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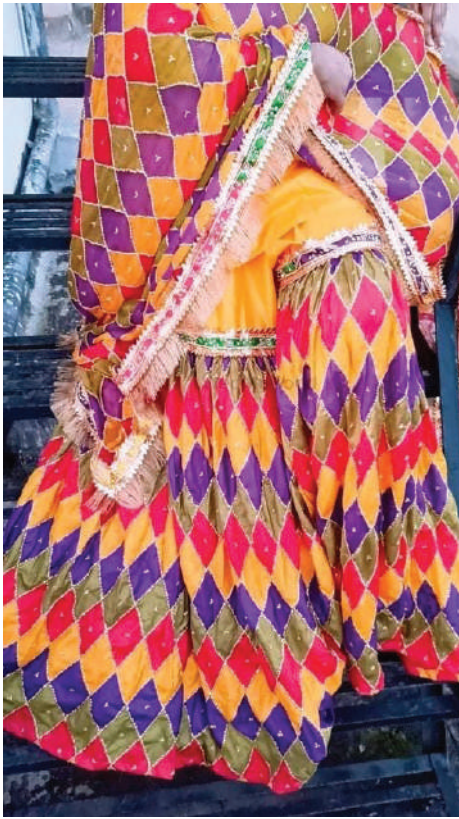
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Lucknowi Gharara through ages

Lucknowi Gharara: a timeless ethnic panache



Pictures: MARIA SIDDIQUI

MARIA SIDDIQUI

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Clothing is one of those necessities of the human race that has experienced continuous revamp, development and seasonal trends. Different regions of the world have different fashion fads, but certain clothing styles have a long-standing history that has made them popular and favoured for ages. Such fashion statements never go out of style and continue to captivate the coming generations.

One such clothing piece is the Gharara, finding its roots in the city of Nawabs in Lucknow. A staple of Awadhi fashion, elegantly adorned by wives of aristocratic households, such as begums and Taluqdars, Gharara gave its wearer a sophisticated and fashionable appearance. The exquisite zardozi, gota, and aari needlework, which blossomed under Mughal patronage, graced the gharara, which was made from the finest silks, brocades, and velvets. Slim at the waist and flared from the knee, its style was meant to enhance poise and movement, signifying feminine grace.

It is not uncommon to see women in Ghararas at marriage celebrations, or at the very least, brides decked up in elaborate ones. Over the generations, the garment has managed to keep its original, classic sparkle and brilliance. Among the many variations, Tukdi ka Gharara or Chatapati is one of the most creative examples of traditional workmanship. Tukdi means 'parts', and as the name suggests, this style is made by hand-sewing several patches of various coloured fabrics together. It involves cutting fabric into shapes like mahipusht (fish scales), lauzat (diamonds), chaukor (squares), tikona (triangles), and hexagons, which create a honeycomb-like effect. When tukdis are arranged horizontally, these pieces demonstrate a wave-like pattern that ebbs and flows with colours. Conversely, a vertical arrangement results in a zig-zag pattern, adding a sense of movement and depth to the artwork.

Colour selection is important, with artisans often opting for vibrant hues. Traditional colour palettes in Lucknow include deep shades of pink, purple, yellow, and green. As a result, the garment looks like a mosaic of colour and culture.

"Not just the fabric, but also the hands

and hearts that shape the apparel, are expressed in every stitch of the Tukdi ka Gharara," says Ghulam Rasool, an old artisan from Chowk. The man is renowned for turning his client's vision into a precise reality. "It takes no less than a month and a half, sometimes even two months, to complete a single Tukdi ka Gharara," he explains.

There are specific centres and artisans in the old city who specialise only in this work, yet very few outside these streets know their names. "We have been doing this for generations; it runs in our blood, but the world rarely comes looking for us anymore.

Most people go to big shops like Madan Lal and Halwasiya, and never step into the interiors of Chowk," said Saira Begum. "My grandmother taught my mother, and my mother passed it on to me." Each gharara piece is the result of countless hours of work by local artists, many of them are members of families that have been engaged in this industry for generations. Wearing or owning one is more than just a fashion statement; it is a homage to Lucknow's anonymous artisans who preserve centuries-old customs. ■

Hiring

Journalists who can work with AI tools!

AAROHI SEEM

Bachelor of Arts in Journalism & Mass Communication

From traditional jobs of announcing, printing, or broadcasting, to fostering creativity, strong thinking skills, and new tech abilities, the media industry has evolved big time. In places like Lucknow, where local newspapers, TV channels, digital media companies, PR firms, and content startups are growing, there are more job opportunities for those ready for the future. However, hiring managers in today's time look for professionals who are well-equipped with AI tools for writing, editing, designing, video making, and analysing audience behaviour.

Abhishek Sharma, an advertising professional who has worked with local brands in Lucknow, stresses that AI has changed the way campaigns are planned. "AI tools help agencies predict how consumers will react, improve ads, and track performance," he says. As a result, there is a demand for advertising professionals who can work with data, think creatively, and understand AI.

Aditi Chaudhari, a social media strategist, shares how social media management has transformed considerably with the involvement of AI, making it easier to schedule posts, analyse engagement, spot trends, and come up with content ideas.

