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The work aimed at blending visual storytelling with social awareness

# NO LIGHTS, SOUND, *or* ACTION



*Deepawali for  
the have-nots*

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# DEEPAWALI for the have-nots

**SUPRIYA SRIVASTAVA**

Bachelor of Journalism & Mass Communication

In the bustling city of Lucknow, Deepawali, the festival of lights, brings a unique blend of joy and hardship for many. For Priya, a 12-year-old girl, the festival holds a special place in her heart despite the challenges her family faces. "Even though my father works long hours, we frequently just eat basic meals. My father has been caring for my younger brother and me since my mother passed away when I was five years old. He always brings sweets for us, which makes Deepawali memorable," Priya shared in an interview with Expressions.

Deepawali, known for its lights, candles, and diyas, symbolises joy, serenity, and hope. However, for Priya and thousands like her living in slums, homeless shelters, or on the roadside, the reality is starkly different. Celebrating Deepawali with sweets, diyas, and firecrackers is often a distant dream for those struggling to secure two square meals a day.

Kamla Rani, the wife of a rickshaw puller near the Chowk area, expressed her daily struggles. "We live on the footpath, and finding food is a daily battle. My husband's earnings are hardly sufficient. There is nothing new about Deepawali; people donate more during festivals, but it doesn't make a big difference," she said. With minimal education and skills, pulling rickshaws is one of the few viable options for earning a living.

Vikas Gupta, a house painter and labourer, shared his bittersweet experience of Deepawali. "Every Deepawali, I work here instead of spending time with my family at home in my village. It hurts, but I do it to give them a better life and a few extra comforts. People renovate



Pictures: SUPRIYA SRIVASTAVA

their homes every festive season; around Deepawali, it is the wedding season, too. Therefore, painters are in high demand. It's a good opportunity to earn a little more," he explained. Being away from home during Deepawali evokes a longing for family rituals and the comforting warmth of home.

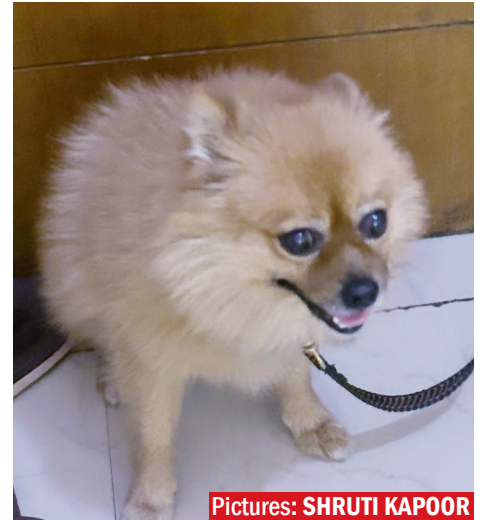
In Hazaratganj, Mohammad Saad, a traditional potter, faces tough competition from factory-made goods. "I pour my soul into my craft, but the lack of buyers leaves me anxious as Deepawali approaches. The demand for our traditional pottery has dwindled," he lamented. Despite the challenges, Saad continues to create beautiful pottery, hoping for better days. Deepawali serves as a gentle

reminder that while wealth can influence everyday experiences, the true essence of the festival lies in our actions towards illuminating the lives of the less fortunate. Sharing joy and happiness with those who have less can make a significant difference.

For Priya, Kamla, Vikas, and Saad, Deepawali is not just about the lights and sweets but about the resilience and hope that the festival brings. It is a time to reflect on the importance of community and the small acts of kindness that can brighten someone's life. As we celebrate Deepawali, let us remember to extend our joy to those who need it the most, making the festival truly meaningful for everyone. ■

## Bursting out loud

# The deafening impact of crackers on stray dogs and pets



Pictures: SHRUTI KAPOOR

### SHRUTI KAPOOR

Bachelor of Journalism & Mass Communication

Every year, Lucknow, like many other cities, looks forward to the kaleidoscope of lights and festivities during Deepawali. However, despite the festive mood, a terrible reality sets in for the city's animals, particularly the domestic pets and street dogs, who end up as the silent victims of the celebrations. The loud noise of firecrackers disturbs them, causing them to become confused, panicked, and even physically unwell. Consequentially, they react with extreme terror, running wildly or hiding in desperation.

