

**(PEN)DEMIC DURING THE PANDEMIC!**

PENNING DOWN THOUGHTS, IMAGINATIONS, STORIES IS NOT THE SAME FOR EVERYONE. | P4

**CRACKERS OR LONG, HEALTHY LIFE? CHOICE IS YOURS**

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AMITY SCHOOL OF COMMUNICATION



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November 2021

# A journey of 100-cr vaccination mark from anxiety to assurance

Vaishali Gautam

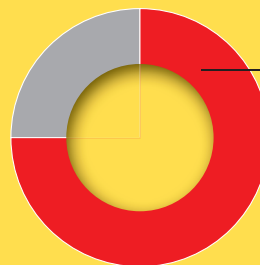
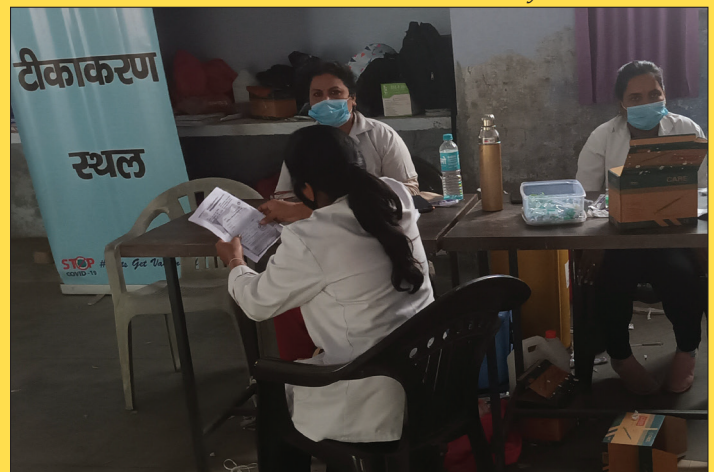
**N**ot too far back we all were going through massive turmoil. There were discourses everywhere about the hot topic of vaccination—some fuelled uncertainties while others raised awareness. Breaking the barriers of tons of rumors associated with it, India achieved the 100-crore vaccination mark in October, thus becoming the second country to achieve this milestone after China that has crossed the 200-crore mark.

With nine states and union territories achieving 100% coverage of the eligible population of the first dose, the graph of India's vaccination drive has been rising steeply.

Since March last year, after a long phase of lockdowns and chaos, the only ray of hope that was visible to the entire human race was of the vaccines. It seemed no less than 'Sanjeevni Booti' to mankind. However, the reality was far from ideal as flood of rumors and misinformation came in the way of people getting their jabs. Some people believed them, some got doubtful, while others showed wisdom and took the initiative.

Continued on P3

Photo courtesy: Vaishali Gautam



**Almost  
75%**  
of the eligible population has been vaccinated at least with the first dose in India.

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## Editor's Desk

### 'Achche din' back on campus but Omicron threat looms large

One are the days when almost for 20 months, the campus looked deserted as we remained in 'Work from Home' mode, but life returned with usual hustle-bustle as students returned to their face-to-face classes in November. This was followed by physical mode of examination that began in November under strict Covid protocol with authorities at Noida, Greater Noida and Lucknow campuses of Amity University making elaborate arrangements keeping in mind Covid appropriate behavior.



"It is a new experience and somewhere we feel tense since the modalities from online examination are very different from offline exams", students said adding they feel different. Online examination is no test of our ability as it was more related to hardware and network issues".

As we all moved into physical mode of teaching & examination, 'Omicron' the new variant of Covid-19 emerged as 'variant of concern' causing widespread alarm after it was first detected in South Africa and then sporadic cases being reported from few countries.

While it is too early to suggest will it be deadlier than the previous variants or will be milder in form, health authorities of different countries have swung into action by imposing restrictions on international travelling and sealing borders.

Countries across the world were already grappling with declining economy and while they planned to open in full 'Omicron' struck.

The virus seems to be spreading fast as it seems to be associated with an increase in R (Replication) factor thus posing risk of faster transmission.

We in India with 135 crore population need to have a guarded approach based on our experience with the second wave and the poor health infrastructure. We have certainly come a long way in our fight against the pandemic that was given a much-needed boost with fast-paced vaccination in the country. Will vaccination be effective against this variant is a big question as scientists are in early stages of research.

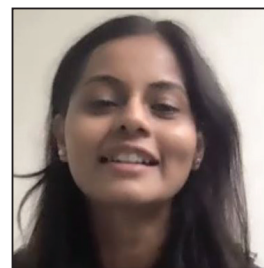
We need to take precautions and get fully vaccinated as it is the only option at present to combat this deadly virus and its variants.

