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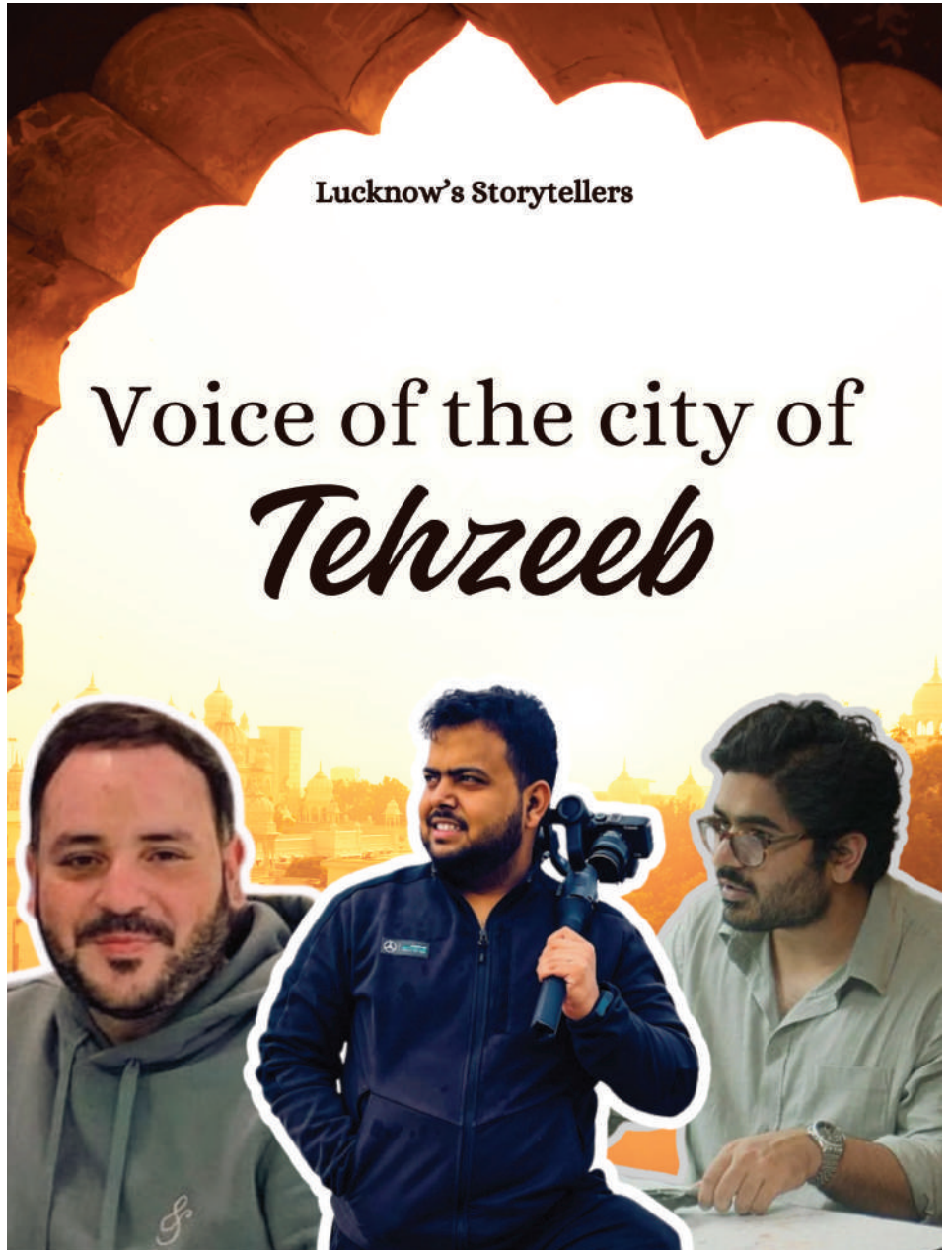
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REDISCOVERING LUCKNOW

Through the lens of a digital storyteller

Rediscovering Lucknow...



MARIA SIDDIQUI

Bachelor of Journalism & Mass Communication

The city of Kebabs, Tameez, and Te-hzeeb is witnessing a new wave of bloggers and content creators who are peeling back the layers of history that rarely made it into the books. Reviving forgotten traditions, neighbourhoods, and those 'Qisse' that our elders once heard from their parents, those timeless evening stories passed down through generations. Did you know that behind the Teele Wali Masjid, there is a bricked-up passage, the subject of local speculation? This passage is rumoured to have been an entrance to a secret escape tunnel during the Nawabi era!