Arushi Singh, a PR worker, says that AI helps with watching the media, understanding how people feel, and handling crises. However, she points out that building relationships, planning, and communicating ethically are essential human-based PR skills that AI cannot take over.

As AI changes the media scene, there is a bigger need for journalism that focuses on solutions. With AI helping analyse data, journalists can discover successful policies, local projects, and inspiring stories that provide hope and guidance.

By using AI tools alongside solution journalism, media professionals in

JOIN OUR AI TEAM

- AI VIDEO EDITORS
- AI CONTENT CREATORS
- AUDIO PROCESSING ENGINEERS
- AI DRIVEN GRAPHICS DESIGNERS

Instead of just discussing issues like job loss or fears about automation, media professionals could use AI to focus on solutions, new ideas, and progress made by communities.

Lucknow can help create more positive stories that uplift society rather than spread fear.

For aspiring media professionals, learning AI-driven writing tools, design platforms, video editing software, and



analytics systems can open diverse career paths. Those who successfully combine creativity, communication skills, ethical responsibility, and AI knowledge will be better prepared to secure jobs and grow in the evolving media industry. ■



Picture: ANSHIKA SRIVASTAVA

Arora Achaar: the sweet legacy of Lucknow's sour pickles

ANSHIKA SRIVASTAVA

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It takes only a spoonful of achar to turn an ordinary meal into a deeply comforting memory. Across India, jars of pickles sit quietly on kitchen shelves, soaking not just in oil and spices but in memories of childhood, tradition and time. From raw mangoes soaked in mustard oil to tangy lemons and fiery chillies, achar is not just a sundry serving. It is a cultural heirloom, passed down through generations.

Patience lies at the heart of pickle-making. The slow process of sun-drying, marinating, and letting flavours rest mirrors the way traditions are preserved over time: slowly, carefully and with love. It is served in small quantities, yet its presence is powerful; it doesn't just enhance food but completes it.

In Lucknow's bustling Aminabad market, where narrow lanes are filled with

In an era of preservatives and mass production, their pickles are still made using traditional methods, sun-dried ingredients, cold-pressed mustard oil, and spices blended with precision.

the marketplace din and the fragrance of street food, one legacy that continues to thrive is Arora Achaar, a shop that guards the North Indian culinary tradition. There is no flashy branding or modern packaging. Just glass jars, handwritten labels, and recipes passed down through generations. "Meine bachpan se yahi ka achar khaya hai," says Ramesh Verma (52), a customer. What sets Arora Achaar apart is its quiet rebellion against changing food trends. In an era of preservatives and mass production, their pickles are

prepared using traditional methods, sun-dried ingredients, cold-pressed mustard oil, and spices blended with precision. "Humne kabhi quality se compromise nahi kiya," said shopkeeper Amit Sharma. "Jo masaale merey dada use kartey they, wohi aaj bhi use hote hain. Log taste pe bharosa karte hain."

Even the Instagram generation finds itself drawn to its authenticity. "Instagram pe fancy food sab mil jata hai, but asli desi achar ka maza yahin hai," says Ananya Gupta (21), a college student.

Arora Achaar isn't just a place to buy pickles; it is a reminder that some traditions don't need reinvention. In a rapidly changing city, it stands as a symbol of continuity, flavour, and cultural memory. Every spoonful carries stories of Lucknow's past, carefully preserved in oil and spice. As long as Aminabad's lanes echo with life and people seek the comfort of familiar flavours, Arora Achaar will continue doing what it does best - preserving not just food, but heritage. ■

Fast food or slow poison?

Convenience over concern



BHAVNA SONI

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“WHO’s data reveals that one out of every eight people is living in obesity.”

Imagine an evening where every fast-food stall suddenly disappears. No sizzling momo steaming at the corner, no paani puri vendor calling out to passers-by, no fries shared casually while waiting for a friend. The evenings would instantly feel quieter, blander, almost incomplete. For many Indians today, fast food is no longer an occasional craving; it’s an emotion, a routine, and for some, a daily ritual.

This shift took root in the post-COVID period, when lockdowns confined people inside their homes and disrupted everyday patterns. With more time at home, many discovered a ‘hidden chef’ within themselves. Once restrictions were lifted, the enthusiasm for flavour and experimentation spilled onto the streets. The result? A rise in food trucks, pop-up stalls, cloud kitchens, and fast-food outlets in every nook and corner.

Longer working hours, hectic commutes, and shrinking family mealtimes have made quick bites not just conve-

nient but comforting. However, this convenience has a cost. According to the 2024 Global Food Policy Report by the International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI), at least 38% of Indians consume unhealthy foods, while 22% rarely eat fruits or vegetables, indicating a widening nutritional gap.

The global picture is no brighter. The World Health Organization (WHO) reported in 2022 that one in eight people worldwide was living with obesity. Among adults aged 18 and above, 43% were overweight, and 16% were classified as obese. These numbers are not mere statistics. They mirror lifestyles that prioritise taste, speed, and affordability over health and long-term well-being.