Prof (Dr) Sanjay M Johri

## 'Be ready to learn and innovate'

*"True guidance is a torchbearer in a dark forest."*

It is rightly said by someone, seeking counsel from elders can set the route for betterment of young ones and to achieve this goal, Amity School of Communication (ASCO) frequently organizes alumni sessions. Providing students with an opportunity to improve their strategizing skills. A conducive session was conducted by Anmol Ratan Singh, ASCO alumna (2011-14 batch), Strategy Head at Moshi-Moshi, Bangalore.



As a strategist, Anmol emphasized that reading your audience's reactions and opinions play an important role in the field. The first and foremost step according to her, is cautiously learning about your audience, which in turn, aids in finalizing the form of content and showing the real research and its impacts to reach cultivable content. Answering the moderator's questions she added, how, during Covid, the event companies and strategists were working together to reach out to their audience.

Pandemic had confined people within four walls causing loneliness, anxiety, and depression, but with the help of strategists, many event companies started working by involving people online. "We were organizing virtual parties, events and mental health programs, adhering

### ALUMNI CORNER

to Covid advisories to ensure people that they are in safe hands." Being the head, she emphasised on boosting the morale of team members to ensure a better outcome.

Sharing experience from her initial years, she suggested students not to look for exposure or opportunities in branded and reputed organizations, rather they should be proactive and take the opportunity in hand, work hard and then make it big. She also shared the various ups and downs in her career graph, making it easier for those starting to relate. Anmol also reiterated the importance of being multilingual, with good command over at least two languages, learning and exploring different software for better strategizing skills and basically learning every step of the way.

She acknowledged the role of ASCO's faculty and facilities provided by the department for practical learning. She added, how the department's dedication to each of its students played a significant role in her overall growth, development, and placement in her dream career.

On a concluding note, she advised students to take care of their mental health because it plays a crucial role in the thought process, daily lives and even creative mind mapping. "If the thinking process is sharp, only then can one take the responsibility of imparting innovative ideas," she concluded.

Ankita Bhatt

# Normal life is good, chorus people

Shreya Kumar

From rushing to morning classes and hanging out with friends to the good old festival celebrations, everything had come to a standstill since the onslaught of Covid-19. It is only recently that things are getting close to normal and no one's missing a chance to be a part of the fun. The newfound freedom tastes sweet and even the dash of Covid protocols does not seem to bother anyone because finally, life seems to be getting back on track.

Pandemic and the corresponding lockdowns were trying for many of us, especially the students. On the flip side, many also had a change of heart and got used to the relaxed lifestyle that the pandemic gave us. In a free-wheeling chat with Lucknowites about their views on the same,

## BYE, BYE COVID BLUES

Sweta Thakur, a college-going student, says, "I had to study in online mode during the last year of my school life. I didn't want that to happen for college too. So, I'm extremely happy and excited to be on campus. Normal feels so good."

Sharing about her return to the physical mode of education, Sakshi Anand quips, "It was more relaxing when the mode of education was online. We were able to attend classes from our comfort zone." Similarly, Kushagra Nigam, another student, adds, "Going to campus is fun & educating but, the commuting part is tiresome".

While the pandemic was bleak for all, it was liberating for those who had to be on the move due to the nature of their job. Nikhil Kumar, a Swiggy delivery guy says, "It was all quiet & noiseless earlier on roads but now it's again getting stuck in traffic for long hours since schools and colleges have reopened. The struggle is real, as the lockdown is over and traffic jams are again a concern when you have to reach your destination on time. But at the end of the day, we can't complain because no matter what minor struggles we might face, nothing was worse than the pandemic and its uncertainty."

This pandemic has taught us to appreciate the small things in life. While it might not be easy getting back on track after 18 months of constant uncertainty, the benefits far outweigh the downsides. Aayushi, a 20-year-old, rightly says, "After so much anguish and dismay, finally we are getting back to normal. Therefore, I'm so happy to back on track".

It's now up to us, to get acclimatized to the new way of life and give in to the uncertainty with as much excitement as before. We cannot let the ease of online life win over the vivacity and thrill of the offline world. As long as we don't allow our spirits to go down, nothing can!

# A journey of 100-cr vaccination mark from anxiety to assurance

Continued from P1

Sonam, a student from Lucknow, after getting her second jab shared, "I got the Covaxin and after the first dose, unlike a lot of other people I didn't get a fever or any sort of illness. We've got the understanding that the after-effects of the vaccine vary from person to person due to various reasons and whatsoever, it is not something to be afraid of. The kind of efforts that have been put in through the drive is appreciative."