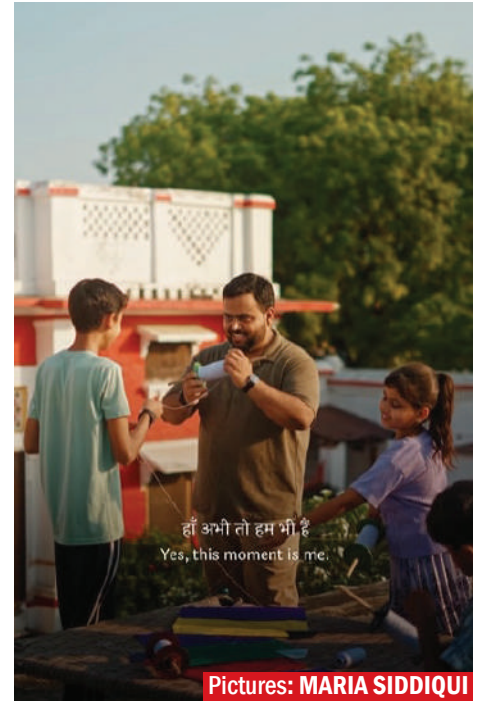
Additionally, the Hussainabad Clock Tower, once a prominent feature of the Gomti landscape, experienced a disruption when its bronze bell cracked during the 1857 uprising. These narratives are effectively brought to life by the bloggers, transforming each reel and blog post into a piece of historical documentation. We humans have always been storytellers. Everything we know has been passed down to us through narratives. From the tales of our ancestors who first started fires to today's thirty-second videos, it's the act of storytelling that



Lucknow Safarkhana guides followers on a delicious journey through the city's iconic food stops, tracing the stories, flavours, and traditions behind every dish.

keeps memories alive. Time and again, we are reminded that our heritage is not merely a museum piece but a living conversation, waiting to be heard. Among the most prominent voices are Maroof Culmen, a popular homegrown creator, whose sharply edited reels capture the city's hidden architectural flourishes, some of which you don't even find in textbooks.

Taqi Abbas (@lucknowuncovered), an Amity alumnus who blends research with warm, first-hand storytelling, whether he's showcasing the elegance of a hand-stitched gharara to tracing rituals around paan preparation. Lucknow Safarkhana guides followers on a delicious journey through the city's iconic food stops, tracing the stories, flavours, and traditions behind every dish. Today, these storytellers are more than just influencers; they



are the new age archivists of Lucknow, each unveiling the city's unheard tales in their own unique style.

Through their reels, they show that an artist isn't defined by a title; it's the reflection of their thoughts in their work. One example is Abdul Majeed, a craftsman who hand-replicates motorcycles, patiently working outside Cathedral School's main gate, keeping a nearly forgotten craft alive. Their content also preserves memories of performers such as Behrupiya Raju from Kakori, reduced to dressing up and visiting shops for coins, a poignant reminder that traditional arts persist even under challenging circumstances. Even the city's royal past comes alive in these digital narratives, such as Nawab Wajid Ali Shah, who shaped Lucknow's cultural identity through concepts such as Adaab, the Duppalli Topi, or the Angarkha; signatures that became synonymous with the city itself.

After all, in Lucknow, every alley hums with untold anecdotes, every handcrafted artifact whispers the secrets of the past. To walk these streets, to pause and truly listen, is to step into a living tapestry where the city's soul opens itself to you, and in that listening, you become a part of its timeless story, carrying forward the elegance, the whispers of a heritage that never fades. ■

D3 and B12: India's silent vitamin crisis

ZEHRA ABIDI

Master of Advertising & Marketing Management

Despite an abundance of sunlight and a healthy diet, India is battling a hidden health crisis. Two vital micronutrients, vitamin D3 and B12, are quietly slipping from people's lives, bringing with them a tide of preventable illnesses.

Step outside at noon in any Indian city and the streets blaze under a generous sun. But inside clinics and labs, test reports tell another story. A meta-analysis of tens of thousands of adults found that over two-thirds of Indians are deficient in vitamin D3, while many studies suggest nearly half have inadequate vitamin B12 levels. Doctors are calling it a "silent epidemic" because the symptoms, such as fatigue, poor immunity, weak bones, and numbness in limbs, creep in slowly and are often misdiagnosed. "Changing food habits and an

indoor lifestyle with inadequate exposure to sunlight have led to a drastic increase in cases of vitamin D deficiency," says Dr Rajeev Sharma, Vice-President of Medical Affairs, a private practitioner. "Young adults below 25 are surprisingly among the most affected."

It's a paradox. Sunlight is abundant, yet many urban dwellers spend most of their days indoors, shielded by windows that block UVB rays. Skin tone also matters; darker skin requires longer sun exposure to make the same amount of vitamin D as lighter skin. "It is not enough to count on the sun," warns orthopaedic surgeon, Dr Aashish Chaudhry, co-author of a recent report on micronutrient gaps.