One of the catalysts promoting this trend is social media. Platforms like Instagram, YouTube, and short-video apps have turned food into highly consumable content. Slow-motion cheese pulls, oversized burgers, fiery noodles, and “street food challenges” attract millions of views. This creates aspirational eating, where trying the latest viral dish feels like participating in a trend. Algorithms further act as a cherry on top, rewarding visually appealing, indulgent food rather than simple, nutritious meals. This constant exposure subtly reshapes pref-



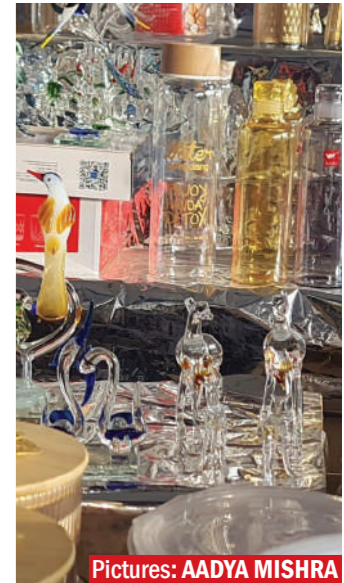
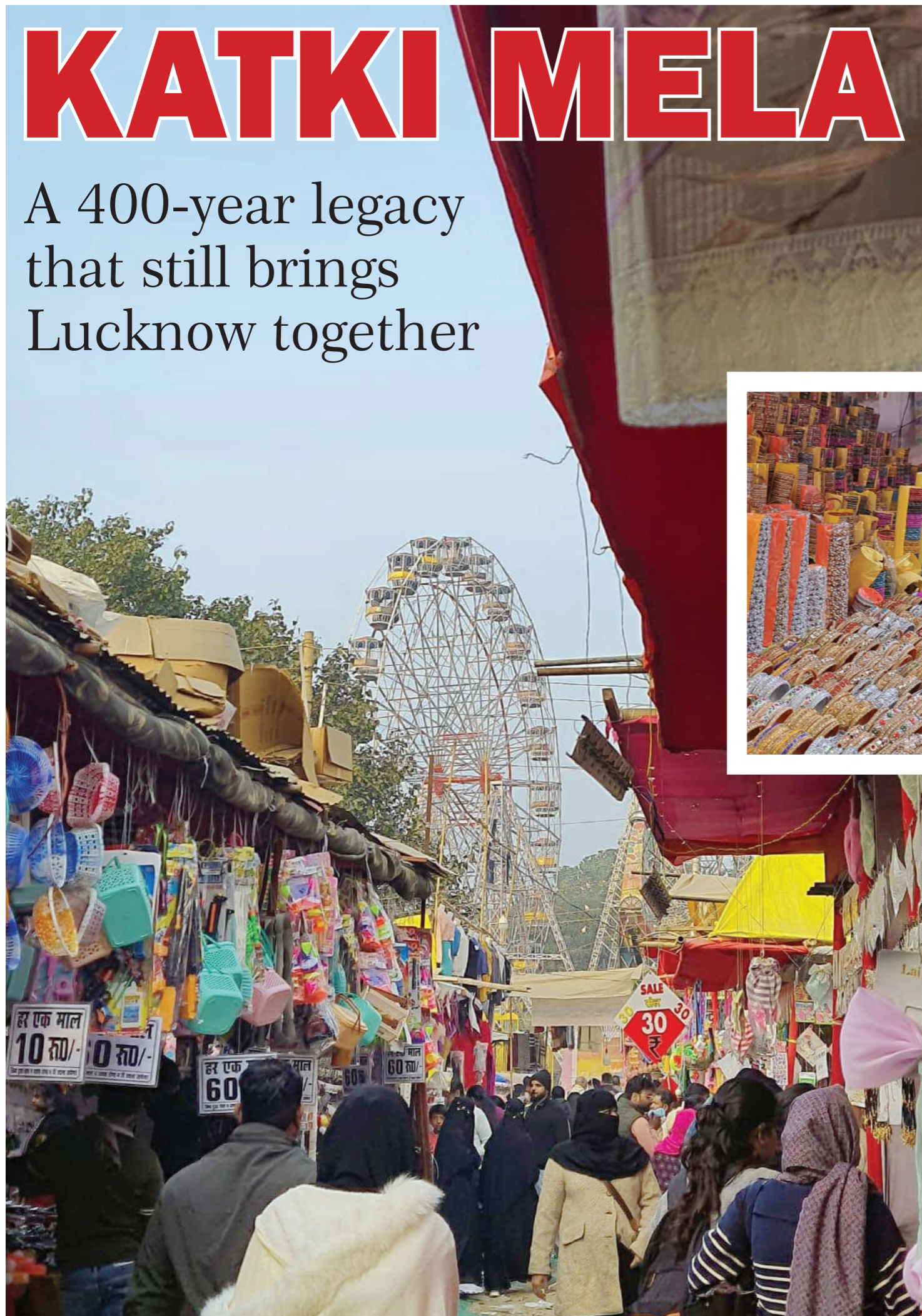
erences, especially among adolescents and young adults, who begin associating enjoyment, socialising, and even self-reward with junk food.

