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# Ram TEMPLE

*Shaping  
BJP's political  
narrative for*

# 2024



Prime Minister Narendra Modi at the Pran Pratishtha ceremony of Shree Ram Janmabhoomi Temple in Ayodhya on January 22, 2024.

Picture: PIB

**Political analysts feel that the much-hyped ceremony will be one of the key issues in the BJP's narrative as the party gears up for 2024 Lok Sabha Elections, writes Sanjay M Johri with inputs from Maria Siddiqui...**



With Prime Minister Narendra Modi having led the country on January 22nd consecrating 'Pran Pratishtha' in a much-hyped world-wide ceremony and opening of the historic Ram Temple in Ayodhya, the issue will be one of the key elements in the BJP's narrative as the party gears up for its 2024 Lok Sabha Elections Campaign expected to be held over in April and May this year.

The Ram temple, political analysts feel, will go beyond the symbolism of a Hindu deity to signal a larger message of cohesion and cultural synthesis. For BJP, it will be a social engineering through invoking divinity.

As the battle for 2024 begins in earnest, the incumbent BJP undeniably maintains the upper hand with most savvy marketing machinery while Opposition parties under the garb of INDIA alliance are already in trouble with one of its main architects Nitish Kumar changing sides with BJP again in Bihar and both the TMC led by West Bengal Chief Minister and SP Chief Akhilesh Yadav not going well with Congress. The BJP is likely to be the main beneficiary of the public sentiment built around the religious issue as it would claim to have delivered on two of its core ideological promises ahead of the elections 'building the Ram temple' and 'removal of Article 370', beside others. The new temple could also attract voters from the southern states, especially on the cultural and spiritual fronts, by creating newer linkages for social integration.

The outcome of the election will likely be decided by several key issues, including the economy, which is currently facing several challenges, including high inflation, a slowdown in growth, and rising unemployment.

The government's handling of the economy will be a major factor in the election. Voters will want to know how the government plans to boost growth, create jobs, and control inflation. In addition, the election will also be influenced by a few other factors, such as the performance of the incumbent government, the level of voter turnout, and the outcome of state elections that are held in the run-up to the general election. BJP certainly has the advantage in northern states, but it will be tough in Bihar, South and Kerala.



Glimpses of Pran Pratishtha ceremony of Shree Ram Janmabhoomi Temple in Ayodhya on January 22, 2024. **Picture: PIB**

A quick chat with commoners shows divergent views. Ram Mohan Lal, a 35-year-old florist said "I am extremely satisfied with the current government. It has strengthened the policies and the security. The various schemes for farmers such as Crop Insurance and Self-Reliant India have not only increased their incomes but also fostered sustainable agricultural practices, he said.

On the contrary Shivpal, a 52-year-old bus driver expressed his discontent suggesting he did not get benefits from government's welfare policies. "My 30-year-old son is still unemployed, and I am the sole bread-earner of my family. Despite various schemes being published in the newspaper every now and then, by and large poor people have not received any

benefits to consider incumbent government to vote again, he said adding the unemployment continued to rise.

Satish Singh, a 22-year-old student, expressed his liking for Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) led by Arvind Kejriwal saying the work done by him in Delhi speaks of his governance. "He made education free for children and took effective steps to reduce the water and power crisis in Delhi", he said.

The Indian election a few months away is not only going to be interesting but a close contest as we draw close to cacophony of electioneering. The outcome of the election will have a significant impact on the future of India as Prime Minister will seek to come victorious for the third term in a row. ■

## HEALTH AND WELL-BEING IN PROFESSIONAL SPHERE

# Debate on paid leave for menstruation

**DIVYA KOTWANI**

Bachelor of Journalism & Mass Communication

**M**enstruation is not a 'handicap' and it should not warrant a policy for 'paid leave'. Minister for Women and Child Development Smriti Irani took a stance against the idea of introducing mandatory paid menstrual leave for women employees. This stance has raised eyebrows and fueled discussions on the importance of addressing menstrual health and well-being in the professional sphere. The discourse on menstrual leave gained traction globally as part of the broader conversation about women's rights and workplace inclusivity.