Vitamin B12 deficiency stems mainly from diet. The nutrient is found almost exclusively in animal products. "A vegetarian diet is known to be associated with higher prevalence of vitamin B12 deficiency in India; their dietary habits could be a significant contributor to the high prevalence," notes a study in Fron-

tiers in Public Health. But even non-vegetarians are not immune because of malabsorption caused by digestive disorders or long-term medication use. "B12 deficiency is extremely common in India, even among the rich," observes Prof. P. K. Sasidharan, an internist who has written extensively on nutritional deficiencies.


Low vitamin D3 can lead to rickets in children and osteoporosis in adults. B12 deficiency may cause anaemia and fatigue, and in severe cases, irreversible nerve damage. Yet because the onset is gradual, many only discover the deficiency when complications appear. "A substantial portion of even healthy-looking healthcare workers show B12 deficiency," warns Dr. S. Nandyala, whose study tracked doctors and nurses.

Experts call for a mix of public awareness, fortification, and screening. Encouraging daily sun exposure in the morning, fortified foods for vegetarians and routine blood tests for vulnerable groups could stem the tide. ■

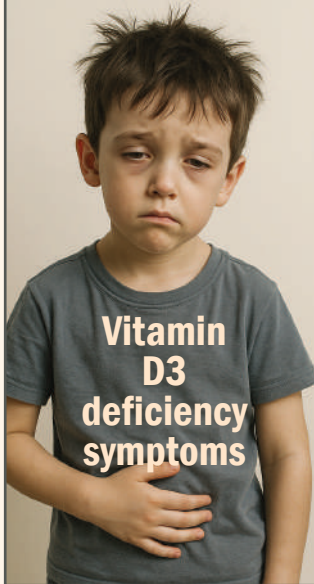
Foods rich in



VITAMIN B12



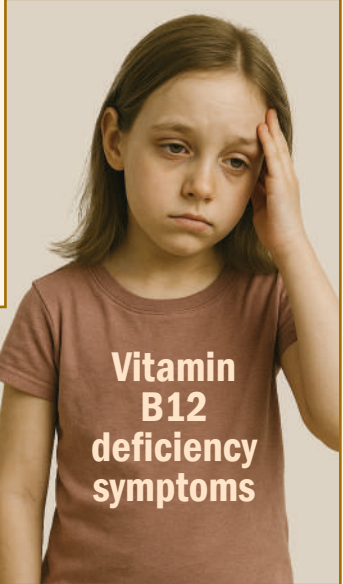
VITAMIN D3



Vitamin D3 deficiency symptoms

Fatigue, bone and muscle pain, and mood changes like depression, hair loss, slow wound healing, and frequent infections.

Fatigue, pale skin, shortness of breath, a sore red tongue, and nerve problems like tingling, numbness, and balance issues.



Vitamin B12 deficiency symptoms

1 in 5 Indians is vitamin D deficient.

High air pollution blocks UV-B rays needed for vitamin D synthesis.

Regional prevalence: 9.4% in North India to 38.8% in East India.

Overall deficiency: 76% of Indians show low vitamin D levels.

High-rise living & overcrowding reduce direct sun exposure.

Infographic: ABHISHEK SINGH

From sea to shelf: seaweed wades its way

SHRUTI KAPOOR

Bachelor of Journalism & Mass Communication

Imagine buying your food wrapped in something that doesn't end up choking the sea or filling up landfills. For years, we used plastic, but it has only harmed nature—blocking drains, killing fish, and even mixing into the air we breathe. Other options, such as newspaper, foil, or paper, didn't really work well. But now there is a new idea: seaweed packaging, a natural wrap that protects our food and then simply melts back into nature.

Leading this innovative shift are a group of passionate volunteers from the Master of Arts in Marketing and Advertising Management (MAMM)-3 programme at Amity University, Lucknow—Anupam, Medha, and Kanan. Their University project, tentatively called Wrapure, aims to introduce seaweed-based edible and non-edible wraps as a sustainable alternative to single-use plastics. Seaweed, after all, is not just ocean vegetation—it's a renewable resource that absorbs over 20 tons of CO₂, creates livelihood opportunities for coastal communities, and offers packaging that's 100% biodegradable.

The urgency is clear. A 2023 report by the Marico Innovation Foundation revealed that although India collects 81% of its plastic waste, only 30% is recycled. The rest piles up in landfills or drifts into oceans, where it breaks down into microplastics and silently enters the food chain. Seaweed packaging, however, naturally dissolves and enriches marine ecosystems instead of destroying them.

As Prof. (Dr.) Sanjay Mohan Johri, Professor, Emeritus, at the University, explained, "While people know about the Green Economy, this concept highlights the blue economy. Seaweed, as an eco-friendly material, makes it a very unique and innovative approach as part of sustainable SDG."