Parallel to this digital push is the rapid expansion of fast-food chains across India. International brands and Indian quick-service restaurants have penetrated tier-2 and tier-3 cities, making fast food affordable and accessible. The concern is not fast food itself, but its unchecked dominance in daily diets.

When healthy foods are gradually replaced by unhealthy ultra-processed items high in salt, sugar, and fats, the consequences like weight gain, lifestyle diseases, fatigue, and nutritional deficiencies, build up quietly. While food culture continues to evolve, there is a need to balance indulgence and awareness. After all, flavour should not come at the cost of well-being. ■

KATKI MELA

A 400-year legacy that still brings Lucknow together



Pictures: AADYA MISHRA

AADYA MISHRA

Bachelor of Arts in Journalism & Mass Communication

While malls are buzzing with Christmas decorations and end-of-season sales, a 400-year-old tradition continues to draw crowds to the banks of the Gomti. Katki Mela, also known as Kartiki or Budakki Mela, began on November 15, 2025, at Jhulelal Vatika Park, Lucknow. Like every year, the fair started on Kartik Purnima and will run until Makar Sankranti, keeping the riverfront alive with colour, culture, and commerce.

December, being the peak time, sees rows of stalls lining the place, with prices starting as low as five and ten, attracting thousands of people who want to enjoy their winters in the old-school way. Historically supported by the Nawabs to provide artisans with a platform for livelihood, the fair still upholds that pur-

pose. And today, as initiatives like One District One Product (ODOP) gain prominence, such fairs stand as a rising hope for fading craft traditions. Food lanes are crowded, serving everything from desi favourites to western snacks, but mini samosas remain the true crowd-puller.

"No cafe or mall can match the experience of having samosas in this season with family," says a visitor, eagerly waiting for his plate. For generations, home décor and crockery have been the pride of Katki Mela. From the glasswork artistry of Firozabad to local crockery dealers, Kartik Mela houses a huge variety. It is often said that almost every household in Lucknow owns at least one piece bought from this mela at some point in time.

Admiring the little teacups by the side, Pankhuri revisits her childhood: "My mother bought me one of these miniature tea sets, and I used to play with them all day long as a child. Seeing them here

again brought back the happy memories of my childhood." For many artisans, the fair is more than business. It's heritage. "We are traditional dealers from Firozabad. We don't have a permanent shop," says Shanu bhai, the proprietor of Aadil Crockery House. "Like our forefathers, we travel especially to this mela, to keep these age-old traditions alive," he adds.

"With children enjoying swings, shoppers filling bags with cost effective shopping and a constant hit of nostalgia at every step, such as seeing the old-style weighing machine and the glass pens which my father once bought for me as a child, coming to this mela was a complete soulful experience," said Kamala, who came to the fair for the first time with her neighbors and kids. "It was worth my time," she added.

Whether it's Azamgarh's black pottery or Barabanki's wooden toys, Katki Mela continues to offer local crafts at accessible prices. ■

Labore et Constantia



Picture: MARIA SIDDIQUI

The living heritage of La Martinière college

MARIA SIDDIQUI

Bachelor of Arts in Journalism & Mass Communication

We often come across articles praising India's heritage architecture, from forts to elegant Nawabi palaces. But have you ever paused to admire a building in Lucknow that feels like a European chateau, yet belongs completely to this city? An architecture that doesn't just stand as a structure but carries the weight of generations passing through its gates.

"Kuch imaaratein sirf pattharon se nahi banti,

Woh waqt, virasat aur kahaniyon se khadi hoti hain."

La Martinière College is one such place. Built in the late 18th century, its distinctive architectural style reflects a rare fusion of European design and Indian craftsmanship. The building, known as Constantia, was originally conceived in 1785 as the residence of Major-General Claude Martin, a French officer who served both French and British East India Companies.

More than just a residence, Constantia was designed to reflect Martin's philosophy of life, captured in the motto

Labore et Constantia, implying 'Through hard work and perseverance', progress is achieved.

What makes the structure even more compelling is the legacy embedded within its walls. Martin, who never married and had no heirs, dedicated his wealth to education, directing in his will that after his death, Constantia be transformed into a college. In an unusual and symbolic gesture, he also chose to be buried inside the building itself, ensuring that the space would remain protected and purposeful. Today, students unknowingly walk above the resting place of a man who believed deeply in discipline, learning, and endurance.

Outside those walls, time has quietly rewritten everyday life. Where horse-drawn carriages once arrived at Constantia, school buses now line up each morning, carrying a new generation into the same space built centuries ago. On most days, it functions like any other school, students rushing to classes, bells ringing, teachers calling out names, etc. But on certain days, the same corridors welcome historians and city residents who pause to look up, ask questions, and notice details they would usually walk past.

The campus also continues to modernise. Initiatives like Nimaya, co-founded by Navya Naveli Nanda and Samyak Chakrabarty, focus on equipping young women with skills and tools, whether through AI readiness or business case studies.