Meanwhile, the government left no stone unturned to eliminate such misinformation, initiate awareness campaigns to encourage people to go to vaccination centres. Commenting on the same, Ritika, a healthcare worker from Lucknow,

**India administered 180 million doses in August which was more than what all G7 nations put together during the month**

assigned with the job of vaccinating people said, "In the initial phase, people were hesitant due to rumors of deaths and severe illnesses after getting the jab but by now everyone has become quite aware. Through news and all sorts of media platforms, people are well informed. Some people coming to take their jabs admit that initially, they were hesitant but with time their confusions were cleared."

With lots of doubts and suspicion on the vaccination drive in a populous country like India, reaching the mark of a 100 crore in 275 days is no less than history being created. With the inoculation drive being launched on the 16th of January this year, this milestone has been reached in just 10 months. The government aims to get the country's entire adult population vaccinated by December 2021 and we must get this pledge fulfilled. So, if you're yet to do it, go get vaccinated.

# (Pen)demic during the Pandemic!

Saumya Agrawal

Penning down thoughts, perceptions, imaginations, ideas, stories is not the same for everyone. To some it comes easily, while for others it may take a while to get into shape. Pandemic though did give an opportunity to people to vent their creativity with many taking up the pen.

Prof. Dr. Sanjay Mohan Johri, Director of Amity School of Communication Lucknow and a journalist wrote two books and published one of them during the pandemic. Sharing about writing during the

**“As journalists, organizational compulsions don't allow you to write on issues which you can mock. 'Corona' helped me to do this as a protagonist**

**Prof. Dr. Sanjay Mohan Johri**

**Whenever my head is heavy with thoughts, writing-like a perfect partner- is there for me as I pour my thoughts onto a blank paper**

**Aashi Agrawal | STUDENT**

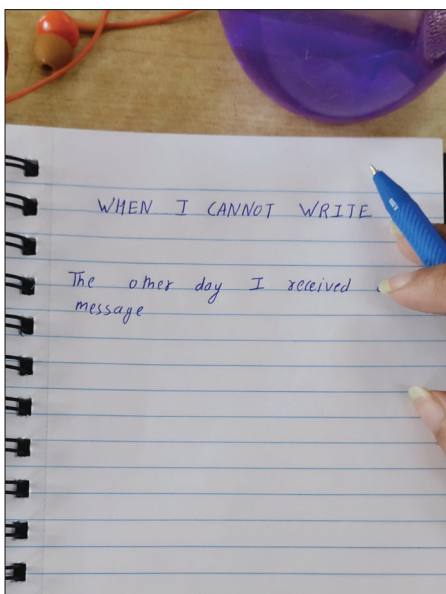


Photo: Saumya Agrawal

pandemic, he said, “Pandemic gave me time to surf through a good collection of notes that I had penned down earlier but never got enough time to focus upon. With so much of negativity all around during those

days, picking up my pen and writing became my stress buster.”

Being a journalist for long, it has never been difficult for him to pick up thoughts and put it into words. “I could never write a ‘satire’ and wondered how writers do it with ease. As journalists, organizational compulsions don't allow you to write on issues, which you can mock. Corona helped me to do this as a protagonist. One day I sat down & could pen down 1500 odd words in a flow and posted it on my blog, which my friends not only enjoyed

but encouraged me to continue, and today I have even my second book ready, which will be a satire”, he added.

Similarly, Pratham Agrawal, final year B.Tech (CSE) student, who used writing as an escape during the pandemic said, “There has been a lot of negativity lately, however, writing is my way of coping with all the stress. Lockdowns prompted me to write more. Moreover, it provided me ample time to hone the art of writing ghazals among other things. I was able to create my own write-up page on social media and contributed my write-ups to some Anthologies.”

Words have been there for all of us when nothing was, and pandemic is the perfect example. They carried as much hope as they could and delivered it to everyone's door. Aashi Agrawal, a student of Amity University Lucknow said, “Writing happened to me like a stranger you come across once in a while, while sitting at a coffee shop near your house. But when the pandemic hit; writing and I went from being strangers to lovers and soon to be partners in live-in relationship with ups and downs. Whenever my head is heavy with thoughts, writing-like a perfect partner- is there for me to make me pour down my thoughts onto a blank paper.”

Playing with words provided succor to those who wanted to vent their creativity amidst chaos. So, what are you waiting for? Go ahead and get your pen and paper out and start your own (pen)demic!