Deepawali presents several risks to stray dogs. These animals run away from what they believe to be an impending danger because of the extreme anxiety caused by the piercing sounds of fire-

crackers. They dart onto highways out of instinct, putting them in danger of being struck by vehicles, suffering injuries, and even getting killed. Many of these animals become disoriented due to the frequent explosions and wind up far from their typical locations, where they cannot find food, water, or shelter. Another truth is that dogs run the risk of getting hurt by abandoned firecrackers; many dogs have been burned or maimed after inadvertently coming in touch with partially ignited crackers thrown on the streets.

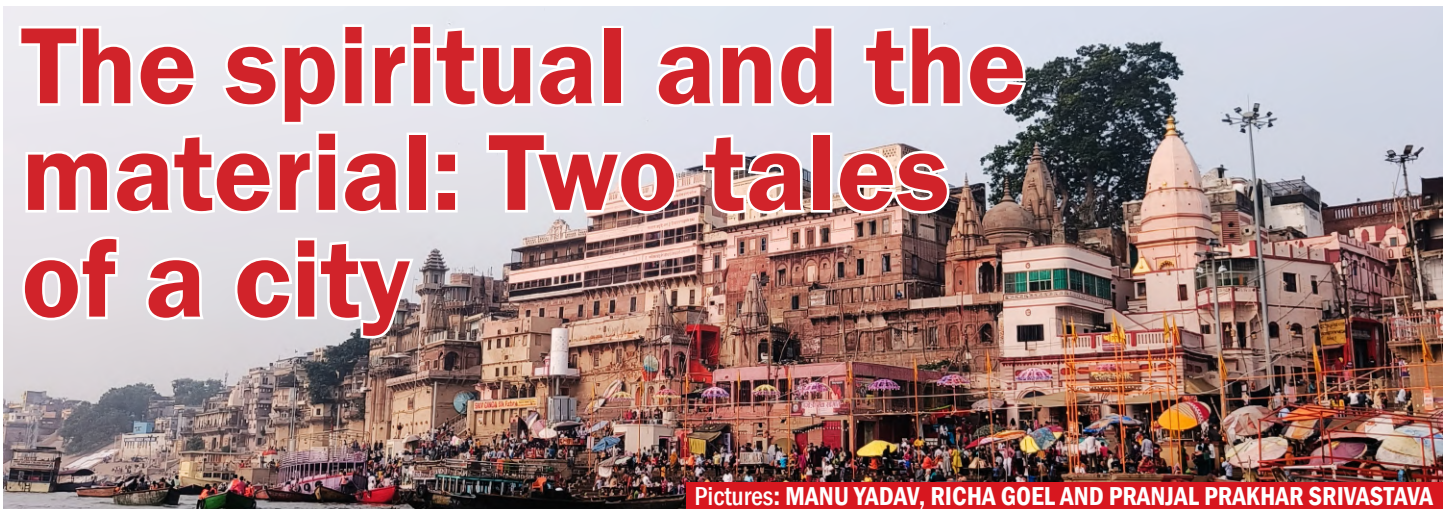
The scenario is similar for pets. In Lucknow, many pet owners talk of the terrifying Deepawali evenings when their dogs and cats crouch in corners and shiver wildly. Due to their highly sensitive hearing, animals—especially dogs—find the sound of a firecracker intolerably loud. When a pet is distressed, it may tremble, bark incessantly, or try to hide

in the smallest spaces in the house. As a result of the stress, they refuse to eat, withdraw and may experience physical symptoms like diarrhoea or vomiting. Because they are more sensitive and reserved, cats may hide for hours or even days after the festivities.

The issues are not limited to loudness. The hazardous mixture of chemicals and particles in firecracker-induced air pollution may harm animals' respiratory systems. To ensure their animals feel safe throughout Deepawali, some pet owners and animal lovers have taken matters into their own hands. Many have resorted to natural solutions like calming sprays and lavender oils to relax their pets. Others establish "safe zones" in their houses, frequently utilising soundproof rooms to block outside sounds.