La Martinière's vast alumni network also speaks of the school's enduring impact. Graduates from different eras, including military officers, civil servants, artists and entrepreneurs, have returned from around the globe to celebrate reunions, share stories of cricket matches on the lawns and friendships formed under neem trees, and to reconnect with the very place that shaped their early years.

Preserving this heritage has become a collective effort. Students and alumni have actively engaged with school authorities to protect century-old stone steps engraved with names dating back to the early 1900s, ensuring they remain untouched even as other parts of the campus evolve.

In a city with layers of history, La Martinière, with Constantia at its heart, has survived not because it is old, but because it is still in use. It teaches, hosts, evolves, and absorbs new meanings with every generation. ■

Who will feed the future?

The silent crisis facing farmers and food security

SANJAY M JOHRI

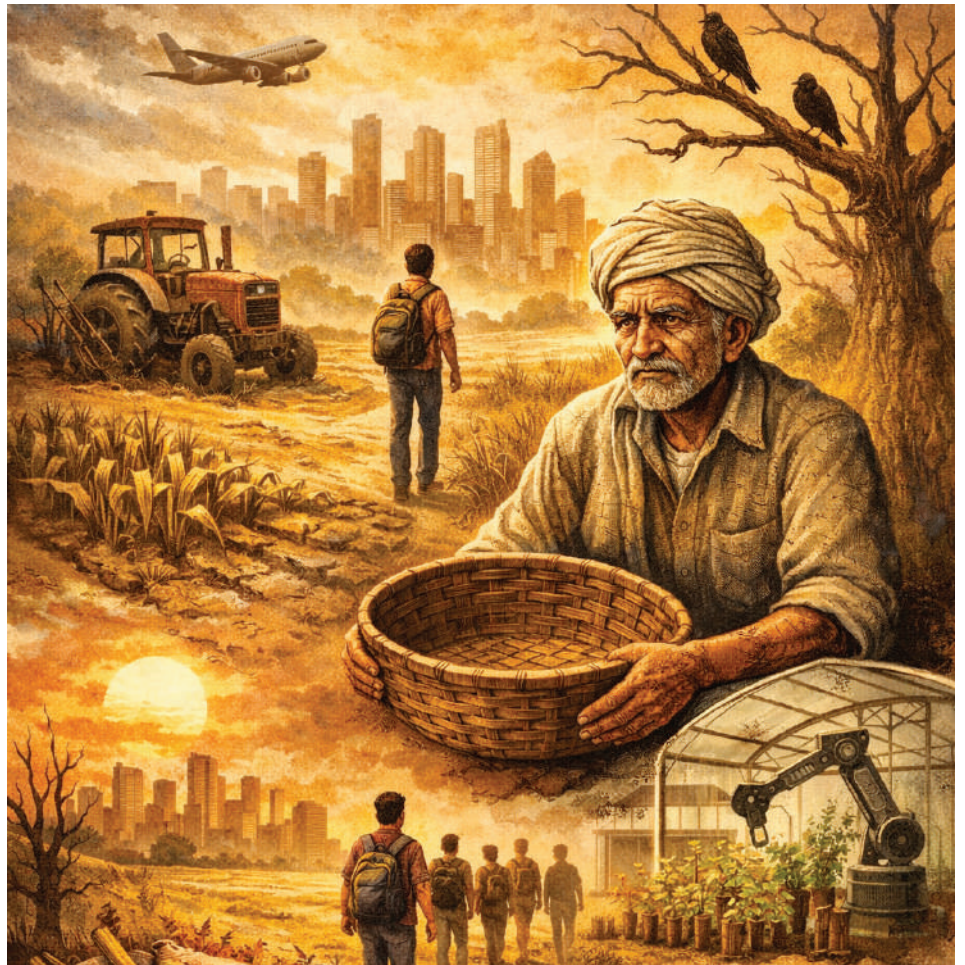
Professor Emeritus & Head, Centre for Media Studies

Have you ever paused to consider that almost everything on your plate is the result of a farmer's labour? From staples such as pulses, rice, and vegetables to a seemingly simple dish like pasta with tomato sauce—wheat for the pasta, tomatoes, basil, onions, and garlic for the sauce—every ingredient reaches us through the hard work of farmers. These farmers may be spread across different fields, countries, and even continents. Every meal we eat is the collective outcome of the efforts of millions of farmers and agricultural workers worldwide.

This raises an urgent question: how secure is the future of farming—and of farmers themselves?

Ironically, at a time when global food demand is rising, interest in agriculture is steadily declining, particularly among the youth. Younger generations are increasingly reluctant to remain in villages and work season after season in the fields. The promise of stable jobs, better incomes, and urban lifestyles is drawing them away from farming. The reasons for this disinterest are deeply structural: low and uncertain incomes, high financial risks, heavy investments in seeds, fertilisers, water, labour, and machinery, dependence on middlemen, and the persistent failure to receive fair prices for produce. Together, these pressures are pushing farmers into mounting economic distress.

Across India and much of the world, farmers are ageing, and the shortage of skilled young people willing to enter agriculture is becoming more pronounced. In India, the average farmer is 55 years of age. In the United Kingdom, the figure is 59; in Kenya, 60; and in Japan—the highest—it stands at 67. The average global age is about 55, close to the retirement age in many other professions. As this experienced generation gradually



exits farming, a critical question looms: who will shoulder the responsibility of feeding the world?

