21st century marked the change in fasting trends, and the rise of intermittent fasting, a modern take on the

age-old practice. Intermittent fasting is more or less based on personal choices, body types, preferences and health goals, whereas religious fasting is typically guided by spiritual calendars.

People are now fasting to lose weight, better their metabolism, stay fit, enhance lifestyle and increase longevity. "Intermittent fasting fits perfectly into my daily routine. I don't have to wait for special occasions to fast, and it helps me feel more energetic and focused", says Radhika Gupta, a tech entrepreneur.

Through techniques like intermittent fasting, food is consumed during specific hours called the "eating windows". "Intermittent fasting has worked wonders for me. I feel more energetic, and it's easier to maintain than traditional dieting," says Rajesh Patel, a fitness enthusiast. Biohackers and fitness enthusiasts take assistance from a variety of apps and gadgets to track their eating cycle and performance. Fasting has now become a data-driven lifestyle.

The shift from traditional spiritual fasting to intermittent fasting and tracking reflects the evolving trends in the world of fasting'. As our relationship with food continues to change, fasting will always prevail as a tool for transformation, be it spiritual, mental, or physical. ■

World's largest religious gathering

The Maha Kumbh

SANJAY M JOHRI
Professor & Director, Amity School of Communication

The Maha Kumbh Mela 2025 is poised to be one of the most significant and spiritually enriching events of the decade, showcasing the rich heritage of India. Scheduled from 13 January to 26 February 2025 in Prayagraj, Uttar Pradesh, it will be organised at the revered Sangam, the confluence of the Ganges, Yamuna, and the mythical Saraswati rivers.

The Maha Kumbh holds immense importance in Hindu mythology, symbolising faith, spirituality, and self-purification. It is believed that a dip in the sacred rivers during this period absolves sins and leads to salvation.

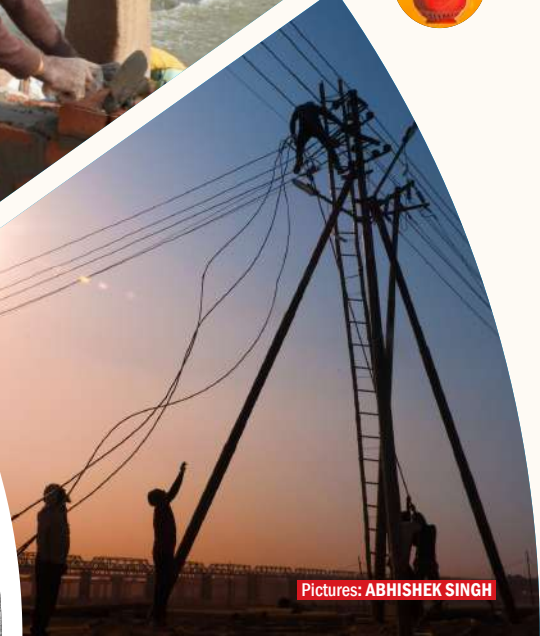
An estimated 43 crore pilgrims are expected to visit Prayagraj. The huge gathering of devotees, saints, and tourists from across the globe will be representative of the event's global and

cultural importance. Twenty high-tech drones will ensure round-the-clock security. The drones will provide comprehensive surveillance, capturing every detail and ensuring the safety of all attendees. As the Maha Kumbh rotates between Prayagraj, Haridwar, Nashik, and Ujjain, it incorporates unique social and cultural activities from each region.

A sprawling tented township is being set up, including cottages, huts, platforms, and civic amenities. This will have extensive arrangements for sanitation, health-

care, and transportation. All critical services will be in place to look after the influx of pilgrims.