The urgent problem of Deepawali's effects on animals emphasises the need for celebrations to be more considerate and accountable. Remembering to consider the plight of these defenceless animals when celebrating Deepawali, is crucial. Eliminating loud crackers, raising awareness, and being careful of what we do can make a big difference. If people celebrate with compassion and consideration, it can be a lovely occasion for everyone, including animals. ■

# The spiritual and the material: Two tales of a city



Pictures: MANU YADAV, RICHA GOEL AND PRANJAL PRAKHAR SRIVASTAVA



The spiritual makeup of the city has not prevented it from foraying into the mundane world! It is a curious city of contrasting dualities.



## MANU YADAV

Master of Advertising & Marketing Management

## RICHA GOEL & PRANJAL PRAKHAR SRIVASTAVA

Master of Journalism & Mass Communication

Nestled on the banks of the Ganges, Varanasi, Banaras, or Kashi, whatever name you use, the city is one of the oldest in the world, wrapped in mysticism and spirituality that is not found anywhere else. People around the globe visit Kashi to participate in thousands of years-old rituals, soothe their souls, and have cosmic energy flow through their veins.

However, the spiritual makeup of the city has not prevented it from foraying into the mundane world! It is a curious city of contrasting dualities. While on one side, you have the spiritual mystic Kashi, on the other, you see Varanasi, the usual hubbub of Indian cities, brimming with life, jostling for space, the usual chaos—crowded streets, constant honking of vehicles, and the cheerful atmosphere of marketplaces.

A first-time visitor, Vani, said, "It offers a mystic sense. I could feel the great

peace with a spiritual aura. During Ganga aarti, as you watch the diyas and flames burn continuously, you feel the world around you coming to a standstill."

The Ganga Aarti at *Dasaswamedh Ghat* is one of Varanasi's most mesmerising spectacles. A revered scholar, Acharya Trivedi, explains, "The harmony and coordination of the priests reflect their dedication to keeping this sacred tradition alive." Another visitor to Kashi, Vishwanath Anuj, said, "I visit Banaras at least once a year. Whenever life feels too heavy, I come here. Some might find it noisy, but when such a large crowd chants the name of God, there's a unique peace in it."

Each ghat along the river has its unique significance. *Manikarnika Ghat*, one of the oldest cremation sites, serves as a sacred place where the living witness the reality of life and death. In contrast, *Assi Ghat* symbolises new beginnings, hosting rituals for prosperity and purification. Devotees often take a holy dip here at dawn, cleansing themselves of sins.

While you are getting convinced of the city's mysticism and serenity and that it is God's abode on earth, a visit to the

central town beyond the ghats has you thinking otherwise.

Anamika, a resident, summarises the duality as follows: "There is more chaos here now than some thirty years ago. The city is full of people; vehicles are everywhere, and traffic is maddening. However, despite all the chaos, Kashi is still my favourite place to visit as the experience is unearthly. The peace I find while sitting by the ghats and watching the Ganga Aarti is unparalleled."

Jam-packed traffic, crowded markets with the usual din, and the everyday chores of a big city all bear witness to the commercial face of this holy city.

The Ganga aarti, the ghats, the priests, and the rituals all fill you with a sense of spirituality. For once, you feel disconnected from worldly affairs, a sense of unearthly calm prevailing. Just a kilometer or two beyond, you are not far from the maddening crowd. The same city now reminds you of the constant struggles of the physical life. Strange, at times eerie, to think that the escapade is so short-lived! Indeed, two cities flourish here. One was created by man, the other preserved by God. ■

# The old art of saying no



## Our boundaries, our new self-care

Pictures: DIVYA KOTWANI

**DIVYA KOTWANI**

Bachelor of Journalism & Mass Communication

“I believe setting boundaries is essential. Saying ‘no’ helps me manage my time and energy better. It helps me avoid overload at work and keeps my personal life balanced. Boundaries are a simple way to protect my mental health. They allow me to focus on what matters in my life and work,” quotes Molly Singh of BJMC-5. In a world that constantly demands more from us—more time, energy, and productivity—the simple act of saying ‘no’ has become a radical form of self-care.