Data from the International Labour Organisation (ILO) underscores this trend. Agriculture accounted for around 43 per cent of global employment in the 1990s. By 2023, that share had fallen to just 26 per cent. Meanwhile, the number of farms worldwide is shrinking. Although roughly one-third of the Earth's land surface is still used for agriculture, the expansion of farmland has stalled, and in recent years, it has begun to decline.

Currently, an estimated 600 million farms feed a global population of 8 billion. By the end of this century, the number of farmers is projected to fall by half, even as they are expected to feed a much larger population. While farm consolidation and productivity gains may offset some losses, a steep decline in the num-

ber of farms poses serious risks to global food security.

Addressing this crisis demands a multi-pronged approach. New technologies must be adopted so that even fewer people can produce more food efficiently. At the same time, the stigma associated with farming needs to be dismantled, and young people must be shown that agriculture can be both viable and rewarding. Agricultural education requires urgent modernisation, with greater emphasis on organic farming, horticulture, agri-entrepreneurship, and rural enterprises. Above all, farmers must be assured fair and stable prices for their crops so that farming becomes economically sustainable.

The real challenge before us is whether we can reconnect the next generation with farming—because the future of our food, quite literally, depends on it. ■

Satkhandha and Ghanta Ghar: two contrasting structures

*“Adhoori si imarat hai,
par kahani poori hai,
Har patthar mein
chhupi hui ek yaad
zaroori hai.*

*Upar tak na pahunch
saki, par dil ko chhoo
gayi,*

*Satkhandha bataati
hai ke adhoori cheezein
bhi noor si hoti hain.”*

KAVYA SHARMA

Bachelor of Arts in Journalism & Mass Communication

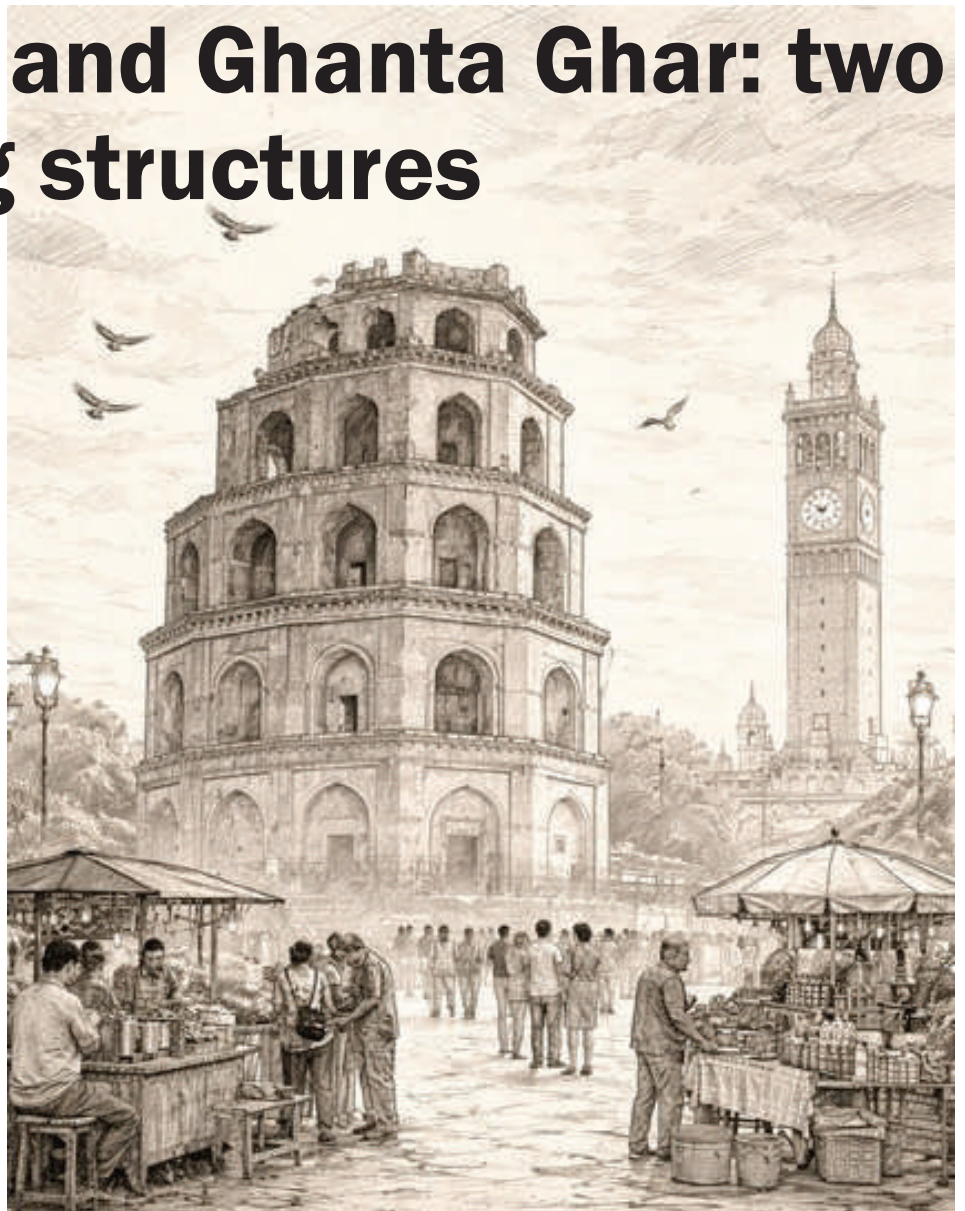
Satkhandha rises in the heart of Lucknow as a monument that draws attention not for its perfection, but for its incompleteness. Four storeys stand tall with confidence, while the missing floors above whisper a silent mystery. People visit, take pictures, admire the architecture, and then move on. However, the monument itself appears to hold a deeper story that extends beyond the pages of history books.