# Seasonal viral infections, Covid leave people on tenterhooks

Drishti Vanaik

For more than a year, the dreaded Covid-19 virus posed a major health risk across the world. However, sudden surge in dengue, and malaria, Zika virus coupled with seasonal viral infection in parts of northern India has added to the worries posing manifold health issues. On top of that, the overlapping symptoms of these diseases make it hard to differentiate between them, which leads to a series of pathological tests resulting in prolonged diagnosis.

Pandemic, though becoming more 'Endemic' now with ups & downs in its number across the country, still poses in front of us a challenge of maintaining the Covid-appropriate behaviour. With Navratra, Diwali & Chath Puja over, and Christmas & New Year-around the corner of the ongoing wedding season, the risk of people flouting the Covid-19 protocols is highly likely.

The Hindustan Times recently stated that over 1,530 cases of dengue have been reported in Delhi this year so far, with 1,200 recorded in October alone, the highest count for the month in the last four years. Adding to the dismay, 21-year-old Rhea Srivastava, from Lucknow, added, "I have been experiencing high fever, constant headache and muscle pain since couple of days and got myself tested for both Covid and Dengue".

Just like at the time of Covid Lockdown, hotspots and red zones came into consideration, similarly many Dengue Hotspots like Aishbagh, Kaiserbagh, Aliganj, Indira Nagar etc., in Lucknow have also been identified. Madhurima, a college going student, coming from the hotspot area of Chinhat in Lucknow adds, "I'm terrified since I reside in a Dengue hotspot area".

Sadaf Chaudhary from Chowk, Lucknow, says, "People are very susceptible to common cold and viral in this weather and prevalence of diseases like dengue etc is only adding to their woes." This dilemma is being faced by Sameer Rizvi, a working professional, residing in Chowk, Lucknow who says, "I don't know what test I should go for. Since, both the infections are at large, one is unable to identify what one is encountering".

During the festive and marriage season it can easily be seen how people are gallivanting around with no masks, no social distancing and no sanitizers. A look at popular markets like Kapurthala, Aminabad, Chowk, Hazratganj clearly show how people are flouting all Covid protocols. Meanwhile, people have their own reasons for flouting these norms as a shopper quipped, "Covid is now dwindling, I have taken both shots of vaccine so what is the tension now."

However, considering the situation in Europe, which has become the new Covid hotspot it is not wise to flout the protocols. "How ironical it is, that one is encircled in a vicious cycle of detrimental infections, still one is willing to give up on safety measurements and protocols. It's imperative on the part of the people to follow safety measures and take the jab to protect oneself from Covid and at least reduce the intensity of one, since another (disease) is ready to attack", cautions Dr BS Bhandari, a physician

residing in Lucknow.

While there continues to be a stress on the importance of getting vaccinated against Covid-19, keeping seasonal illnesses at bay is equally important to put a halt at this vicious cycle of infections and staying safe. The age old saying "Prevention is better than cure" indeed stands true.

Graphic: Drishti Vanaik





# Students came, saw, learned and enjoyed!

UNICEF-ASCO  
event series:  
Podcast  
& video  
production,  
creative writing  
workshops  
help build  
professional  
skills among  
budding  
journos

Sanjana Saxena

**W**ith the vision of sensitising next generation journalists about their commitment towards the society, a fruitful association of Amity School of Communication (ASCO) and UNICEF, Uttar Pradesh, concluded after three months of skill building and enthralling activities. To instil much-needed empathy in the youth, a myriad of activities were planned and executed to integrate innovation and skills into the transformative potential of youth.

Embarking on this journey, an insightful panel discussion on COVID-19 and its impact on young minds was held, laying the foundation of a brighter tomorrow. Covering psychological, economical and overall impact of the widespread pandemic, a renowned set of panelists from different fields threw a light on the 360-degree impact of COVID-19 in our lives and ways of manifesting a positive outlook to emerge victorious in these trying times.

The panel discussion was followed by three different workshops that aimed to equip the students with knowledge and know-how of the latest tools and platforms of disseminating information. Renowned resource persons, namely RJ Raashi, Radio City; Midhat Ullah Hasani, BBC World News; and Rohit Vats, journalist conducted interactive online workshops with the students on podcast production, video production, and new tools of information dissemination respectively. Keeping the nature of the workshops as task-based and interactive, the students first proactively learned from the resource persons and then implemented their learnings through given tasks towards the end of each workshop. To top it all, they got feedback and appreciation from the resource person on their respective creations.