Prayagraj, with its historical and spiritual significance, is readying itself to host this colossal event, reaffirming the timeless appeal of the Maha Kumbh Mela which is barely a fortnight away. ■



From joy to nostalgia

The emotional rollercoaster of an Indian bride and her family

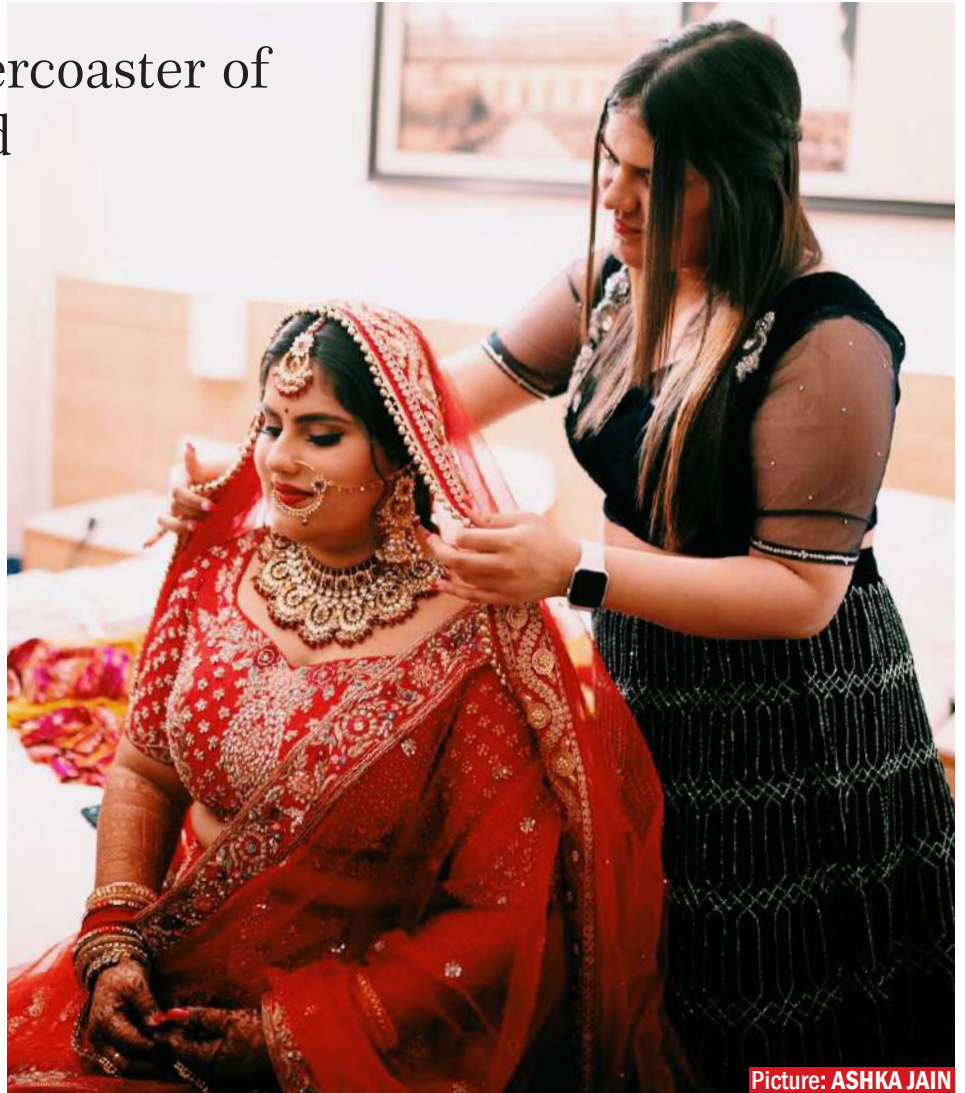
ASHKA JAIN

Bachelor of Journalism & Mass Communication

Indian weddings are known for their grandeur, rich traditions and lively events. However, beneath the bright surface of pomp and show lies an emotional turmoil for the bride and her family. This journey, characterised by joy, nostalgia, excitement and even moments of epic tension, is an essential component of the bridal tapestry. Since the wedding season is here, let's explore the various emotions that define an Indian wedding through the eyes of the bride and her family. The wedding announcement creates a rush of enthusiasm. For the bride, it is the beginning of a new chapter in her life. There's the excitement of finding a partner and planning a future together. The family participates in this joy, relishing the prospect of their girl departing on a life-changing adventure.