“We have grown up seeing Satkhanda every day. It feels less like a monument and more like a silent witness to our lives,” said a resident.

Every old structure holds memories within it, and Satkhanda feels like a place where those memories still linger. The “ghosts” here are not supernatural shadows, but the lingering traces of those who worked, dreamed, and built.

The nawab who conceptualised a tall seven-storey tower inspired by foreign architecture, workers who carried stones under the hot sun, artisans who shaped its design, each left something behind. Even though their voices are no longer heard, their emotions seem to linger in the air.

Just a short walk away stands Ghanta Ghar, the tall clock tower, complete



and purposeful, marking time as the city moves around it. Rickshaws weave through traffic, shop shutters are lifted and lowered, vendors call to passing crowds, while the clock keeps ticking.

A nearby shopkeeper observes, “This clock has seen generations change. People change, professions change, but time keeps moving.”

These monuments also support everyday survival. Near Satkhanda, a local vendor selling water and snacks speaks of his quiet struggle. “Earning is not easy,” he says, “but when visitors come, click photos and buy something, it makes me happy. Their visit helps my family.” These are the ghosts of Satkhanda: the memories, efforts and dreams that once filled its unfinished halls. But the most powerful ghost of all is the dream that stopped midway. Satkhanda was meant to rise higher, but circumstances shifted,

and construction halted. The tower never reached its intended height, leaving it incomplete yet unforgettable. Its incompleteness is a reminder that not every dream is realised. However, the constructed portion still carries meaning.

A tea seller between Satkhanda and Ghanta Ghar adds, “People come smiling, enjoying the place. When they stop for tea, I feel connected to their happiness.”

The monument stands without an apology. It does not hide the fact that its dream was cut short. Instead, it carries it openly and proudly. Together, Satkhanda and Ghanta Ghar tell a story of Lucknow, one of paused dreams, of struggles and survival. Satkhanda is more than a historical structure. Its ghosts do not frighten; they make us remember that anything created with good positive intention leaves a trace in stone, in time, and in the everyday lives surrounding it. ■

Astrology: the latest fad for Gen Z

ZEHRA ABIDI

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Astrology content, such as Mercury retrograde alerts, zodiac-based relationship tips, and tarot readings promising clarity and calm, appears on Instagram and TikTok at all hours. Astrology influencers have become a daily digital presence for Gen Z, transforming age-old belief systems into scroll-friendly content that feels personal, emotional, and timely. Astrology's resurgence among young people is not always based on faith or superstition. Instead, it serves as an emotional language, allowing Gen Z to express confusion, anxiety, and hope. Dr Ritu Sharma, a media sociologist, says, "Astrology provides a low-pressure method for making sense of uncertainty without the rigidity of organised belief systems. This is vital for a generation that has grown up amid overlapping crises such as climate anxiety, economic uncertainty, and the pandemic.

Social media platforms play an important role in promoting astrology influencers. Aesthetic reels, calming voice-overs, and meme-based zodiac humour blend seamlessly into Instagram and TikTok's algorithm-driven environments. Astrology content is frequently shared alongside self-care and mental wellness posts, ensuring that it reaches users during times of vulnerability or transition. A digital engagement study conducted by a psychology student researcher found a significant increase in astrology-related interactions among users aged 18-25, particularly during exam periods, job searches, and relationship changes. These times of uncertainty provide fertile ground for content that promises reassurance, guidance, or emotional stability. Many young users admit they don't follow astrology rigidly; they consume it intuitively.

"During stressful times, astrology reels just find me," says Ayesha Khan (22). "I don't believe everything, but it's comforting. It feels like someone reminding you to slow down." Astrology influencers



A digital engagement study conducted by a psychology student researcher found a significant increase in astrology-related interactions among users aged 18-25, particularly during exam periods, job searches, and relationship changes.

rarely position themselves as experts.