Irani said that she opposed the Menstrual Hygiene Policy because she did not want women to face discrimination and harassment at the workplace over it. She said there was no need for such policies as they reinforced stereotypes and contributed to gender-based biases.

For years at end, women have been struggling to get gender parity at every level in society but with little result. Professor at Amity School of Communication Dr. Bhavna Wal emphasized and said, "I feel menstruation is a natural and biological process. There's nothing to feel ashamed about it. Irani is quite right, this is a natural process and part of routine so why special treatment?" Wal added that in her long professional career she had never seen someone seek paid leave on menstrual grounds. Therefore, at present it is a new subject of discussion in public domain.

The economic impact of providing paid menstrual leaves is a key consideration in this debate. Some argue that accommodating additional leave policies may burden employers, particularly smaller businesses, leading to concerns about productivity and operational efficiency. Also privacy is another reason

why many stand in support of Irani's statement. Many women are not comfortable in sharing the details of their menstrual cycle before asking for that supposedly assigned leave as Irani has pertinently pointed out.

This issue has another aspect to it. Some critics say that Irani is showing a lack of empathy towards women. Aishani Purkayastha a student of Bachelor's in Journalism and Mass Communication says, "I completely agree that menstruation is not a disability but for a lot of women initial days are really hard. And by taking leave, if everyone would know about a woman's menstrual cycle, then what's wrong with informing people about this? It's 2024 and periods are no longer a taboo anyway."

Menstruation is part of our lives but sometimes it might affect a woman's efficacy. Khushi Kumari, student of medical sciences at Banaras Hindu University, advises that paid leave has always been an issue when it comes to menstruation, and even doctors have acknowledged that. For a day or two, female employees can manage working from home, too and that way, they won't really be on leave and won't have to face the risk of possible salary deductions. Though, there should be a system for at least one-day paid leave for them, she adds.

As discussions continue on the subject, policy makers can collaboratively explore solutions for it. ■



Illustration: DIVYA KOTWANI

**PROF (DR) SANJAY M JOHRI**

Editor-in-Chief  
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EXPRESSIONS ANNIVERSARY ISSUE

## 4 years on, full steam ahead for Expressions



Four years and 48 issues and we enter the fifth year of its publication. Yes, the anniversary issue of Expressions and the journey has been interesting, at times with tension when we fell short of content or ideas.

Expressions' success lies in enriching the profiles of student contributors and for us, the most satisfying thing has been that quite a good number of students got placed in the industry by exhibiting their talent and they credit it to this monthly publication.

Kudos to the entire team as without them it would not have been possible.



Pictures: ABHISHEK SINGH



# AYODHYA *welcomes...* BALAK RAM

**SHRUTI KAPOOR**

Bachelor of Journalism & Mass Communication

It was the day that everyone had been waiting for, January 22, 2024. This was the day when Lord Rama or 'Balak Ram' would find his rightful place in Ayodhya, the place of his birth. Following the consecration ceremony at the Garb Griha on January 22, witnessed globally, the occasion could be captured as 'historic' and 'maturity of Indian society'.

It was a significant moment on August 5, 2020, when a grand ceremony was held to lay the foundation stone for

the Ram Temple. The seeds for nation building have already been sown with this foundation ceremony which PM Modi aptly captured in his speech on January 22 when he said 'the generations a thousand years from now will remember our nation-building efforts of today. Therefore, I say – Yahi Samay Hai, Sahi Samay Hai. We have to lay the foundation for India of the next thousand years, starting from this sacred time'.

What's more, city residents too have reacted with joy and ecstasy on the occasion. Talking to Expressions, Janhvi Singh, who visited Ayodhya with her family for the ceremony, said, "I am filled

with a mix of overwhelming excitement and deep emotions on the occasion. Traveling to Ayodhya with my family on January 22nd was a dream come true. It was a profound moment as I was part of this historic moment.” She added that ‘as we embark on this journey, I am reminded that we are not just travelers but witnesses to a divine homecoming’.