The preparation process begins in earnest, with a whirlwind of vendor meetings, planning sessions and shopping excursions. Numerous elements, such as venue selection, guest finalisation, catering arrangements and other complicated ceremonies must be coordinated. This phase often leads to stress and occasional friction.

The wedding planning process turns into a moment for bonding amidst the stress. Sisters, brothers, cousins, relatives and friends attend to help the bride choose her costumes, schedule festivities and practice dance routines for sangeet, on popular beats. However, as the wedding day draws near, anxiety rises. The bride is coming to terms with the fact that she is leaving her childhood home for an unknown destination. It's the bittersweet



Picture: ASHKA JAIN

experience of letting go of her parents. The ceremonies are quite emotional, particularly, the kanyadaan. Bride, in her extravagant clothing, experiences a mixture of anxiety, excitement and delight as she walks down the aisle, and later, around the sacred fire. She feels the spirituality and tradition of elder's blessings, chants and ceremonies. Parents experience both joy and the unavoidable sense of loss as they watch their daughter prepare for a new journey. Perhaps the most heart-breaking part is Vidai, the ritual where the bride says goodbye to her family. Amid sobs and embraces, it serves as a reminder of the connection that endures despite the distance from home.

As soon as the wedding is over, there is an overwhelming feeling for the bride and her family. Despite being emotionally

spent, they experience a profound sense of fulfilment. A celebration of love and togetherness is the result of months of preparations, hard work and emotional investment. For a bride, the initial few days of marriage are a mix of adapting to a new setting and savouring her wedding memories.

An Indian wedding is more than simply a ceremony. It is an emotional journey that changes everything and everyone forever. From unrestrained excitement to melancholy remembrance, the bride and her family go through a range of emotions. Indian weddings are characterised by intense emotions, even if their grandeur frequently takes centre stage. The bride and her family weave a tapestry of memories to always treasure through the tears, laughter, and time spent together. ■

Unrealistic expectations, harsh realities

Indian women in marriage



Picture: DIVYA KOTWANI

DIVYA KOTWANI

Bachelor of Journalism & Mass Communication

Marriage is supposed to be a joyous occasion, filled with love, celebration, and the beginning of a new chapter in life. However, for women, the transition into married life is not as easy or seamless as it may appear. Behind the smiles and festivities lies a much more complex reality. While both men and women face challenges in marriage, it's crucial to acknowledge that, for women, marriage can often be tougher, especially in the initial phase.

Bhavesh Kumar, a businessman from Varanasi, aptly points out, "Marriage is tougher for women than us, obviously the first reason being changing her home, which is not easy at all. Whenever I go on a trip, I can't wait to come back to my home, to be in my comfort zone, but hands off to them for leaving their home behind forever." For a girl, the feeling of 'home' at in-laws may take months or

even years to develop!

The groom's family must take the onus to help her feel at ease in this new environment so that the new address starts to feel like a home, even if it is different from the one she grew up in. While it's true that both men and women have challenges in marriage, there is a fundamental difference in the ways these challenges affect them.

Compared to men, women are forced to take on a new identity in a completely new environment. Jayeeta Purkayastha explains, "In India, girls usually stay with their parents until their marriage, so to leave all that behind and have a renewed sense of identity overnight is a challenging beginning."

Furthermore, women are often held to higher standards in their marriage than men. These expectations can be overwhelming and difficult to meet. Purkayastha continues, "There are some expectations that are tied to a woman's very being. And those expectations can get overwhelming. Another dimension

Women are 1.5 times more likely to report mental health struggles post-marriage than men.

National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH)

43% of women have had to leave or delay career advancement due to marital or family obligations.

McKinsey & Company, Women in the Workplace Report

61% of women report feeling societal pressure to take on more household responsibilities than men.

Pew Research Center

of this challenge is the added pressure women face when balancing their careers and family life. Khushboo Kotwani, currently with BDO in Bengaluru, highlights the difficulties in adjusting to new job responsibilities and living in a new city after marriage. "Girls face the added stress of changing jobs. We make his parents our parents because now we live with them, but they will rarely treat our parents as their own."