Whether in personal relationships, work, or everyday life, setting boundaries is no longer just about self-preservation; it’s about thriving in a society that often equates busyness with worth. The rising trend of setting boundaries has transformed how we approach our well-be-

ing, particularly our mental health, and it has never been more necessary. Without boundaries, we risk feeling overwhelmed, anxious, or resentful towards the people and activities we initially said ‘yes’ to. Saying ‘no’ is a way of reclaiming space in your life for peace and mental well-being. It helps you prioritise what truly matters and creates an environment where you can thrive. In a world that glorifies hustle culture and overworking, boundaries are essential for maintaining emotional stability and fostering a healthy relationship with yourself.

One of the most potent aspects of saying ‘no’ is the opportunity it creates for self-care and personal development. By setting clear boundaries, you give yourself the gift of time to focus on your goals, recharge your energy, and work on becoming the best version of yourself. When you carve out time for yourself, you make room for reflection, self-improvement, and creative pursuits. Wheth-

er you dedicate time to a hobby, learn a new skill, or simply rest, saying ‘no’ is an act of self-love. It reminds you that you deserve moments of solitude and that your well-being should be prioritised.

“I used to be the biggest people pleaser growing up, and it took me quite a few years to finally realise that this habit wouldn’t get me anywhere. So, while I still try to work hard to be validated for my efforts, I have stopped saying yes to everything, whether it’s work, plans that I am not really interested in, or people I don’t want to be around. And it has been so therapeutic! I still have my days where I struggle with saying no and not feeling guilty about it. However, in the long run, the art of saying no is the biggest favour I can do myself and my mental health”, says Gireesh Upadhyay, pursuing a Bachelor’s in Computer Application from Banaras Hindu University.

Nowhere is the need for boundaries more apparent than in the corporate world. Modern work culture often pressures individuals to say ‘yes’ to extra tasks and longer hours—all for career advancement or job security. This leads to exhaustion, decreased productivity, and a poor work-life balance. By setting clear limits on your availability, whether logging off at a set time each day or declining to take on more projects than you can handle, you signal that your personal time is just as valuable as your work time. Such balance leads to long-term success and happiness.

Saying ‘no’ is an art, and everyone must learn it. It can feel uncomfortable at first, especially if you are used to people-pleasing or avoiding conflict. However, setting boundaries is not selfish or unkind; it is about protecting your energy and prioritising your well-being. Ultimately, learning to say ‘no’ is an act of self-respect that honours your time, energy, and emotional well-being. So, the next time you face a request that feels overwhelming or unnecessary, remember that it’s okay to say ‘no’. Your mental health, happiness, and personal growth depend on it. ■

# Five days, five stories, one bright festival

ASHKA JAIN

Bachelor of Journalism & Mass Communication

Deepawali, or the Festival of Lights, is among India's most popular celebrations. It symbolises

the triumph of light over darkness, good over evil, and knowledge over ignorance.

While many consider Deepawali a single event, it actually lasts five days, each with a unique meaning, purpose, legends, and traditions.

Each day of Deepawali is a glimpse of distinct customs and provides a shared sense of community and regeneration, from worshipping the Goddess of riches to celebrating siblings. Here's a detailed look at this five-day grand celebration.

*Let there be*  
**LIGHT!**



Pictures: ASHKA JAIN



Day: 1



Day: 2

Dhanteras, also known as Dhantrayodashi, is the first day of Deepawali and is dedicated to wealth and prosperity. The term "Dhan" means "wealth," while "Teras" alludes to the thirteenth day of the lunar calendar. People celebrate this auspicious day by worshipping Lord Dhanvantari, the God of health and medicine, and Goddess Lakshmi, the deity of wealth. As part of the festivities, people purchase new items, of value or use, such as gold, silver, or culinary utensils.

Naraka Chaturdashi, popularly known as Chhoti Deepawali, is the second day of the celebrations. It signifies the triumph of good over evil. It celebrates Lord Krishna's victory over the demon Naraka-sura. It is a day to contemplate inner strength and a suggestion to defeat personal demons. It is celebrated by waking up early, applying aromatic oils, and bathing to cleanse the body and thoughts. This ceremony, known as 'abhyanga snana,' is believed to purify the soul.