Medical student at KGMU Rajeev Kumar told Expressions, “Besides religious and spiritual peace, we are also witnessing India’s overall development. As people from all walks of life want to visit Ayodhya, tourism is getting a boost. This will add to the GDP of the country.” He added that tourism led to job creation in various sectors namely hospitality, transportation, and retail. According to Economic Times newspaper, it is expected 300,000 to 500,000 visitors will visit the temple initially. Upon conclusion of the second phase, the Maharishi Valmiki International Airport is set to accommodate six million passengers annually. At present, the Ayodhya Dham Railway Station attends to a daily crowd of 10,000 to 15,000 individuals. Following the station’s comprehensive development, it is expected to accommodate a daily footfall of 60,000 people.

As the city prepares to welcome visitors, these and more development initiatives promise to transform Ayodhya into a fantastic thriving hub. ■



TOTAL AREA	TEMPLE AREA
70 Acres	2.77 Acres

As per the design and architecture of Ram Mandir at Ayodhya, it is said to be the largest temple in India. The cost of Ram Mandir is ₹1,800 crore till now and ₹3,000 crore are still left with government officials for finishing and final touches.

**ALUMNI CORNER**

**ASCO is a launchpad for students’ dreams**



**VAISHNAVI AGRAWAL**  
Associate Manager  
Republic Bharat  
BJ&MC - 2018-21

Looking back at my ASCO days is like scrolling through a highlight reel of my journey : From being clueless to working at Dainik Jagran and now at Republic Bharat. When I first entered ASCO, I had no clue I’d end up working for the country’s top news organizations. You know, you may not get it at first. But when you’re out there in the real world, you realize, “Hey, I learned this at ASCO!”

College life is a mixed bag and ASCO helped me navigate that. I

used to be that student who never missed a class, but here’s my two cents – classes are vital, but so is spreading your wings. Don’t forget to dive into the real world. Want to shoot a short film? Host a podcast? Anything is possible. Go

talk to Johri Sir and other faculty with your wild ideas; they’ll be your guide.

In my third year, I had no clue where I was headed. Now, I’m at a news channel, still figuring out things. My advice? It’s cool to be confused, but don’t stop exploring.

Our generation tends to get bored quickly, but good things take time. Don’t rush to judge a subject or a job. And stop comparing your journey with others; every field takes its own pace.

People might say private universities don’t cut it, but ASCO proves them wrong. You’re in one of the best places with the best folks. Believe in yourself, be patient, and grab every opportunity that comes your way.

ASCO isn’t just a college; it’s a launchpad for your dreams. Soak it all in, because when you step out, you’ll realize the little things you learned at ASCO make a big difference. You’ve got the best at ASCO – make it count! ■



# From dormant housewife to tech-savvy homemaker

ARHAMA ALI

Bachelor of Journalism & Mass Communication

**T**hey were the housewives of yore. But come the digital era, and hey, they are the tech-savvy homemakers.

Welcome to the world of a new generation of homemakers characterized by their tech-savvy approach to managing households, blending traditional responsibilities with modern advancements.

In the realm of self-expression, Samantha, a Culinary Blogger and former dedicated homemaker, discovered her passion for cooking. Starting a food blog enabled her to share creative recipes and kitchen tips. With a growing online presence, Samantha now collaborates with brands and has her own line of cookbooks.

With a few clicks, homemakers can now venture beyond the traditional confines of their homes. Technological empowerment has granted them the freedom to pursue careers and independence. Many are now leveraging online educational platforms to enhance their skills, learning and teaching a variety of subjects.

Emily, an interior designer, shared her journey from a homemaker to tech-savvy woman. She said, "After transforming my own home, I began sharing design ideas on social media. This led to partnerships with home decor brands, and now I run my own online interior design consultancy." The transition from a housewife narrative to a self-made empowered woman in the digital sphere is seen to be believed. Women are proving their capabilities by successfully managing both household responsibilities and contributing to their family's financial well-being.