The workshops were keenly paired with three competitions namely: "Voice Your Thoughts" (Online Podcasting Competition), "Youth Warriors" (Video Making Competition), and "Abhirachna" (Creative Writing Competition-held offline in the campus) in which all the students submitted original projects of their own on given topics in the stipulated time. An effective blend of learning and creativity was

thus created that helped develop a knack of producing content about the prevailing issues of importance and bringing them to the forefront.

While professional and social commitments were being inculcated among budding journalists, comprehending the possible challenges was also of utmost importance. In order to achieve that, a virtual panel discussion on journalists reporting from the edge as frontline warriors was conducted with a panel of eminent journalists who shared their

**Past 3 months with UNICEF have been really astonishing. Got so much to explore and learn not only about the issues I was working on but also about my own skills. This journey helped me to grow both professionally and personally**

**Abhishek Singh Gaur | BA(J&MC), FINAL YEAR**

experience on the field, the hurdles at ground zero and ways of tackling them to serve their purpose as 'the fourth pillar' of democracy.

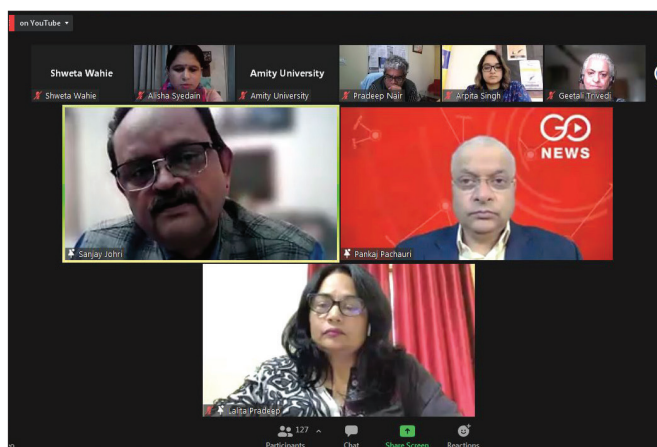
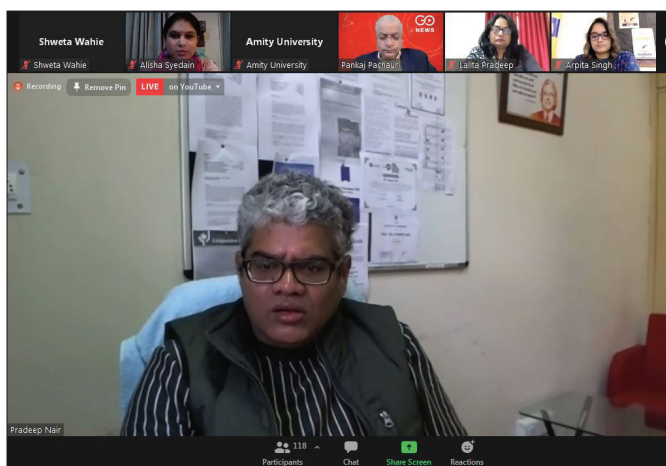
Last but not the least was the final panel discussion on "Learning during the pandemic- Exposing the digital divide", wherein a set of es-

teemed panelists including Pankaj Pachauri, Founder, GoNews India; Lalita Pradeep, Director, SIET, UP; and Dr Pradeep Nair, Prof. and Dean, School of Journalism, Mass Communication and New Media, Central University of Himachal Pradesh; weighed in on the digital divide, which was further widened by the global pandemic. The rich variety in the panel covered the perspective of media, government as well as education. Thought-provoking data and impactful news reports were

shared to help students meticulously unravel the widespread impact of pandemic-driven online shift of education.

A valedictory ceremony followed by award distribution was

also conducted on the campus to felicitate young achievers who won prizes for their entries in different competitions. The ASCO-UNICEF association thus enriched creativity, innovation and empathetic approach- a must-have in the post-pandemic world.



# Festive sales shot in the arm for traders, boost economy

Rinil Srivastava

**A**fter a sluggish growth courtesy the pandemic, the country's economy got a much-needed boost from sales during the festive season culminating with Diwali.

According to MOSPI (The Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation) data, the Indian economy shrank by 7.3 percent in the April-June quarter of the fiscal year 2021. India's GDP fell by a whopping 24.4 percent in April-June 2020 (Indian Express). However, a new zeal and freshness has been witnessed after a long gap in the markets this year. According to CAIT (The Confederation of All India Traders), people flocked to markets for festive purchases, generating Rs. 1.25 lakh crore in revenue. Traditional Diwali items like earthen lamps, candles, home decor goods, sweets, clothes, etc were in high demand, bringing in significant revenue for Indian artisans. Moreover, sales of gold jewellery and silverware reached to the tune of Rs 9000 crore. (Indian Express)

"The pandemic has caused people to suffer in every aspect, both physically and financially," says Manish

Khanna, owner of a garment shop in Lucknow. Due to lockdowns and no public gatherings the previous year, earning money was extremely difficult. This year things are gradually returning to normal. People are no longer afraid to shop during festivals."