The project is more than an environmental experiment—it has a strong human dimension. Seaweed cultivation is

simple, coastal, and community-driven. By encouraging its use in packaging, Wrapure has the potential to create sustainable jobs and uplift local economies.

Prof. Rohit at Amity University, Lucknow, highlighted this aspect: "If initiatives like Wrapure come in, then maybe we can use it and make a sustainable environment. With seaweed coming into play, it will also enhance and boost the economy of the people living around ocean shores."

For him, seaweed is not just about wrapping food—it's about rebuilding our broken relationship with the ocean and its creatures.

"Yes, I think it's costly, and that's why it is for the rich." He added.

This tension between cost and accessibility makes seaweed packaging a compelling human-interest story. It's about how ordinary people can be inspired to adopt better practices if given the right tools.

Yet, innovation can't succeed without a change in behaviour. As Prof. (Dr.) Sanjay Mohan Johri noted about India's waste segregation practices: "In some parts of India, it's happening very well, but in smaller places, we are still lagging behind. We are not in the habit of throwing waste in the right box. It is more of a behaviour change that we need."

Technology can provide answers, but society must embrace them. Seaweed wraps may dissolve in nature, but our careless habits must dissolve too.

Though still a mock project, Wrapure holds a powerful vision. Every chapati wrapped in seaweed instead of plastic, every sandwich carried without foil, becomes an act of resistance against pollution.

As Prof. Rohit summed up, "Seaweed can play a revolutionary role in packaging. It will be accepted by our planet as pollution and other problems are destroying our mother nature, and we have to rebuild it."

Sometimes, the most powerful solutions don't come from futuristic labs but from the ocean itself. With seaweed, we may finally succeed. ■



Finding fortitude in solitude

MANU YADAV

Master of Advertising & Marketing Management

These days, being connected is pretty much a part of everyday life. Our phones keep buzzing, social media draws us in, and conversations feel never-ending. When the noise quiets down and it's just us, a big question comes to mind. Are we feeling lonely, or are we just by ourselves? This is a question that really connects with young people looking for meaning, balance, and who they are.

Loneliness and solitude are not the same thing. Loneliness can feel like a weight that you didn't ask for. It creates an emptiness inside us. Being alone is something we can choose. It's about choosing to take some time for ourselves, stepping back from the hustle and bustle of others. The book, 'The Art of Being Alone', shares that being alone doesn't mean being cut off from others. It's really about creating a safe place where we can think, heal, and find our true voice again.

This is beautifully shown by young voices. Riya, a student, shares, "Look-

ing through social media often leaves me feeling more alone than when I'm just in my room with a book. Every now and then, I turn off my phone to reconnect with myself." What she says shows the quiet challenges of life in today's digital world.

Ikigai, a Japanese concept meaning 'reason for being,' teaches us that taking quiet moments can reveal what really matters in life. When we take a moment to be with ourselves, we often discover what truly brings us joy and meaning in life. It could be something you enjoy doing, something you love, or just little moments in your daily life. Being alone helps us find the strength to explore ourselves and discover what we're meant to do.

While speaking to Expressions, Vinay Singh, an entrepreneur, shares a different perspective. "Spending years away from my family showed me that being alone doesn't mean feeling empty. It offers a chance to really get to know myself and figure out what I truly want."

It's true that being alone can be really tough for a lot of people. It's easy to confuse being alone with feeling down.

Feeling isolated because of rejection or not having connections can be really overwhelming. When we consciously choose to be alone, it can turn into a source of energy and personal growth instead of feeling sad.

Albert Camus once said, "In order to understand the world, one has to turn away from it on occasion." His words remind us that stepping back from the constant noise and rush of life is not withdrawal, but wisdom. It is in those quiet pauses, when we turn inward, that we begin to truly observe, reflect, and understand the deeper patterns of the world around us.

Their experiences show us that being alone can be tough at times, but it can also bring great rewards if we learn to accept it. For students, professionals, and families, it's essential to view being alone as a strength instead of a weakness. Many of the best ideas and important choices come from those peaceful, quiet times. Is being alone a blessing or a burden? How we see things makes all the difference. When we see solitude as a friend, it turns into one of the best gifts we can offer ourselves. ■





Lucknow bids farewell to the goddess, in colour and devotion

Navratri and Durga Puja festivities drew to a close in Lucknow amidst vibrant devotion and joyous fervour. From Aliganj to Gomti Nagar, the city's temples and puja pandals echoed with chants, conch shells, and the rhythmic beats of dhak. The immersion of Durga idols in the Gomti River marked a poignant farewell to the goddess, accompanied by heartfelt cries of "Asche Bochor Abar

