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It showcases a unique collection of robotic
dinosaurs and other extinct ice age creatures



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VENDORS' AGONY

FLOWER SELLERS DIVIDED

Flower sellers divided over relocation



Pictures: SUPRIYA SRIVASTAVA

Marigold is the unofficial national flower of India due to its wide spread use in festivals or celebrations and Bengaluru is known as India's "Rose Hub" accounting for over 50% of India's Rose production.



SUPRIYA SRIVASTAVA

Bachelor of Journalism & Mass Communication

The festive season has already commenced bringing the thrill of festivals, traditions, and pleasant gatherings. In Lucknow, it is characterized by colors and aromas of marigolds, roses, and jasmines, all of which play an important role in the city's cultural and religious celebrations.

Phool Mandi, also known as Phoolon Wali Gali in Chowk, was established in 1775 for the flower trade by Nawab Asif-ud-Daula.

Shopkeepers were allocated land in Gomtinagar Kisan bazaar in 2019, but as most refused to relocate, the district administration terminated their lease. It served notice to them to relocate and the demolition drive began shortly afterwards. Ali Akhtar, a flower vendor with over 25 years of experience, told Ex-

pressions, "Phool Mandi was our home. Over 120 flower merchants have relocated but for me it is not feasible. I have my house here in Chowk and farmers who come from Malihabad, Etaunja and Barabanki say how costly and timetaking it would get for them if we were shifted to Gomtinagar's Kisan Bazaar."

Daily customers who relied on the market for religious rituals now face additional logistical challenges. Kavita Bhatia, a regular visitor at Kisan Bazaar, told Expressions, "The prices in mandis are lower than in shops, and they also change according to the seasons.

The flowers smell great, and I use them to decorate my home and restaurant." Temple festivals like Diwali, Navratri, and Janmashtami draw a large number of devotees who expect elaborate floral decorations and purchase in bulk for such occasions.

Speaking to Expressions, Harish Dubey, a priest from the Hanuman Setu

Temple, stated, "Since all of Lucknow's religious buildings, including mosques, are situated in Old Lucknow, there is a greater need here. The rich merchants and the impoverished would be at odds if the mandi were moved to a posh area like Gomtinagar."

Although, the new location offers a chance for digital innovation and branding. Vivek Sharma, a young entrepreneur said, "Moving to Gomti Nagar is a wonderful opportunity for my firm. We are noticing an increase in demand for unique flower arrangements for occasions. It's an opportunity to innovate, even if it differs from the conventional layout near Nimbu Park."

Despite the struggles, there are several positive aspects, including new business opportunities to innovate, a broader customer demographic in Gomti Nagar, and the potential to modernize traditional floral offerings while preserving cultural heritage. ■

Asian flavors: Setting appetites on fire

RICHA GOEL

Master of Journalism and Mass Communication

“After a long, tiring week, a platter of fresh salmon sushi or enoki mushroom uramaki is all you need. It’s a perfect healthy treat with subtle and balanced flavors that can refresh your senses,” said a customer at Mamagoto.

Though Indian flavors rule the world, many from the country have developed an appetite for certain Asian cuisines like from Japan, Korea, Thailand, Vietnam, and Tibet. Even Lucknow, best known for its kebabs and Mughlai dishes, has seen a surge in food enthusiasts, specifically Millennials and Gen-Zs, going gaga over authentic Asian delicacies. While Indo-Chinese or desi Chinese has long been in demand—with iconic restaurants like Chung Fa, Moti Mahal, Aryans, or Noodle Station, remaining popular today—Lucknow has joined the trend of serving authentic Asian cuisine as well.

Anjali Tiwari, founder of La Chakhna told Expressions, “I wanted to introduce something entirely different in the food landscape of Lucknow. The rising Hallyu wave was already making people eager to try something new and I just seized the opportunity to be the first Korean restaurant, serving authentic K-dishes in Lucknow.”

The Hallyu wave, which is the Korean wave has certainly taken the world by storm. Spreading like wildfire, especially during the COVID-19 lockdown, the popularity of K-pop groups like BTS and the charm of K-dramas has attracted viewers from all over the world to their culture. This trend did not stop with the rise of K-culture, it also extended to the world of anime from Japan. While anime has always had a presence in India, the OTT platforms made these shows more accessible than ever.