Day: 3

The Lakshmi Pujan, popularly known as Deepawali, this day is dedicated to Goddess Lakshmi, the deity of wealth, prosperity, and good fortune. It is believed that on this night, Lakshmi travels the Earth, blessing clean, well-lit, and pleasant dwellings. Families prepare for Lakshmi Puja by tidying their homes, decorating with rangoli (intricate designs composed of colourful powders or flowers), and installing diyas to welcome the Goddess into their area. Around the entrance, people also create little footprints with rice flour and vermilion to represent Lakshmi entering their homes.



Day: 4

The next day after Deepawali is celebrated as Govardhan Puja. This day honours the tradition

of Lord Krishna lifting Mount Govardhan to save the residents of Vrindavan from the wrath of Lord Indra, the God of rain. Many families in North India celebrate Govardhan Puja by making a model of Mount Govardhan out of cow dung and decorating it with flowers. Devotees also spread food, known as Annakut (mountain of food), to present to Lord Krishna. After that, the food is distributed to friends and family as a prasad (holy offering).

Bhai Dooj is a celebration of brotherhood and sisterhood. According to legend, Yama, the God of death, paid Yamuna a visit on this day, and she greeted him kindly, prepared a lavish dinner, and prayed for his health. Moved by her affection, he proclaimed that any brother who receives a tilak from his sister on this day will be blessed with long lives. Sisters organise a minor ceremony for the brothers, putting tilak to their foreheads, performing aarti, and praying for their success and safety. In exchange, brothers give presents and vow to defend their sisters. ■



Day: 5

# Cosmetic bodies, Shattered souls

The dark world of beauty (non) standards



Illustration: ABHISHEK SINGH

**MARIA SIDDIQUI**

Bachelor of Journalism & Mass Communication

A careless comment about someone's appearance can become the seed of a lifelong struggle with self-worth. In today's fast-paced world, social media platforms, movies, and advertisements constantly push beauty standards far from reality. This unrealistic portrayal has given rise to body shaming, a silent yet deafening epidemic that affects people of all ages, especially

the youth. In the age of Instagram and Facebook, where photos and videos are edited to show people in their best light, even a short casual social media comment can become a significant source of distress.

The digital age allows anyone to voice opinions anonymously, and this often leads to careless, cruel remarks that leave lasting psychological scars. Juhi Singh, a second-year B.Tech. student, told Expressions, "Society expects everyone to look a certain way or dress a certain type, and failing to meet these standards often

leads to negative comments. You can't look overweight and must conform to a particular image to be accepted!"

Body shaming can start at a young age, and often, it is in schools and colleges where young people face the harshest scrutiny. Friends and peers may think they are joking or "motivating" someone to lose weight, but such comments can deeply scar the person. Riddhi Vashishth, a teacher at a local playhouse, shared her personal experience. "I used to be healthy during my school days, and I got to hear words like 'fat,' 'ugly,' and some other derogatory terms, which I can't even speak!" She added, "Even my parents pressurised me to lose weight, which made me feel even worse about myself."

Indian cinema and media also contribute significantly to body image issues by portraying unrealistic beauty standards. Movies depict the 'ideal' woman as slim and fair, while male characters are muscular and fit. Such stereotypes tell young audiences they must appear a certain way to succeed. According to Zareen Asif, a psychologist, "Body shaming attacks a person's core identity and can lead to chronic low self-esteem, depression, and even suicidal ideation in severe cases. Young adults are particularly vulnerable because they are still developing their sense of self, and body shaming can have a lifelong impact on their mental health." She added that we must teach children that a person's weight, height, or skin tone does not necessarily define beauty, but their character and personality do.