Thirty-four-year-old computer science B.Tech homemaker Sangya told Expressions, "Managing both could have become impossible, but with social media's



Picture: ARHAMA ALI

The Pandemic of 2020 has brought the entire world to an uncertain halt. At the center of the crisis have been the homemakers, trying their best to balance their professional, personal, and familial responsibilities.

*Deepak Lamba, CEO of Worldwide Media*

help, I've been able to earn a neat amount after starting my own online business in four years." She added that her husband quit his job to help her.

Tech-savvy homemakers in India are leveraging a myriad of technological tools to streamline their daily routines. From smartphones and smart appliances to home automation systems, these women are integrating technology seamlessly into their households. The adoption of digital platforms for grocery shopping, online banking, and e-learning for children is becoming increasingly common, saving time and effort. Many have even

become online trainees.

Dr. Sara Zayed, a fitness enthusiast says, "It all started during the Pandemic. I began recording my daily routine, covering everything from cooking to fitness. However, the fitness videos gained more attention, so I turned my channel into a fitness channel. It has since evolved into a professional platform, where I conduct virtual workout sessions and offer personalized coaching to my online community."

As women aspire for a better life, the internet becomes a powerful catalyst to help them transform. ■

# An indelible 2023 that was!

**Memes are like the universal language of the internet, adding humor and relatability to online conversations, like the recent trending meme 'so beautiful, so elegant, just looking like a wow.'**

## SHAHIDA KHAN

Bachelor of Journalism & Mass Communication

**A**s 2023 recedes into the shadows, it's time to revisit its viral impressionable moments.

Starting with Narayana Murthy, founder of MNC IT company Infosys Limited, who started a debate by suggesting that young Indians should work 70 hours in a week to compete in a rapidly booming economic environment. This suggestion left many aghast as they said that instead of increasing productivity, it would diminish it. Talking to Expressions, Yashi Agrawal, a student at Amity University, Lucknow, said, "The evolving nature of work, influenced by advancements in technology and changes in global business practices, has shifted focus towards outcomes and efficiency rather than sheer hours spent working. A 70-hour work week raises concerns about burnout and stress."

Another viral trend was 'just looking wow'. Taking social media by storm as the year drew to a close, the fad originated with Jasmeen Kaur, a Delhi boutique



Illustration: SHAHIDA KHAN

owner. This trend attained meme status after she promoted her collections on Instagram with the phrase, 'so beautiful, so elegant, just looking like a wow'. Kaur gained fame as her catchphrase spread across Instagram. From celebrities like Deepika Padukone, Ranveer Singh, and Nick Jonas to brands like Amul, everyone capitalized on it. The phrase became one of the most-searched memes on Google. In the same vein, the most viral and loved personality was Orhan Awatramani, famously known as 'Orry'. He quickly rose to web fame. Perceived as Bollywood's dear companion, Orry much of the time showed up alongside Janhvi Kapoor, Nysa Devgan and Sara Ali Khan. His enigmatic persona and statement, 'I am living, I'm a liver' piqued people's interest in his life. They were eager to know what he did for a living making him a compelling digital figure.

Yashashvita Agnihotri, working in digital marketing operations told Expressions, "Memes are like the universal language of the internet, adding humor and relatability to online conversations, like the recent trending meme 'so beautiful,

so elegant, just looking like a wow.' People started commenting on the pictures, and some even began making videos of themselves. For many, it showed a creative way to compliment someone. Another trending meme is 'Orry,' and people in daily life have started expressing themselves in the manner Orry does. For example, he says 'I'm living, I'm a liver,' so people started saying 'I'm commenting,' hence 'I'm a commenter.' Many other phrases have emerged from it." "They provide a quick and visually appealing way for people to express emotions, opinions, and even social commentary, making online communication more dynamic and fun," she added.