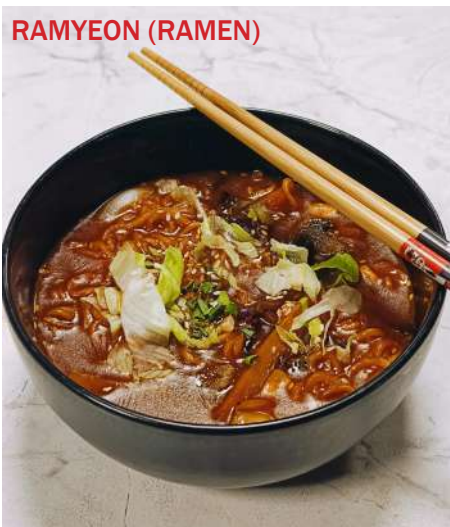
“Honestly, the graphics are so stunning that whenever I saw food in anime, it felt like I was admiring a work of art. That always sparked my curiosity to try Asian dishes, especially a warm bowl of

For me, it was Instagram that fueled a growing appetite for Asian cuisine. After a point, my feed started to fill with dishes from all over Asia. Not only it was aesthetically very pleasing to watch but were very simple to prepare, with an even amount of ingredients.

Moudipa

Ramen.” Said Swarnali, while Moudipa added a point further, saying “For me, it was Instagram that fueled a growing appetite for Asian cuisine. After a point, my feed started to fill with dishes from all over Asia. Not only it was aesthetically very pleasing to watch but were very simple to prepare, with an even amount of ingredients. Rice paper rolls and Dan Dan Noodles are now my go-to-snack.”

It is safe to say that social media has played a crucial role in creating a community that is eager to explore flavors and dishes that complement the lively entertainment they enjoy. In response to this rising popularity, restaurant owners like Zao, Fo’sho, Chango’s, and many others in Lucknow are actively investing in curating their menus to meet the growing demand for exciting and authentic Asian flavors. ■



Pictures: RICHA GOEL

DELIGHT STORES

A legacy well earned

MARIA SIDDIQUI

Bachelor of Journalism & Mass Communication

In the heart of Lucknow's bustling Hazratganj, nestled in the prominent Halwasiya Market, lies Delight Stores, a family-run business with a history stretching back more than half a century. Founded by three brothers - Jairam Das Jethwani, Parasram Das Jethwani, and Ishwar Das Jethwani, the outlet started around Indian Independence.

The story of Delight Stores starts with a small shop. Initially, the Jethwani brothers sold a variety of goods like toffees, biscuits and broomsticks among other products. Back in the mid - 20th century, these products were everyday essentials, yet the shop's true value came from personal relations it built with its customers.

"My father opened this shop, and from the very beginning, he taught us the importance of running a business with integrity and hard work," recalls Tirath Jethwani, one of the current owners, alongside his brother Kishore Jethwani.

"We started small, but over the years, we learned everything from our father, and today the store stands as a symbol of our family's dedication," he

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added. The shop gradually expanded its inventory and ventured into selling cosmetics, hosiery and household essentials. Their decision to diversify into these products proved to be a turning point.

"Our shop has a name, and it's known for its reputation," the brothers comment.

While the Delight Stores has seen its fair share of ups and downs, the Jethwani family's unity has been a constant. Though one brother eventually left to start a new shop named as New Delight Stores, the bond between the siblings

remains strong. This sense of family extends to their employees as well. Nupur Dikshit, one of the store's saleswomen, has been working at Delight since the early 2000s. "The Jethwani family treats everyone with respect, and it's been a pleasure to be part of this journey," Nupur says.

Even activities like construction of the Lucknow Metro or COVID-19 did not deter the brothers from doing active business.

The rise of online shopping has significantly impacted customer behavior, with many preferring the convenience of purchasing from platforms like Amazon and Blinkit.

Jethwani acknowledges the challenges this shifts presents. "I don't understand these online shops—how can they give so many discounts when we could never afford to give such discounts?" he wonders. "Now, even for daily grocery shopping, people use these apps. So why would they take the time to visit physical stores like ours?"