The good news is a growing movement towards body positivity in India. Influencers, mental health advocates, and even some celebrities are beginning to speak out against body shaming and are embracing diverse body types. Yet, the fight against body shaming is far from over. It requires consistent efforts to dismantle society's deep-rooted biases. By fostering empathy, advocating for body positivity, and implementing supportive policies in schools and workplaces, we can create a society where young people feel secure in their skin. Together, we can make a difference by choosing kindness, celebrating diversity, and building a community that values each individual for who they are rather than how they look. ■



Pictures: BHAVNA SONI

## From hands to heart Preserving the art of clay pottery

**BHAVNA SONI**

Bachelor of Journalism & Mass Communication

Indians have always strongly connected to their motherland, profoundly valuing the three critical elements of nature: earth, air, and water. This reverence is especially evident during festivals such as Holi, Deepawali, Karva Chauth, Chhath Pooja, and Bhai Dooj, each possessing a significant connection with at least one of the three elements. India cannot imagine a Deepawali without the traditional clay diyas. Clay pottery is one of the oldest crafts in the world, embodying a rich heritage that dates back thousands of years. In India, potters, known as kumhars, have played a significant role in society, shaping not only clay into beautiful forms but also contributing to the cultural and social fabric of the communities they serve.

Traditionally, potters were esteemed artisans whose craft was deeply interwoven with people's daily lives. Vijay Sharma, a resident of Bijnor, nostalgically recalls the days when homes were designed with unique spaces for diyas and lanterns, illuminating households during festivals. He also stressed how inter-community bonds were strong between clay potters, mainly Muslims, and Hindu com-

**“The therapeutic yet backbreaking art of pottery, which gives us clay pots and diyas, has been the ultimate symbol of auspiciousness in every festival.”**

munities whose festivals were incomplete without supplies of clay-made items like matki, diya, khilone, and grihasti.

Jamil, a 56-year-old clay potter from Bijnor, shares insights into the significance of their craft before the birth of electric and artificial lighting setups. He observes a noticeable decline in the demand for clay items since the influx of cheaper, mass-produced alternatives, particularly from China. This shift in consumer preferences has forced many clay potters to seek alternative means of livelihood, as their traditional craft can no longer fully sustain their families. Jamil's children, Faisal and Sahina, who assist their father, express the emotional toll of witnessing their family's struggles. Despite their hard work, customers increasingly overlook these handmade creations in favour of electric lights and other dec-

orative items. “This sight demotivates me every time and forces me on the verge of quitting this artwork, but then I remember how dedicatedly my father and grandfather have carried forward this profession,” Faizal shared.

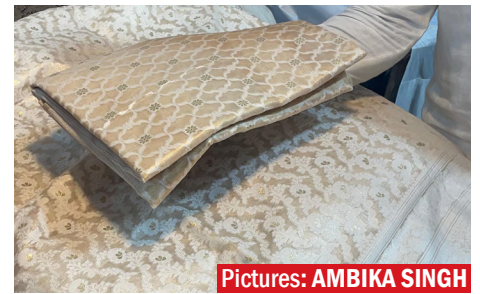
Reflecting on the changing landscape of childhood, Jamil regrets that children today no longer play with clay toys like cars, houses, and animals. Due to hygiene concerns, parents hesitate to let their kids interact with such toys. Nevertheless, Jamil is determined to pass on the artistry and skills of pottery to his sons, encouraging them to preserve this traditional craft—kalakari. This is increasingly recognised in modern settings, as some cafés in Lucknow and Delhi have begun incorporating pottery activities as relaxation exercises for visitors, highlighting the therapeutic aspects of this ancient craft.

As we delve into the importance of clay pottery, it becomes clear that this intricate craftsmanship has served society for generations and continues to do so. The rich tradition of clay potters is at stake, and it is crucial to recognise and support these artisans. By appreciating and supporting these artisans, we can ensure that this beautiful and essential aspect of Indian heritage continues to thrive for generations to come. ■



# SILK SPLENDOUR UNVEILED

Lucknow expo weaves modernity, tradition in a luxurious showcase



Pictures: AMBIKA SINGH

## AMBIKA SINGH

Master of Advertising & Marketing Management

Silk, a fabric renowned for its elegance, is steeped in legend. It is said that Empress Leizu of ancient China stumbled upon its secret by chance when a silkworm's cocoon fell into her tea. This discovery led her to master sericulture, the art of raising silkworms. By the second century BC, the Han dynasty expanded this treasure's reach by opening trade routes that connected distant lands.