For Indian cricket enthusiasts, the ICC ODI World Cup was another star attraction. The internet buzzed with discussions about the World Cup. The pinnacle of the tournament was the India vs. Australia finale in Ahmedabad. Despite India's impressive 10-match winning streak, the match concluded with a defeat for India. The World Cup's conclusion was a poignant moment, reflecting the highs and lows of the cricketing journey. ■



# Will ChatGPT replace life skills?

**BHAVNA SONI**

Bachelor of Journalism & Mass Communication

**ChatGPT is an AI-powered language model developed by OpenAI that can generate human-like text based on context and past conversations. It is capable of generating text in multiple languages.**

**B**arely released a year ago, this chatbot, built on top of OpenAI's foundational large language models, has redefined standards of AI. ChatGPT has proved that machines can learn complexities of human language and interaction.

As aforesaid, ChatGPT has deeply impacted evolution of AI while simultaneously exhibiting efficacy of transformer-based models for language tasks. As the success of this model has stimulated interest in large language models, ChatGPT is substantially impacting various industries like education. In the field of education it is being used to create smart tutoring systems capable of providing personalized assistance to students.

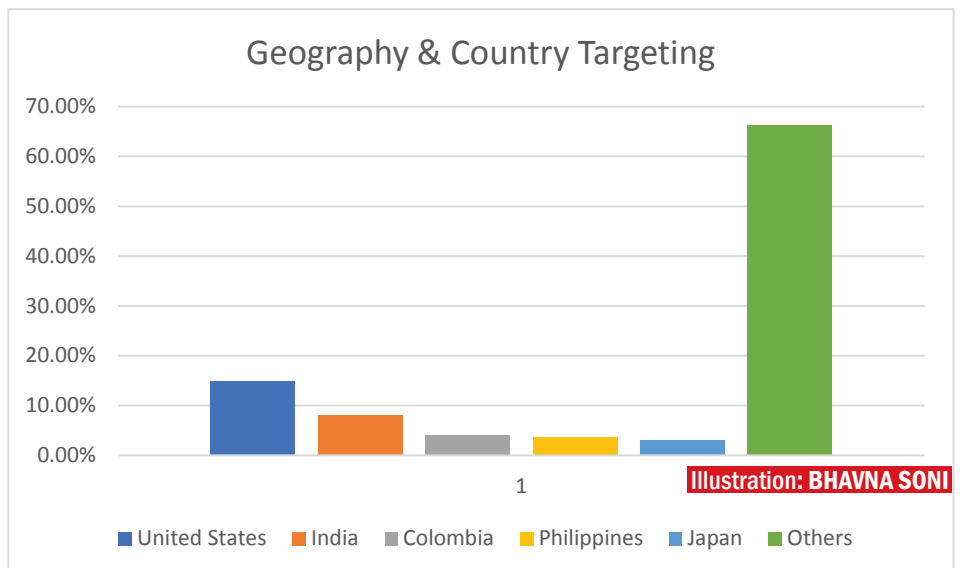
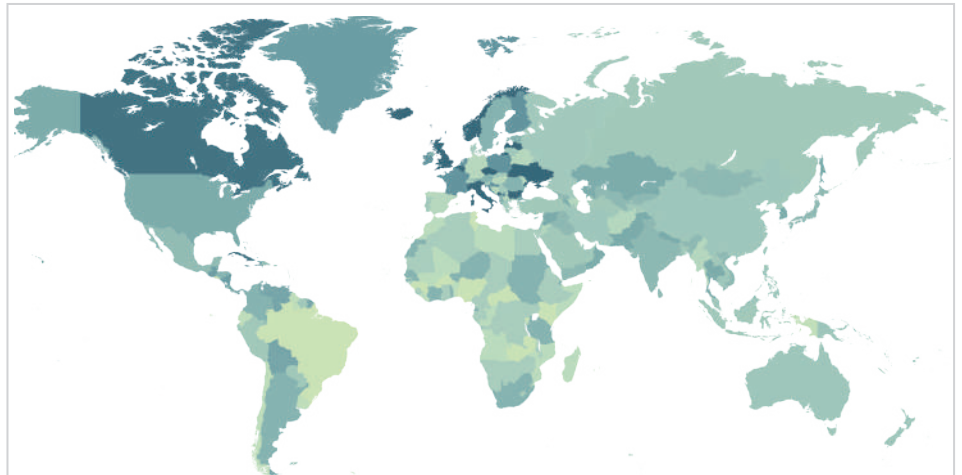
Given this ease of work, no wonder ChatGPT currently has over 100 million users with United States having most ChatGPT users (14.82% of total users), followed by India (8.18%).