Although as the next generation of the Jethwanis plans to branch out and the previous generation does not see much hope for the store's survival, Delight Stores continues to run like business as usual. ■



Picture: MARIA SIDDIQUI

Not all galore for daily wagers



Pictures: AMBIKA SINGH



AMBIKA SINGH

Master of Arts in Advertising and Marketing Managemnt

It's a ground reality that one sees daily but keeps mum. As Indian economy buoys towards the \$5 trillion mark, it is worth wondering is the daily wager on the streets benefiting from this largesse?

Rajkumar Yadav's eyes speak more than words. They reveal a life of silent toil as he stands in the unforgiving sun from morning to evening, his innocent face shadowed by the weight of bricks on his head, as he mixes cement to build homes for others.

Yadav tells Expressions he began working alongside his father at 15. Now 29, with a housewife for a partner and two daughters to care for, he is the sole provider for his family. Every day, he pours his strength into his labor, yet he can only afford to send one of his daughters to school. Living in Lucknow, he earns just ₹400 on a good day, sometimes going days without work. When asked if he can manage his family's expenses on such meager earnings, his eyes fill with tears. He admits that it's often a struggle specially as cost of basic necessities and medical care continues to rise. Yadav's contractor reveals that laborers like him

gather at Bazaar Ada, Chinnat, waiting to pick up some work. He admitted that they often choose laborers who will accept the lowest pay, knowing they have little choice but to take whatever they can get.

Mohit Yadav and Mahesh Prashad make the daily journey from Barabanki to Lucknow on bicycles, arriving to work from 9 am to 5 pm. Their wages are tied to the eight hours of labor they tirelessly put in. Mohit, 23, is unmarried and illiterate. He works to support his widowed mother after losing his father at a young age, a loss that plunged their family into hardship and forced him into construction work. Mahesh, 48, has spent 20 years in the same trade. Living in a joint family with a son and daughter, he has always dreamed of sending his children to college, but lack of money and resources keeps that dream out of reach. His wife and daughter work as housemaids for families in Barabanki, doing whatever they can to make ends meet.

The world is full of people like them, striving every day just to make a living, to keep their families fed and sheltered. They carry dreams and ambitions in their hearts, but many go unfulfilled, buried beneath the weight of survival. ■



DHOBI GHAT

Survivors of Time

by Abhishek Singh and
Prof (Dr) Sanjay M Johri

The shallow carving on stones kept near the banks of Gomti between Naya Pakka Pul and Old Pakka Pul tells the story of hard work and dedication of washermen. In this era of machines, technology and AI, it's only the hard work of these watermen that has kept the old tradition and Dhobi Ghat alive in Lucknow.

The pattern of ropes crossed bamboo poles and bright high contrast shining color of clothes changes the barren and empty place into a beautiful landscape. Clock tower behind the Naya Pakka Pul and dome and tower towards Imambada, opposite the river Gomati compliments to make it distinct from other Dhobi Ghat.

At this ghat, the work of washing clothes starts every morning at four o'clock with many people doing the work of washing clothes for generations. Rishi Kannaujia, who works as a clothes washer, does not even remember exactly when he started this work.

Busy with washing the white chicken kurta, Rishi says, "Our children start working in water when they are 12-15 years old. It hurts but it has become a habit, life has

become like this for us. Washermen reach ghat by in the wee hours and stand in the water washing clothes throughout the day. "We face a lot of difficulty during rains and the extreme heat conditions. Winters are worst when we have to stand in ice-like water", says Rishi.

From a distance you may find work easy 'but it is not so at all. We bring cloth from the market and separate each colour of cloth, then apply masala in it and then after washing it thoroughly, spread it on ropes to dry'.

But the work does not end here, after drying the clothes, they go home and iron these.

Dhobi Ghat is a traditional place where washing and drying of clothes is done. It is usually an open space where the dhobi, who is engaged in the profession of washing clothes, uses large washing tubs and an open area for drying.

Here the clothes are washed by hand and spread in the sun for freshness. Dhobi Ghat is particularly prevalent in South Asia, especially India and each city has its uniqueness becoming a symbol of community effort and hard work.

"No child in our society wants to do this work but this is the livelihood of at least 50,000," another washerman Ram Raj said. ■



Pictures: ABHISHEK SINGH

THE PODCAST PARADOX

Many shows, little impact

SHRUTI KAPOOR

Bachelor of Journalism & Mass Communication

Of late, podcasts have seen a meteoric growth. More and more creators are stepping into this field to carve a niche for themselves.