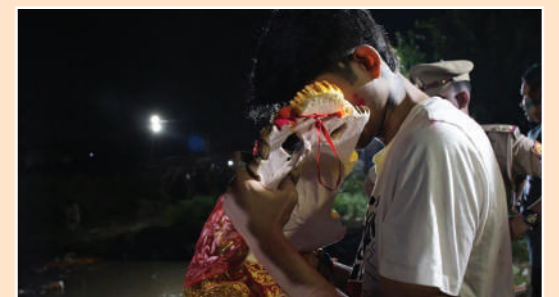
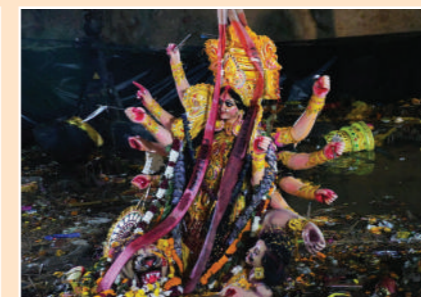
Hobe!" (We'll celebrate again next year). Throughout the festival, the air was infused with colour, music, and community spirit as devotees thronged the pandals to seek blessings and revel in the festive atmosphere. ASCO Campus Photographer, **Suresh Sahu**, captured the essence of these celebrations through his lens, offering a visual glimpse into the city's collective devotion and cultural splendour. ■



DUSSEHRA



VISARJAN



This Navratri, discovering Maa Durga in women demonstrating exemplary courage

KAVYA SHARMA

Bachelor of Journalism & Mass Communication

Navratri is a time when we worship Maa Durga. But beyond our homes and temples, countless women live each day as warriors—unnoticed, uncelebrated—yet embodying the very spirit of Shakti.

In Bhootnath Market, Indira Nagar, Dhruvi sells bangles on a pavement where most pass by without noticing. Married young, abandoned for her Dalit identity, and widowed by tragedy, she had to learn to survive alone in Lucknow.

“Pavements don’t question your caste or surname,” she told me with a quiet pride. Then, meeting my gaze, she added, “They tried to break me, but a goddess does not beg. She fights.”

Not far away, at an Indira Nagar temple, Rekha sits with her daughter, stringing garlands.

“For others, Navratri is devotion. For me, it is hunger or food—depending on how many flowers I sell,” she whispered, her voice cracking. Then, with bitterness, she added, “People bow to idols inside but step on my child outside. If that is devotion, then where is humanity?”

In Munshipulia, Shalini’s story unfolded. Once employed in a restaurant, humiliation drove her out. Today, she runs a modest tea stall.

“I don’t care what people say,” she said firmly. “I will serve tea all my life if it means my children can study in a good school. My fight is my worship.”

In old Lucknow, I met an elderly woman with the Bhagavad Gita resting in her lap, a bright tilak glowing on her forehead. When asked about it, she said, “I am a Brahmin. My family was punished for believing in gods. Today, even Hindus sell their dignity in the name of politics.”

Her eyes carried both anger and pain. Then, almost to herself, she whispered, “People may forget gods, but gods never forget me.” Within the walled city, Fatima—a Muslim vegetable seller—shared



Picture: ABHISHEK SINGH

her journey. She never married, choosing instead to devote her life to her father, who suffers from Alzheimer’s.

“I earn for him. I will not leave him alone,” she said, her eyes brimming with tears. When I asked her thoughts on Maa Durga and Navratri, she smiled faintly:

“I may be Muslim, but I believe this festival belongs to every religion. A woman is powerful herself. Without her, life cannot exist. If a daughter can sacrifice her dreams for her father, what else is Shakti?”

Near Kukrail forest, I met Meera, a mother of seven, bent beneath bundles of firewood heavier than herself. Her husband was left paralysed after a snake

bite, yet she continues to feed not only her children but also stray animals in the forest.

“The forest is my temple, the animals my devotees. Maa Durga killed demons; I fight hunger, fear, and debt every single day,” she said, laughing with a warrior’s spirit even though her body bore the exhaustion.

These women may never be honoured in decorated pandals, yet they are the truest faces of Shakti. Their scars tell stories of survival. Their words echo resilience. And their lives remind us that goddesses are not only carved in stone or clay. They walk among us, in every woman who dares to fight. ■

Screen addiction: probably the biggest epidemic of the 21st century

WHO recommends no screen time for children under 2 years, a maximum of 1 hour per day for ages 2–4, and at least 60 minutes of daily physical activity for children 5–17, while limiting sedentary screen time.

Prof. Pawan Kumar Gupta, KGMU advocated for improved “digital hygiene,” suggesting written screen-use agreements, daily screen limits, device-free home zones, outdoor activities, and structured education on digital responsibility.