Similarly, Jaanki Kumari, Lucknow based diya and god sculpture trader rued, "The Coronavirus caused us a lot of damage financially. During Diwali, making and selling diyas is the only source of revenue for our family. However, because of Covid-19, people were so terrified that they either refrained from buying or only bought a small number of diyas & deity sculptures. We had suffered a significant setback last year. However, this year's festival season brought a glimpse of hope, as people purchased diyas in large number thus helping us earn money."

"Festivals are all about eating and gifting sweets," says Kritam Sharma, a sweet vendor in Lucknow. "However, during the unusual circumstances last year, we witnessed a reduction in clients purchasing sweets throughout the festive season. It's because of Covid-19

dread, as well as the fact that people weren't going to each other's houses to greet with sweets. This year though it was different as people flocked to the shops to purchase sweets thus fuelling our revenue."

After enduring so much hardship due to Covid-19 crisis both physically & financially, festivals this year have bolstered the economy, reignited enthusiasm and added a ray of optimism in everyone's lives.

Confronting the evil antagonist, better known as COVID-19, amidst festivities that usually go hand-in-hand with zeal and excitement, is a rather sad affair. With plenty of festivals lined up in a row, most of us find autumn to be a happening part of the year. For us, it is all about feast, happiness and enjoyment. On the other hand, it is one of the major sources of earning for many. However, it was observed that the global pandemic has been unfortunate for the corporate economy for quite a while now as sales during the festival season decreased due to COVID-19, further resulting to a drop in the Indian economy.

**“This year, people flocked to markets for festive purchases, generating Rs. 1.25 lakh crore in revenue. Traditional Diwali items like earthen lamps, candles, home decor goods, sweets, clothes, etc were in high demand, bringing in significant revenue for Indian artisans**

– CAIT

**“This year's festival season brought a glimpse of hope, as people were making purchases more enthusiastically**

– **Jaanvi Kumari** | A LUCKNOW-BASED  
DIYAS AND GOD SCULPTURE  
TRADER

# Crackers or long, healthy life?

## Choice is yours

Photo courtesy: Garima Dobhal

Garima Dobhal

Everybody loves enjoying the glittery view of firecrackers painting the sky with colors and sparkles. Needless to say, crackers have become so common now that any special occasion, ranging from India winning a cricket match or the moon finally taking a peak through the clouds on Karwachauth; is now incomplete without bursting firecrackers. While inhaling the polluted air is a threat to humanity, people fail to understand the severity of situation.

**Bursting firecrackers for entertainment is harmful for the environment and our health. It also scares animals**

Mohit Yadav | COLLEGE STUDENT

Expressions Reporter spoke to Lucknowites about their views on bursting crackers and this is what they had to say. Sanjana Arora, 35, housewife, mentioned, "Even after restrictions on sale of firecrackers in different regions of the country, it is sad to see people using firecrackers as a symbol of happiness, which

in reality is injurious to our health. We need to think of people suffering from various health issues as they cannot exist in this kind of environment. Not only this, but stray animals are also scared of noises emitted when crackers are burst. One must think where we are headed before bursting crackers."

There are also events like wedding ceremonies where fireworks are symbols of happiness and gaiety. "Bursting firecrackers for entertainment is harmful. It scares animals. I am against bursting of crackers; it is not at all good for us, the animals, and environment", said Mohit Yadav, a 24-year-old college student who provides shelter to stray animals during wedding and festive season.

The festival of Diwali is often blamed for significant increase in air and noise pollution. Taking a stand against it, Utkarsh Yadav, a 20-year-old college student, who loves firing crackers, quipped, "We express our happiness regarding any special occasion through crackers. There are many ways to express our gratitude towards God, and this is one way through which we show our love, affection and thank God for giving us a day to celebrate. Truly it is not good due to its negative effects, but we are not doing it every day."

Whereas Swastik Singh, a 35-year-old working professional, said, "I noticed that small children, as well as elders of my age, are busy bursting crackers near their houses. Instead of teaching their children,

**Vehicular pollution, industrial pollution, construction, coal thermal plants, and stubble burning contribute heavily to the pollution along with crackers. On the other hand, the livelihood of lakhs of workers associated with firecracker industry depends on sales of crackers.**

they accompany them. Children, young or old, need to learn the importance of life to be fit and healthy."