Yet, as their number rises, their impact on viewership is declining. What was once hailed as revolution in storytelling, education, and entertainment is currently facing challenges. These obstacles can be oversaturation and fragmented audiences coupled with a rapidly changing digital landscape.

A survey conducted through Google forms reveals this trend and more.

But the silver lining to this dark cloud is that niche podcasts continue to proliferate. After all, the more niche, the more targeted, the more specialized, the better—the conversation will be. But because of this trend toward hyper-niche programming, there is further audience fragmentation. Instead of creating larger, broader listener bases, most podcasts exist to serve relatively small, niche audiences. This can often lead to loyal listenership in certain pockets but overall constrain the cultural reach of podcasting as a whole.

The survey reveals (information gathered from 45 participants) that most respondents listen to podcasts just several times a week, while 13.3% do this once a week, and none of them admitted listening to podcasts every day.

Thus, it can be seen that listening to podcasts is not yet a central, daily habit for most listeners even if they enjoy the medium in its general sense. While they might occasionally entertain or educate, as of now, they have not reached the depth within everyday lives in the way video streaming or social media have.

A 2023 survey on podcast listening trends in India revealed that more than a quarter of Indians listen to podcasts at least once daily.

According to a study on podcast consumption in selected countries worldwide in 2024, the United States had the highest rate of internet users listening to podcasts at 40% percent.

A 2022 survey on podcast listening trends in India revealed that more than 60% of listeners preferred listening to news-related podcasts.

Listening patterns among people have also changed. YouTube is the most popular platform for survey respondents to listen to podcasts, at 53.3% use it as a first port of call for audio. 'Respondents listened to podcasts for entertainment and education.

Forty per cent listened for entertainment while 33.3% for education and 20% primarily listen to podcasts for news and current events. Interestingly, the self-improvement, once among the principal drivers of the growth of this medium, was a concern for only 13.3% of respondents. This would suggest that there is a shift in what people perceive as useful, and it is being diverted into entertainment value rather than having a driving purpose to personal growth for these listeners.

Additionally, an eye-opening 66.7% said they no longer listened to a podcast because there were too many ads or sponsorships, suggesting the need for a fine balance between monetizing the medium and allowing listeners to trust it. Even though the survey showed that 60% disagreed with the notion that podcasts are "too commercialized," the fact that ads are driving listeners away from some shows suggests a frustration with the medium's commercialization.

Also, 53.3% of listeners feel that podcasts provide a kind of content profile more uniquely than any other media; 26.7% feel that podcasts are only somewhat unique.

33.3% of the respondents said audience engagement remains a huge podcast advantage over others. Yet, audience retention remains a significant problem. Indeed, 46.7% of respondents declared that oversaturation of content was the biggest challenge. ■



Picture: SHRUTI KAPOOR

Rural women use cloth for menstrual safety



Pictures: MANU YADAV & VASVI CHATURVEDI



The conversations with many others revealed while they are aware of the sanitary pads it was the cost and the taboos which restricted them from using these.

MANU YADAV

Master of Arts in Advertising and Marketing Management

VASVI CHATURVEDI

Bachelor of Journalism & Mass Communication

Contrary to belief that women and adolescent girls are now using sanitary pads, the situation in semi-urban, slums and rural areas tells an entirely different story. Even in the 21st Century, customs and old habits dominate. It has been seen that girls and women continue to use old rags or unhygienic strips of cloth for their menstrual days.

Lack of awareness is not the only reason for this. It is abject poverty and what they called 'buying sanitary pads is a luxury and they cannot afford them'.

A team of students on behalf of Expressions went on a fact-finding mission to slums in Lucknow and localities falling in semi-urban and even outskirts in rural areas to find out whether women and adolescents were using sanitary napkins or not. Mini Kumari (35) residing near Madaion works as a cook and said she

and her family are aware about sanitary pads but maintained these were expensive. The family manages Rs 25-30,000 a month through earning by the couple but they said besides the subsistence and children's education they could not afford to buy them. Even my daughter who goes to school uses cloth only, she said.