Picture: SUPRIYA SRIVASTAVA

SUPRIYA SRIVASTAVA

Bachelor of Journalism & Mass Communication

Picture a household in 1995. Parents, grandparents, and children crowd the living room after dinner to share stories, play games, or assist with homework. Evenings were spent laughing, playing outside, and engaging in important talks.

Fast-forward to 2025. The living room is quiet, not because everyone is asleep. Each family member is glued to their own screen. Mothers are busy watching a serial on some OTT platform, whereas fathers are busy watching cricket or the news on television, while children spend hours watching reels and YouTube shorts.

Doctors, schools, and parents are all concerned about how mobile phone addiction is affecting the health of Generation Z and youngsters.

“We are seeing more children coming to clinics with symptoms like eye fatigue, myopia, headaches, and disturbed sleep patterns due to excessive mobile usage,” says Dr. Amit Kushwaha, a paediatrician in Gomti Nagar.

Long hours devoted to screens means less focus on studies and weaker real-world friendships. For parents, the

impact is more grave. “My son, who is 12 years old, was using his phone for practically every free moment,” recalls Mrs. Stuti Sharma, a mother from Natkur, Lucknow.

“His mood and sleep started to suffer, and he became disinterested in his studies. We made the decision to implement a screen-time schedule and now urge him to participate in group activities and play outside. We play badminton and cricket together, thus his confidence and behaviour have improved as a result,” she added. Parents must make sure their kids take regular breaks and strike a balance between screen time and exercise.

“Young people often feel overwhelmed by expectations and personal problems. Phones offer an easy escape, but it is not a solution. It is important to help them develop resilience and seek healthier ways to cope,” says Dr. Meena Gupta, Professor, Psychology Department at Amity University.

Lack of social interaction is causing Developmental Delays, Virtual Autism, Language Issues, Obesity, Myopia, and much more, which is as dangerous as any other addiction. A study found that people who eat while watching television or using any screen tend to consume more calories. As a result, this habit often leads

to unnecessary weight gain. Rohit Verma, a first-year student at Bennett University, admitted, “Due to my phone addiction, I stopped participating in outdoor sports and exercising regularly. As a result, my energy dropped and I became physically weaker. I also began avoiding social events because I lacked confidence. A friend suggested trying meditation and yoga, and since then, I’ve been feeling much better.”

A study published in the Indian Journal of Paediatrics underscores the scale of the problem: 56.7% of children had an average daily screen time of over 120 minutes, with 83.1% using two or more screen types.

According to Dr. Shyam Saxena, a Physician at Apollo Hospital, “Parents can help children by setting specific times for phone use and encouraging activities such as reading, drawing, or playing outside. They can also keep phones away during meals and make mealtime a family time. Getting kids involved in cooking, gardening, or helping at home, as well as playing board games or going for walks together, can keep them busy and reduce their screen time.”

Small steps such as family time, outdoor play, and hobbies can help them stay healthy and connected. ■

The untold struggles of late-night delivery workers



ASHKA JAIN

Bachelor of Journalism & Mass Communication

In India, quick commerce has transformed urban living. Platforms such as Zepto, Swiggy Instamart, and Blinkit deliver groceries, snacks, and essentials within minutes. For customers, it's unmatched convenience—no need to plan ahead or wait in lines. But behind this efficiency are delivery workers who brave long hours, tight deadlines, and health risks. Their struggles seldom make headlines, even though they carry the true cost of our convenience.

The most visible feature of quick-commerce is the countdown timer promising "10-minute delivery." For customers, it means efficiency. For delivery workers, it's constant pressure. Companies emphasise their dark stores and pre-sorted inventories, but the final stretch still depends on workers racing against the clock. Rushed

rides, shortcuts, and the constant ticking timer often mean safety is compromised.

Working late hours brings unique dangers—low visibility, reckless drivers, stray animals, and poorly lit roads. Accidents are common, and while some platforms provide insurance, workers complain that the claims process is complicated and slow. In many cases, medical bills, repairs, and lost income fall directly on them.

The human body isn't built for night shifts. Doctors warn that disrupted sleep cycles affect long-term health, increasing risks of diabetes, high blood pressure, and fatigue. Delivery workers face irregular meals, sleep deprivation, and body strain from long hours on two-wheelers. These issues accumulate silently, creating hidden health crises.

On many apps, customer ratings influence worker income. Low ratings often mean fewer orders or lost incentives, regardless of whether delays are due to

traffic or weather. Muhammad, a 32-year-old worker in Lucknow, shared, "A customer once told me, 'If you can't deliver in 10 minutes, why are you doing this job?' I wanted to say I am not a machine, but I stayed quiet. If I argue, my rating goes down, and that affects my income." Such interactions leave workers feeling disposable, adding to mental strain.