The societal expectations that women face post-marriage also create additional stress. Kotwani points out the lifestyle changes often expected of married women: "You should wake up early, make breakfast, and manage the house. These are generally not expectations placed on men."

We must acknowledge the struggle that women face, support them in their journey, and make efforts to balance the expectations placed on both partners. Marriage may be a new chapter in life, but it should not demand an unfair share of sacrifice from one. ■



Changing the changing city: Students for development

MANU YADAV

Master of Advertising & Marketing Management

A group of committed students in the busy metropolis of Lucknow is leading a quiet but effective revolution to address environmental issues. Students for Development (SFD), a student-led organisation, unites young individuals to tackle critical environmental issues such as river pollution, waste management, and insufficient awareness. Their initiatives drive change and motivate the local community to pay attention and engage actively.

The initiative to rejuvenate the Gomti River, an essential resource for the city, has resonated with residents throughout Lucknow. "It is encouraging to witness students engaging in such proactive efforts." We've seen Gomti's state worsen for years, but now there's hope," says Rajesh Singh, a store owner next to the riverbank.

SFD's community connection is what makes them unique. In addressing local challenges such as waste management and raising awareness about water contamination, they actively engage the community, ensuring that individuals

play a crucial role in finding solutions. Sunita Verma, a resident of Gomti Nagar, recounts her experience: "My children returned home after participating in their awareness session and educated us on the importance of waste separation." It is remarkable to observe how these students are not only educating their peers but also actively engaging in meaningful action.

The team is also actively involved in providing students with opportunities to participate in international events such as the Conference of Parties (COP) and the Conference of Youth (COY). "Imagine seeing students from Lucknow representing India on the global stage," says Anwar Hussain, a retired school teacher. "The fact that these young people are working hard to achieve their goals and have big ideas makes us proud."

SFD's work is based on a simple but strong belief: young people can make real changes. These students set a standard for others to follow. "The Gomti internship program, which engages youth in surveying and studying the river, is an excellent initiative to involve the community," states Neha Tripathi, a professor of environmental science.

The journey hasn't been easy. The



Pictures: MANU YADAV

challenge of fostering environmental consciousness among students remains, yet the team continues to push forward with determination. "Their dedication is truly inspiring. If this is what our youth can achieve, the future appears bright," Rajesh remarks, a smile spreading across his face.

SFD's efforts are slowly but surely creating a wave of positivity and action in Lucknow. Their efforts serve as a powerful reminder to the community that meaningful change often can begin on a small scale. Sunita Verma expresses a sense of reassurance regarding the next generation's willingness to take on responsibility. "If they keep going, I know they'll achieve something incredible." ■

Small cameras, huge stories

The world of mobile filmmaking



Pictures: ABHISHEK SINGH & ALISHAH SYEDAIN

“Filmmaking is a story-telling art, and the device you use to tell that story is only a tool; the true magic lies in the vision behind the lens.” – Martin Scorsese.

ALISHAH SYEDAIN

Assistant Professor, Amity School of Communication

From November 18 to December 20, 2024, the BA (J&MC) Semester 1 students at Amity University embarked on an inspiring exploration into mobile filmmaking, creating short fiction films, entirely with their smartphones! The workshop, organised by the Centre for Media Studies and the Amity School of Communication, was led by Prof. Dr. Sanjay Mohan Johri, with Dr. Alisha Syedain and Mr. Shivanshu Pathak playing pivotal roles as resource persons.

Dr. Syedain guided students through the pre-production phase, helping them with script development and directing actors. At the same time, Mr. Pathak mentored the production and post-production phases, ensuring a smooth and immersive learning experience.

Learning the foundations of storytelling

The journey began with an introduction to visual storytelling, where students learned how to generate ideas and craft compelling narratives. Drawing from Syd Field's Foundations of Screenwriting, they explored character develop-

ment and the three-act structure—setup, confrontation, and resolution. This solid foundation emphasised the importance of conflict in storytelling, ensuring every film had a clear beginning, middle, and end.