Another woman Sarita who works as a maid had five daughters and they all work in multiple homes. "We are aware of sanitary napkins but don't use them because of the cost," she said.

While females in Sultanpur city had better access to modern hygiene goods and knowledge, the situation in rural areas of the district was different. Women here continue to follow traditional practices that are shaped by cultural taboos and a lack of education.

Sneha, a young village woman stated that she still used cloth during periods because sanitary pads were too expensive. "The elders in the family believe cloth is better because it has been in practice for generations," she said. Many women said they washed and reuse the cloth

unmindful of the risk of infection. Shanti Devi, another woman, spoke on the cultural restrictions women suffer, adding, "We're not allowed to go to the kitchen or the temple when we're on our periods. People claim we make the house impure. Nobody questions it because that is how it has always been," she said.

This shows how deeply ingrained cultural taboos around menstruation continue to impact their lives, creating shame and limiting women's independence.

Despite some awareness of modern feminine hygiene products such as sanitary pads, many girls living in the slums are unable to buy them. Aside from affordability, a lack of understanding about good menstrual hygiene practices risks them to infections and other diseases.

The conversations with many others revealed while they are aware of the sanitary pads, but it is the cost and the taboos which restrict them from using these.

Sanitary pads or a square meal a day, perhaps choices for these women are limited. ■



HVCO

Spreading smiles



Pictures: ASHKA JAIN

ASHKA JAIN

Bachelor of Journalism & Mass Communication

Human Value and Community Outreach (HVCO) is all about spreading smiles and happiness through youngsters. College students are uniquely positioned to help their communities. They frequently bring new perspectives, enthusiasm and innovative ideas to community involvement. Through their studies, individuals acquire access to a wealth of knowledge that, when used through outreach activities, can generate significant societal change. More importantly, college students are frequently at a pivotal time in their life, developing their sense of self and purpose. This provides fertile ground for developing empathy and a commitment to social justice. Student-led community engagement activities range from local volunteer efforts to global initiatives.

Many students volunteer at local schools, instructing and mentoring youngsters from low-income families. Others collaborate with non-profit organizations to combat poverty and homelessness by organizing food drives or

constructing homes for those in need. Furthermore, college campuses frequently become centres of environmental activism, with students organizing clean-up drives, tree-planting activities, and educational initiatives to encourage sustainability.

For instance, there have been students from Amity University, Lucknow campus, who, through this platform have managed to spread smiles over the years. From rescuing animals to enhancing lives of especially abled people these students have been doing community work.

Speaking to Expressions Ahana Kulshrestha, a 2nd year student of BA (J&MC) expressed her gratitude towards Amity for giving her this opportunity through which she was not only able to self-reflect but at the same time was also able to engage in community service. Her team continues to work independently on a project named 'AAS ki Udaan - Igniting young minds' which aims on educating illiterate children living in slums. Simerpreet Kaur who is a 3rd year student of BA(J&MC) stated, "Interning at Umeed NGO, teaching children who had left beggary to attain basic education there, organising fun activities for kids, representing the NGO

at various events ignited the feeling of empathy within me."

Similarly, Maria Siddiqui a 2nd year student of BA(J&MC) who is working with the Aastha Foundation expressed how sad and heartbreaking it was for her to experience the pain of those people living in an old age home. But there are drawbacks. The most significant impediment is time. Furthermore, financial constraints may prevent some students from participating in unpaid community service programs.

However, this can also be utilised as an opportunity to learn time management, multitasking, and feeling grateful for what you have. However, Amity University has overcome these obstacles by incorporating community service within the academic curriculum named HVCO.

Each department has a mentor/guide assigned to the students who are 24*7 there for their help.

For example, students of Amity School of Communication get a golden opportunity to work under Head of Institution Dr Sanjay Mohan Johri. Student-led community outreach programs demonstrate the strength of human values and group effort. ■

Jurassic Park welcomes visitors

BHAVNA SONI

Bachelor of Journalism & Mass Communication

For city residents it's a boon to live in a heritage city like Lucknow. Blessed with cultural and historical legacy, Lucknow has a special place. Now, with the newly opened Jurassic Park here, that legacy gets strengthened. The park completes the missing taste of adventure in the city. Spanning more than five acres of land, this Jurassic Park opened in Janeshwar Mishra Park, showcases a unique collection of robotic dinosaurs and other extinct ice age creatures, including woolly mammoths, King Kong, Godzilla and sabretooth tigers. Lucknow in its phase of beautification is all set for tourist attraction. Ranging from old age cultural

heritage to colonial era monuments, from the mouth-watering taste of kebabs to wholesome flavours of basket chat and now the thrilling and adventurous experience of newly opened Jurassic Park.