Thus, the famed Silk Road was born—a path that wove cultures and commerce together, with silk at its heart, becoming an enduring symbol of luxury and cross-cultural exchange.

From October 22 to 28, 2024, an expo, a true celebration of silk's splendour, unfolded at Indira Gandhi Pratishthan in Lucknow's Gomti Nagar. This showcase brought together the finest silks from across India: the regal Banarasi of Uttar Pradesh, Tamil Nadu's opulent

Kanjeevaram, Andhra Pradesh's elegant Dharmavaram, the timeless Mysore silk of Karnataka, Maharashtra's resplendent Paithani, Mooga and Katan silk from Assam and Bangalore, and the delicate Chanderi of Madhya Pradesh. The expo highlighted sustainable options like Ahimsa silk, also known as peace silk, which is created without harming the silkworms. Each fabric told its own tale, weaving the rich heritage of regions into a vivid tapestry of luxury, embodying the essence of tradition and artistry.

Beyond the fabric sales, the Silk Expo had stalls set up by government bodies engaged in sourcing and producing silk. The Indian Ministry of Textile and Resham Nideshalaya presented and educated people about the process and significance of silk and its fabrics by bringing sericulture to life, showing step-by-step how silk is created from silkworms. Visitors saw various types and sizes of cocoons and watched as silkworms fed on mulberry leaves. The process unfolded as the worms spun their delicate cocoons

and eventually transformed into moths. It was a fascinating glimpse into the natural artistry of creating this luxurious fabric.

The exhibition explicitly aimed to promote a new benchmark for silk purity standards. As the BIS Hallmark is used in gold, pure verified silk fabric will now be sold with a 'Silk Mark', controlled by Government entities. The exhibition had sellers and manufacturers who had received this 'Silk Mark' and were, therefore, allowed to display their offerings. Talking to Expressions, the manufacturers showcased a range of silk products, with prices starting from ₹3,000 and going up to ₹30,000.

The collection included fabrics in different colours and woven and unwoven suits and sarees, giving visitors plenty of beautiful options to explore. To conclude, the Silk Expo in Lucknow highlighted silk's rich heritage and production practices. Attendees learned about the silk-making process and the importance of the 'Silk Mark' for purity. The event seamlessly connected tradition with modernity, inviting all to explore the silky world. ■

## Lights, camera, action

# ASCO students mov(i)e towards excellence!

## Script to screen: Amity students make powerful films on women's pressing issues

**DR. ALISHAH SYEDAIN**

Assistant Professor

At ASCO, life is far beyond classroom lectures. It is more about creativity, doing things, experimenting, and learning. Every year, we have a bunch of budding artists come to ASCO, dreams soaring high, aiming for the moon. We make sure that dreams see the light of day. ASCO gives wings to students so that they can reach unfathomable heights.

This semester, undergraduate semester 3 students at Amity University took on one of society's most pressing issues—women's safety. Through their Production Studio course, they created two impactful fiction films based on the horrific 2024 Kolkata rape case, aiming to raise their voices against such crimes—the work aimed at blending visual storytelling with social awareness.

### Stories of strength

The workshop began in July 2024 and saw students engage in brainstorming, character development, and improvisation. Two powerful narratives emerged. Directed by Vartiki Singh, *Ikhtilaf* follows Tarini Malik, a woman confronting past trauma while rebuilding her life. Kashish Khan directed *Raksha* is a supernatural tale about Suhasini, a young intern protected by a mystical force.

Kashish Khan emphasised the importance of preparation and adaptability. "Writing is all about rewriting," she said. Ahana Kulsheshta, writer of *Ikhtilaf*, reflected on the depth of storytelling: "This semester taught me that writing is about creating stories that resonate, not just putting words on paper." Shruti Kapoor, writer and actor in *Raksha*, discussed the synergy between storytelling



and shooting timelines, stressing filmmaking's "show, don't tell" principle.

### Lights, camera, action!

Filming began in September at various locations, from the Amity University campus to Anandi Magic World, Lucknow. Students gained hands-on experience with technical aspects such as camera angles, lighting, and audio recording while managing time and data efficiently. Despite the challenges, they took full responsibility for rehearsals, costumes, and acting.