Platforms promote 'flexible work,' but incentive structures tell a different story. Day shifts bring lesser earnings because orders are spread out, while night shifts offer higher incentives due to fewer workers. Many feel compelled to work late into the night, forced to choose between safer hours with low pay or riskier hours with higher returns. Flexibility, in reality, doesn't mean freedom.

Some companies have introduced night-shift bonuses, helmets, and basic health coverage. They also argue that shorter delivery distances reduce the need for speeding. But workers say these measures look better on paper than in practice. Insurance claims are difficult, benefits are poorly communicated, and rising customer expectations only add to the pressure.

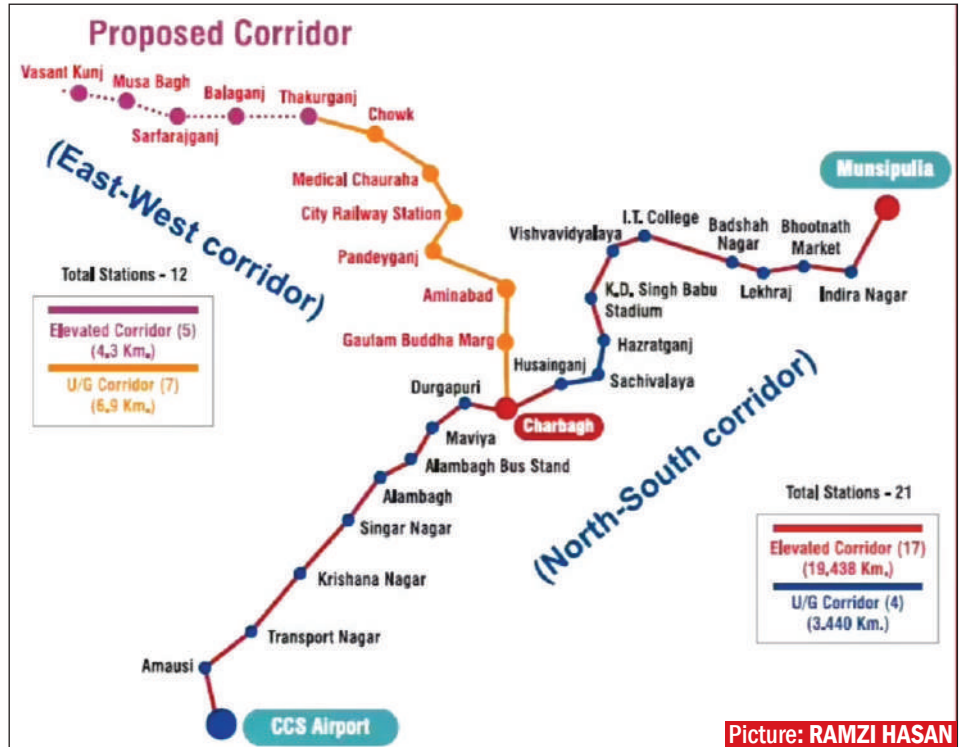
Late-night delivery exists because customers demand it. Unpredictable schedules and instant gratification mean midnight orders are here to stay. But convenience must not come at the expense of worker dignity, health, and safety. If these services are to continue, companies must provide realistic delivery times, stronger safety protections, and easier access to benefits. Regulators need to ensure fair practices. And customers, too, must show patience and understanding instead of treating delivery times as guarantees.

The modern economy thrives on instant gratification, but its foundation rests on workers who keep riding through the night—engines running, eyes heavy, and clocks ticking. Ensuring their safety and dignity is a shared responsibility between corporations, policymakers, and consumers. Until then, while cities sleep, delivery workers will continue to carry more than just packages—they carry the weight of an economy addicted to speed. ■

Green signal at last: Lucknow Metro's Phase 1B expansion, with 12 stations



Approved by	Union Cabinet
Added Distance	11 km
New Stations	12
Distance	11 km
Total Distance	35 km



RAMZI HASAN

Bachelor of Journalism & Mass Communication

On 12 August 2025, the Union Cabinet, chaired by Prime Minister Mr. Narendra Modi, approved the Phase 1B metro project in Lucknow. The new corridor will stretch 11.16 km and include 12 stations—seven underground and five elevated—at a cost of ₹5801 crore. Of the total route, 4.286 km will be elevated and 6.879 km underground. The elevated stations will include Thakurganj, Balaganj, Sarfrazganj, Moosabagh, and Vasant Kunj. The underground ones will be Charbagh, Gautam Buddha Marg, Aminabad, Pandeyganj, City Railway Station, Medical Crossing, and Chowk.