Firecrackers light up the whole sky for a few moments but have significant after-effects. Dense cloud of

smog engulfed several cities post festivals, with nation's capital Delhi and NCR shutting schools and colleges indefinitely and imposing WFH orders due to air quality hovering between "severe" and "hazardous". Vehicular pollution, industrial pollution, construction, coal thermal plants, and stubble burning contribute heavily to the pollution as well. On the other hand, livelihood of lakhs of workers associated with firecracker industry that is still recovering from the loss due to pandemic, depends on their sales. As it seems, the way to pollution-free India is not limited to abstaining from bursting crackers, but much more than that.



# Waning Covid lends sheen to Chhath Puja celebrations

Photo courtesy: Anjali Singh

Anjali Singh

Considering all the precautions and given the better situation of Covid-19, people celebrated Chhath Puja with fervour. Eastern UP and Bihar, where the festival is celebrated on a large scale, it was a challenge for the government to maintain safety protocols at ghats but the fest passed off peacefully.

Chhath Puja, the festival of thanking Surya Dev (Sun god) is observed for four days— Nahay Khay, Kharna, Sandhya Arghya, and Usha Arghya. Commenting on the sanctity of this festival, Uma Devi, a female devotee from Bihar said, “I have been observing Chhath Puja for more than 15 years now, and it is quite tough, but Chhathi Maiya has made us celebrate the festival with the whole family after a gap of one year. We pray to get out of this vicious cycle of infections, and live as we used to before Covid.”

**Even though the devotees have taken both the doses of vaccination, we are urging them to wear masks, and follow social distancing**

**Rahul Tiwari** | POLICE OFFICIAL

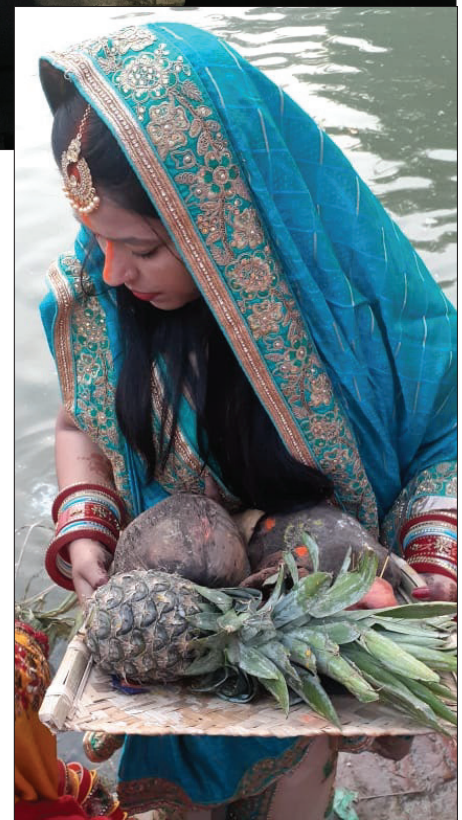
The officials also did not lag in assuring the devotees about order and security. Rahul Tiwari, a police officer present at Lucknow's Shri Chitragupt Ghat, said, “Even though the devotees have taken both the doses of vaccination, we are urging



them to wear masks and follow social distancing. Looking at the controlled situation, we are witnessing the celebration and it is our foremost duty to make everyone follow it.”

The women are seen with great enthusiasm observing strict fasting periods, making prasad, and offering prayers to Surya Dev. “It is a pleasure for me to do Chhath Parv where every member of the family comes together and celebrates. This year, it is very special to see the fun, joy, and people offering prayers at the ghats. Making Thekuas (prasad) and doing all the preparations before going to the ghats are special parts”, said Jyoti Mishra, a devotee residing in Lucknow.

Another devotee from Lucknow, Renu Singh said, “I kept fast for the first time this year, though I was



following all the rituals after observing my mother, elder sister, and mother-in-law on how. The festival

of purity is as sweet as the celebrations, preparations, and bonding with loved ones."

Markets were buzzing as usual. A college student Akanksha Singh said, "It is wonderful to see markets buzzing with people doing festive shopping. Yes, we are gradually going back to normal, but taking the precaution of wearing face masks etc. Strangely, though there are

defaulters who continue flouting norms."

The four-day ritual ended on November 12, and it taught each one of us to understand that though the festival was celebrated with fervour but the threat of another Covid wave is still looming large. The pandemic has been a barrier to the celebrations, and this barrier can only be broken down when all stand responsible.