Shiraz Asim, Assistant Director of *Raksha*, found the experience both challenging and rewarding. "I learned to juggle multiple tasks and coordinate with the crew to realise the director's vision," he said. Aishwarya Agrawal, who worked as both the lead actress and production manager for *Raksha*, shared, "The experience pushed me to embrace imperfections, collaborate effectively, and gain confidence." Vinamra Gupta, Director of Photography for *Ikhtilaf*, emphasised the importance of persistence in capturing the perfect shot. At the same time, the cinematographer of *Ikhtilaf*, Shubh Abrol, highlighted the relevance of finishing the shoot on time and learning from the experience of on-location shooting.

### Shaping stories in post-production

October was dedicated to post-pro-

duction, where students fine-tuned their films through editing, sound design, and trailer creation. They also captured professional-quality posters to enhance their projects. Yuvika Bagree, editor for *Raksha*, noted, "Editing taught me to shape a narrative while balancing creativity with technicality, staying true to the director's vision." Smriti Singh, editor for *Ikhtilaf*, reflected on the importance of transitions and timing in elevating emotional tones.

### The grand finale - screening

On November 7, 2024, students showcased their hard work at a final screening, receiving feedback from internal and external examiners. Their films are now set for broader screenings, accompanied by guest lectures on women's issues.

Khushi Gulati, Assistant Director of *Ikhtilaf*, summarised the experience: "The workshop was transformative. It was more than filmmaking; it was about collaboration and growth as storytellers."

### Stories that resonate with change

These films go beyond academic exercises. They address sensitive topics like rape and trauma, highlighting cinema's power to spark social change. As these films aim to reach wider audiences, they will continue to inspire discussions on resilience and the impact of storytelling in shaping society. ■

# DIGITAL DETOX

## The push for analogue living

### What is digital detox?

Digital detox or digital pause is an intentional break people take to reset and disconnect from the online world to understand the offline sphere better. It is practised to reduce dependency on gadgets and improve mental and physical health. “Social media can be an unconscious source of anxiety and stress.

The expectation to appear a certain way and the fear of missing out can all contribute to an unhealthy relationship with your phone. These social media platforms are designed to keep you coming back, so time away is a good way to evaluate and reset your relationship with them”.

(source- [www.nuffieldhalth.com](http://www.nuffieldhalth.com))



### MOLLY SINGH

Bachelor of Journalism & Mass Communication

“The more hooked I am to the digital platforms or my mobile phone, the less I feel connected to my surroundings and the real world, which is just sad, but this has become a habit I’m trying to overcome,” says Anupama Ghosh, a 28-year-old marketing professional. With the advancing digitalisation, mobile phones and digital platforms have become omnipresent.

It is almost impossible to spend a day or two without checking up on emails or social media updates. Our mobile phones are constantly buzzing with notifications, emails, reminders, and endless other feeds. In recent years, the need for

digital detoxification of our lives and taking a day off from these ‘tech toys’ is being increasingly felt. This is because of burnout and other severe problems people face. The constant urge to stay updated and be online 24/7 often causes mental health-related issues like stress, restlessness, severe anxiety, and panic attacks. Studies show that a short, rejuvenating break from social media can help you focus better and reduce stress.

“In the initial days when I decided to take a day off every week from social media, my hands used to tremble, and I just wanted to switch on my mobile phone and scroll through Instagram,” says Anay Singh, a graphic designer, “but as time passed I realised it was a much-needed break that I needed from the virtual world and it helped me reflect better.” A break from the ‘polished’

social media life might help focus on real-world relationships, giving a sense of mental clarity.

Digital detox can also enhance creativity by clearing unnecessary clutter of thoughts and rediscovering simple joys of life. For many of us, completely disconnecting from the digital world is not an option because of our jobs or work-related issues, but we can take a step towards balancing; we must start setting boundaries so that we are using technology and not the other way round.

As we navigate an accelerating digital world, finding balance and reconnecting with the natural world is crucial and the need of the hour. Digital detox is not about avoiding or abandoning technology but finding a balance and connecting to ourselves and our immediate surroundings. ■