The route will connect key parts of the city, such as Aminabad, Yahiyaganj, Pandeyganj, Chowk, KGMU, and even tourist attractions such as Bara Imambara, Chota Imambara, Clock Tower, and Rumi Darwaza. Starting from Charbagh and ending at Vasant Kunj, this corridor will make

travelling easier while also improving connectivity to the railway station and bus depots. For local vendors, the project is expected to bring new opportunities, as increased footfall around stations will benefit both businesses and commuters.

Students and commuters also have high expectations for this new phase. Speaking to Expressions, Iram Hussain, a B.Tech 3rd year student at Integral University, said, "There should be no empty counters. Someone should always be present; otherwise, people crowd around a single counter. Digital displays for train timings and charging ports would also make the experience better." On safety, she added, "Women-only coaches and visible security personnel are a must to make passengers feel safe."

The plan for this East-West corridor had been in the pipeline for a while. The Uttar Pradesh government sanctioned the detailed project report in March 2024, the Network Planning Group cleared it in July 2024, and the Public Investment Board gave its recommendation in May 2025.

Another commuter, Ishan, a 20-year-old B.Sc. student at Charak Institute of Paramedical Studies, shared his thoughts, "I prefer underground stations because they save space, provide protection from the weather, and most importantly, reduce traffic congestion." He also supported the idea of a dedicated women's coach for safety.

The East-West corridor will connect seamlessly with the existing North-South line at Charbagh, taking the total metro network in Lucknow to 35 km, building upon the 23 km stretch already running from Amausi Airport to Munshipuliya. With this expansion, an additional 2 lakh passengers are expected to travel daily.

The Lucknow Metro is not just about smoother travel—it's a big step forward for the city, combining modern infrastructure with opportunities for growth.

The upcoming corridor is not just about better connectivity, but also about redefining urban mobility and ensuring that Lucknow continues to grow as a modern, sustainable city. ■

From memes to movements

The TikTok generation takes on tradition in Nepal



BHAVNA SONI

Bachelor of Journalism & Mass Communication

Gen Z has been traditionally and casually labelled as a bunch of phone-addicted, meme-obsessed kids who'd rather scroll than stand up for something. They've been called casual, distracted, even apathetic. But in September 2025, Nepal's young people turned that stereotype upside down. What started as frustration over a government crackdown on social media exploded into one of the country's biggest youth-led uprisings, proving that this generation is anything but disengaged.

It all began with a spark: the government's move to repress online platforms. For a generation that lives and breathes digital spaces, this wasn't just about losing TikTok or Discord—it was an attack on their voice, their connection, their world. But instead of shrugging it off, Nepal's Gen Z hit back with a movement that was bold, creative, and impossible to ignore. They took the tools they'd been mocked for—memes, hashtags, viral edits—and turned them into weapons of resistance.

The young have always been a catalyst for change. Think of Nelson Mandela, who started off as a student leader and

was even expelled from university for his involvement in a protest. Or Aung San Suu Kyi, Bill Clinton, and Jacinda Ardern, all of whom started as student politicians.

The protests weren't just about blocked apps. They tapped into deeper frustrations: a government riddled with corruption, a job market that felt rigged, and a future that seemed out of reach for too many. Gen Z brought their signature flair to the streets, weaving anime references, trending sounds, and sharp-witted slogans into their fight. Protest signs quoted viral memes alongside calls for justice. Chants mixed pop culture with demands for change. It was a movement that felt young, vibrant, and fiercely serious, all at once.

When the state pushed back with tear gas, curfews, and even bullets, these so-called 'soft' kids didn't flinch. Videos captured students shielding one another, volunteers racing to help the injured, and teenagers staring down armed police with nothing but cardboard signs and raw courage. Some were hurt; others didn't make it home. Yet their resolve never wavered. Nepal's youth sent a clear message: they're not just here to scroll—they're here to shape the future.

What made this uprising stand out was how Gen Z blended digital savviness

with real-world grit. They organised on encrypted chats, spread their messages through viral videos, and used humour to keep the movement relatable. Far from being carefree, their creativity made the protests accessible, pulling in people who might've otherwise stayed on the sidelines. It was a masterclass in turning 'time-wasting' apps into tools for revolution. The fallout was seismic. The Prime Minister stepped down, curfews were imposed, and an interim government took over. But the real victory was bigger than politics—it was a shift in how the world sees Gen Z. Nepal's youth proved that their digital fluency isn't a flaw; it's a superpower. Their ability to mix irony with urgency, memes with meaning, showed a generation that's not just reacting to the world but reshaping it.

Nepal's streets became a stage for a new kind of activism, one that speaks in hashtags and history, satire and strength. Gen Z showed they're not just consumers of trends—they're creators of change. Behind their casual vibe and quick-witted humour lies a fierce demand for fairness, dignity, and a future they can believe in. This wasn't just a protest; it was a wake-up call. Nepal's Gen Z didn't just fight for their country—they rewrote their own story. ■