Officially opened in October 2024, residents of Lucknow and Gomti Nagar have kept cash registers ringing. In an age where countries are focusing on sustainable development and growth, this public private partnership initiative has taken special care of the environment while constructing the elements of the park by reusing old trash metal scraps, broken parts of vehicles, tires, discarded materials and old cylinders.

With a talking tree at the entrance to keep the visitors captivated and give them a real time feel, the park not only offers areas of adventures for children

and young but also takes care of the refreshments for them with a cafeteria installed. The sculptures of Godzilla and King Kong will leave you almost amazed. And if visiting the Jurassic Park at evening one should not even think of missing the light show when the dinosaur chooses to show up by emerging from the cave and greet the visitors while scaring them with its roar.

Not only a site of adventure, the educational aspect of the park is a key highlight specially for those who take keen interest in a prehistoric world. Through interactive displays and realistic models, visitors can learn about the Jurassic era and the technological advancement that makes these lifelike creations possible. Well, now the extinct species are not far away from visitors. ■



Pictures: BHAVNA SONI

DURGA POOJA



Unleashing culinary aromas



MOLLY SINGH

Bachelor of Journalism & Mass Communication

Aruna Singh almost gushes as she says, "During Pujo, I feel a deep connection to my roots. Each ritual reminds me of the joy and unity we share. It's a time that fills my heart with gratitude and nostalgia."

Singh is one of the many devotees across board who regularly celebrates the Durga Puja festival in all its pomp and galore. Singh adds Durga puja is an experience that arouses memories deeply tied to the flavour and aromas of traditional foods and culture.

For many, Durga puja is the gateway to their childhood and a reminder of simpler times, from the smell of the flavourful one pot Bhoger Khichuri to the kaleidoscope of delectable street foods like jhaal muri, puchka, chaat, kathi rolls. Khichuri is considered the heart of Durga puja bhog. The simple but unparalleled taste of the bhoger

khichuri is comforting and it encapsulates essence of simplicity, warmth and festivities. "There's this notion, that khichuri is sick people's food or that it's a tasteless and bland food item. If you think so, too, try bhog ki khichuri. This, for us, is the pious, most delicious form of food ever," says Aishani Purkayastha.

During Durga puja, bhog is prepared at the pandals and offered to Goddess Durga and later distributed among the people daily. It often includes a variety of dishes such as begun bhaja (eggplant fry), shobji bhaja (vegetable fry), mix veg, pulao, luchi (deeply fried flatbread), sweet and tangy chutney and a variety of sweets including payasam. "Not everyone can make bhog properly but a well-cooked Khichuri with a well prepared mix veg or as we call labra/dalna in Bengali is a classic! Although I prefer my bhog Khichuri with brinjal or potato fries!" says Ashma Chatterjee.



One can never really forget the comforting taste of bhoger khichuri and nothing can ever match its simple yet exquisite taste. "Every Navratri, I've made it a point to visit the Durga Puja pandal, but surprisingly, I had never tried the 'bhog' food until this year.

And what a revelation it was! The khichuri was hands-down the best I've ever had when paired with papad. The meal was truly exceptional. To top it off, they served a delightful dessert consisting of traditional sweets (mithai) and kheer, which happens to be my favourite. I'm now hooked - I won't be missing the bhog food every Navratri from now on," says Divya Kotwani.

The variety of taste is not limited to the delicacies of bhog during the time of Durga puja, a number of street food stalls are set up outside each pandal and taking a stroll down these stalls feels like going back in time. Flavours so rich and authentic that one can never resist not trying the phuchkas- bursting with flavours or the tangy sweet and spicy chaat or the rolls. "Street food during Durga Puja is a feast unleashed. From phuchka to papdi chaat to jhaal muri and so much more, your taste buds will dance with joy in this time of joy!" says Arjun Majumdar. ■



Pictures: MOLLY SINGH