"Online astrology today is more about validation than prediction," says content creator Rohan Mehta. "People want to feel seen, not instructed." This approach makes astrology feel supportive rather than prescriptive. Gen Z is more likely to relate to influencers than institutional authorities. "These are parasocial relationships," explains Dr Neha Verma, a psychologist who studies digital behaviour. "Followers feel emotionally connected to influencers, and astrology serves as

a shared language, strengthening that bond," she adds

Despite its popularity, mental health professionals warn against relying too heavily on astrology, especially when it replaces professional help. "Astrology and self-reflection can coexist, but it should not replace evidence-based support during serious emotional distress," says clinical psychologist Arjun Malhotra. Disclaimers like "take what resonates" and "this is not professional advice" are becoming more common. This balance of belief and entertainment makes astrology content appealing to even sceptical audiences. Astrology thrives in the media because it is easily shared and personalised. "Astrology provides Gen Z with cultural shorthand," says Kavita Rao. "It facilitates discussions about emotions and identity without sounding heavy or preachy." Ultimately, the appeal of astrology stems from storytelling rather than planetary accuracy. In a rapidly changing, often overwhelming world, astrology provides narratives that suggest emotions have meaning and that phases pass. ■

A DECEMBER to REMEMBER!

Ft. Lucknow's festive vibe



RAMZI HASAN

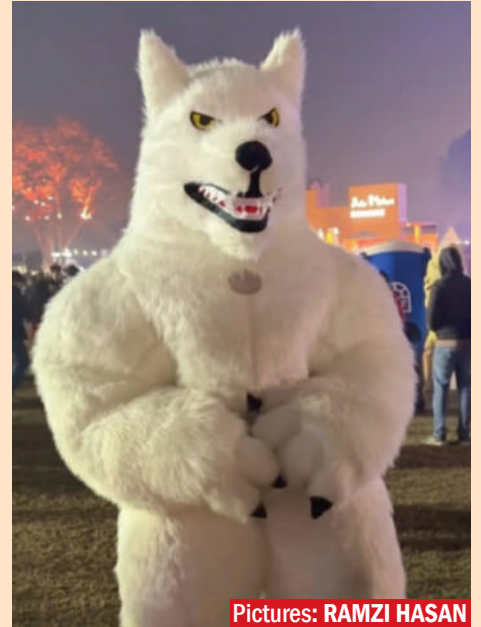
Bachelor of Arts in Journalism & Mass Communication

The winter season in Lucknow doubles the charm of the City of Nawabs, with its breezy fog, captivating mornings, and a radiant glow that comes alive at night through a series of festive celebrations beginning in December. Leading the season was Repertwahr, its 13th edition this year, held from 19 to 21 December at Janeshwar Mishra Park. The festival celebrated theatre, comedy, music, and literature, creating a vibrant cultural atmosphere. A unique highlight was the silent disco, where visitors tuned into DJ sets curated by DJ Nikhil Chinappa. Renowned poets Wasim Barelvi and Badal Sharma graced the stage for poetry lovers. The musical lineup featured Ankur Tewari, Indie Band Euphoria, and a Nir-gun folk performance by The Aavahan Project. Comedy acts by Aakash Gupta,

Gurleen Pannu, and Gaurav Gupta kept the audience entertained with laughter throughout the event.

Kashish Khan, a third-year BA (J&MC) student at Amity University and a volunteer at Repertwahr, described her experience as delightful. "Working on a stage where such importance is given to talent presented through poetry and storytelling taught me many things and inspired me deeply in my journey. Like last year, this event once again allowed me to contribute." Summing up Repertwahr in a single line, she said, "If tehzeeb were life, I would like it to be Repertwahr."

Adding to the festive calendar was the Chill and Bloom Flower Show, held at the Botanic Garden, National Botanical Research Institute, from 20 to 21 December. The two-day event showcased stunning varieties of chrysanthemums and coleus, while experts offered visitors valuable tips on seasonal planting and plant care, helping enthusiasts enhance



Pictures: RAMZI HASAN

their gardening skills. Continuing the celebrations, High Spirits: Christmas Carnival took place at Le Press, Hazratganj, on 21 December. The day-long carnival featured Christmas-themed activities, including tree decoration, carol singing, and hands-on DIY sessions for children. The evening concluded with a lively performance by the pop band Madtown Funk, setting the perfect festive mood.

Riwaayat, a three-day cultural event hosted at Sangeet Natak Akademi, celebrated women entrepreneurs. It provided a platform for independent brands showcasing apparel, accessories, décor, crafts, and food products. Fashion shows, dance performances, and music competitions added to the excitement, with awards at the end. The event featured performances by folk singer Priyam Pandey and Udan Dance Association, along with a mushaira headlined by Awadhi poets Satish Shandilya, Mithilesh Lakhnavi, Saleem Siddique, and Ali Malihabadi. Actor and poet Murad Ali also launched his book Rasm-e-Ijra during the festival.

The city's grand music celebration, Boho Fest, took place on 27 and 28 December at Janeshwar Mishra Park, featuring electrifying live performances by Rabbi Shergill, Divine, Paresh Pahuja, and Mame Khan, along with a vibrant bohemian market and diverse food options, adding year-end charisma to Lucknow. Amid the festive spirit, sublime winter weather, the warmth of Christmas, and the anticipation of the New Year, December in Lucknow truly uplifted the souls—leaving smiles behind, offering a graceful closure to the year, and welcoming the New Year with a radiant glow. ■