**Chhath Puja, the festival of thanking Surya Dev (God Sun) is observed for 4 days - Nahay Khay, Kharna, Sandhya Arghya and Usha Arghya.**

# These slum kids' dream to make it big

Bhargavi Singh

*A single dream is more powerful than a thousand realities.*

*- J.R.R. Tolkien*

A kid's creativity and imagination are unparalleled. It is reflected through their innovative stories, vivid experiential recounts and even their unconventional career goals. The doe-eyed kids from Nirala Nagar's slum-dwelling have huge aspirations, and despite their financial constraints, these children are not one to stop dreaming.

When asked about their future goals, 7-year-old Nimish said, "I want to become a police officer like Simba and Sooryavanshi and beat up all the bad guys". Nimish's 15-year-old elder brother, Abhijeet, is more mature and dreams of becoming an engineer. Meanwhile, 8-year-old Sana, who loves to recite poems for anyone who visits her, wants to become a teacher when she grows up, while 10-year-old Gauri aspires to become a doctor. Blissfully unaware of the harsh realities of the world, these kids look at life through rose-colored glasses, where no dream is unattainable.

Carrying around the weight of these dreams are their parents, who struggle to make ends meet. This slum constitutes a diverse popula-



Photo courtesy: Bhargavi Singh

tion of maids and other daily wage workers who work tirelessly to help fulfil the dreams of their little ones. Gauri's mother, Meena Devi, shares, "We know that we might not be able to afford to make her a doctor, but we want her to study hard and find a decent job so that she can move out of this place and live a good life."

While the younger kids go to a local government school, the older kids tend to drop out due to various reasons. Harshit Sonker, founder of Mango Foundation, an NGO that teaches older kids of the slum for free, says, "While some are forced

to work, some are married off while others just don't want to study, but whatever may be the reason many of the kids here don't complete their education. We aim to help these kids get back on the right track and help them achieve their dreams."

However, unpredictable the future might be for them, their ambition guarantees one thing, no matter where you are from, your dreams are valid. It also inspires us to aim high in life and lead a change in the world, where every young heart has the fearlessness to dream and know that they will be fulfilled.

# The art of business communication:

## A guide for upcoming entrepreneurs

Sonia Singh

Currently growing at a tremendous rate, entrepreneurship in India comes with its own demands in terms of passion, hard work and courage in abundance. This is probably why majority of people visualize themselves working for an established corporation, while very few dream of starting their own corporation.

Becoming an entrepreneur is all about having that one big idea, which impacts many people at the same time. The success of a business, however, depends on how well you communicate your million dollar idea to your target audience.

Mass communication is an ally for any successful business. Currently, there are numerous channels of mass media without which several business activities would be cramped. However, perfecting a communication strategy for your business requires deep knowledge of mass media vehicles.

Shagun Verma, Alumnus of Amity School of Communication Lucknow started her own venture Madhouse that specialized in printed and trendy masks at the beginning of the Corona Virus pandemic in 2020. Her idea of customized masks was a success because of two reasons:

### Role of Mass Media can be narrowed down to the following stages of a business

#### Product Launch

Mass Communication channels play a key role in wide circulation of news about your product launch. It will instantly deliver the message to your target audience, which will in turn provide the required traction from the audience.

#### Product Advertising

After informing the launch of your product, it is necessary to send the recall messages to the audience. This is done with the help of mass media vehicles such as Newspapers, Radio, Social Media and IEC material. With a plethora of options available, choosing the right vehicle to reach your target audience increases the chance to product purchase.

#### Market Analysis

To keep your product up to date, it is important for an entrepreneur to keep learning about the ever-changing customer behavior. Mass Media plays a vital role in gaining knowledge about current market trends and changing customer preferences. This helps in timely updation of the product and media message.

#### Customer Relations

Building strong customer relations is now viable through mass media. Engaging with customers post product purchase helps in maintaining a loyal customer database. This data comes handy during future product launches and notification of upcoming sales and offers.

#### Employee Relations

Business is a team sport. For a successful business venture, it is essential to keep communication among the employees positive. This also helps in word of mouth publicity of your product and overall business environment.

**Effective communication and knowledge about the ever-changing mass media plays a vital role at different stages of any business. The new-age businessmen should hence master the art of Business Communication for a successful venture.**

#### Appropriate Timing

Since 2020, face masks became a must have. They were required by everyone, which meant a large target audience.

#### Well-planned Communication Strategy

Shagun used her knowledge of mass communication, advertising and marketing in chalking out a communication plan,

which was well-suited for her business. This gave her product a wide range of customers.

In business, role of effective communication is indispensable. From choosing right brand colors to right outlet for advertising your product, the know-how of mass media and communication is a must.