Exploring themes through stories

Students developed two distinct short film ideas:

1. Maggi and Us – Directed by Vasvi Chaturvedi, this story explores mental health and denial, wrapped in an incomplete love story.
2. Dabbe – Directed by Yuvika Singh, this poignant narrative delves into the struggles of LGBTQIA+ individuals seeking social acceptance from society and parents.

Character and performance development

An acting workshop focused on directing actors helped students embody their characters. They experimented with improvisation and the Navrasa technique, learning to deepen their characters' motivations and emotions.

Understanding visual grammar

Students explored the technical side of filmmaking by learning about camera

shots, angles, and movements. They practiced these techniques using mobile phones and completing exercises like the 5-shot and 7-shot practices. Analysing films helped them better understand shot breakdowns and visual storytelling.

Production process and collaboration

Pre-production included casting, auditions, and role assignments—director, assistant director, cinematographer, scriptwriter, and more. Teams were divided into writing, acting, technical, production, and direction units to foster collaboration. Students also scouted locations and filmed both on and off campus. While they faced challenges such as re-shoots and commitment constraints, their creativity and determination led to the successful completion of the production phase.

Post-production and upcoming screening

The films are now in the editing stage, where students are fine-tuning their narratives and visuals. The final screening, scheduled for January 16, 2025, will celebrate students' hard work and creative journey and the culmination of the mobile filmmaking workshop with certificate distribution to the participants. ■

Desi WINTER ESSENTIALS

A timeless blend of health and warmth

BHAVNA SONI

Bachelor of Journalism & Mass Communication

Winter in India is a season synonymous with age-old traditions and remedies that prioritise health and comfort over luxury. While modern spas may appeal to the senses, they pale in comparison to the nostalgic warmth of a good massage delivered by the experienced, loving hands of our grandmothers. The simplicity of cracking roasted peanuts after dinner or enjoying the sweet crunch of jaggery and peanut chikki during a leisurely winter walk reflect the essence of Indian winters—a celebration of togetherness and timeless culinary treats.

The streets come alive in winter with vendors selling seasonal favourites like roasted peanuts, famously referred to as “poor man’s almonds,” and water chestnuts. This seasonal aquatic fruit, locally known as Singhara, in India, is consumed raw, boiled, or roasted. Encased in a thick green or black shell, it is not only rich in antioxidants, fibre, and essential nutrients like potassium and vitamin B6, but also promotes hydration, aids

Winter dishes to keep you warm this season!

Gajar ka Halwa
Sarson ka Saag
Undhiyu
Sakarkand Rabdi
Nolen gur Sandesh
Gond ka Ladoo
Beetroot Thoran
Lapsi
Til Pitha
Carrot Poriyal
Chikki
Raab

digestion, and boosts overall immunity. These simple pleasures, enjoyed by haves and have-nots alike, symbolise the unifying power of food. Seasonal fruits like guava, best enjoyed under the gentle warmth of the afternoon sun, offer a refreshing reprieve and encourage families to bond over shared moments.

Winter cuisine undergoes a delightful transformation with the arrival of fresh green peas and carrots. Be it Uttar Pradesh’s matar kachori, the flavourful nimona, or a hearty plate of tehri, the inclusion of peas becomes a hallmark of winter dishes, showcasing the culinary ingenuity of Indian households. Whether mentioned or not, fathers and brothers often bring home carrots, subtly hinting at their unspoken craving for Gajar ka Halwa.

Beyond food, traditional remedies like mustard oil stand as a testament to India’s wisdom. Known for its pungent aroma and warming properties, mustard oil is a go-to solution for dry skin, poor circulation, and joint pain. A gentle massage with this natural healing oil not only nourishes the skin but also rejuvenates the body, making it a trusted winter staple.

The enduring appeal of these desi essentials—peanuts, jaggery, chikki, and mustard oil—goes beyond their immediate benefits. They embody India’s rich heritage, reminding us of the importance of simple, natural solutions in maintaining health and happiness. As modern lifestyles evolve, it is crucial to preserve these traditions, ensuring they remain a cherished part of our winter routines. ■



Pictures: BHAVNA SONI