The increasing use and reliance on ChatGPT, particularly among students in schools and colleges, is a cause for concern. Teachers and academic professionals have expected the negative impacts it may have on students.

Expressions carried out a Google Form survey on the subject concerned.

Ninety per cent respondents stated that ChatGPT was an easy tool to work with. Almost 50% believed that this tool supplied answers in a jiffy with no research involved.

Ayushi, a Bachelor's student in Applied Psychology, told Expressions, that



once she knew about ChatGPT and its usefulness, she found it very convenient to use the tool. According to her, "ChatGPT is a fantastic tool for giving a push to the reader about an issue, but relying solely on it without conducting added research may cause problems because it does not always produce the desired results."

Priyanka, Ayushi's batchmate and a ChatGPT user, said that this tool was a time saver for students when they wanted to work on a given assignment. But she alerted that plagiarism could be an issue if everything were copied and pasted.

Faculty responses suggested that the results of ChatGPT are not always desirable. More than 66% of academic professionals have put forth the issue of lacking uniqueness in students' work. They believe that this technology is not being

used with enough discretion by students and is becoming a major cause for plagiarism.

Educators fear that it will make students lazy thinkers, and students will be unable to develop life-long skills like critical thinking, researching or writing.

For students, this tool has become something to be fascinated with, as it gives them the capability to reduce efforts and get usable content and results with the snap of a few buttons. Abilities like critical thinking and brainstorming are diminishing. There is a lack of uniqueness in students' assignments.

The survey findings reveal that this AI tool might appeal students initially, but later it can possibly lead to diminishing of the cranial capacity for the incumbent concerned.

All said and done technology is a useful resource but should be used with care. ■



Pictures: ASHNA ALI

As reported by Hindustan Times, in the Jammu market, prices of almonds, apricots and raisins have increased by ₹ 200 per kg. Pistachios have witnessed a massive hike of ₹ 250 per kg.



# Kashmiri dry fruits add warmth to city chill

ASHNA ALI

Bachelor of Journalism & Mass Communication

**W**ant to enjoy the Kashmiri chill in Lucknow? How, you may ask? Well, the dry fruit vendors who come all the way from Kashmir to sell their wares here is how one can relish the Kashmiri winter in Lucknow.

These vendors can easily be seen on the pavements of Samta Mulak Chowk, Daliganj pull, Nishat Ganj crossing, and around other city areas. The vibrant display of wares by these Kashmiri vendors is a sight to behold, with their small set-ups on sheets displaying an assortment of dried fruits such as apricots, figs, dates, walnuts, almonds, and pistachios. The air is infused with the earthy aroma

of these winter delights, creating an irresistible allure for passersby. These Kashmir vendors travel from different parts of Kashmir, like the Kulgam district and Srinagar, in the winter season every year to earn some shekels.

Explaining why he comes outside of Kashmir to sell his wares, Ishtiaq Ahmadaar, from Kashmir's Kulgam district, 36, says, "I am a postgraduate in psychology. In Lucknow, I am selling dry fruits, a region unknown to me. There are no opportunities for us in Kashmir. However, we have to feed our families, so we sell winter goods like shawls, suits, and dry-fruits."

It is noteworthy that an article published in Deccan Herald states that as per a CMIE (Centre for Monitoring Indian Economy) survey, unemployment rate

in Jammu and Kashmir is second worst among states/union territories of the country.

These Kashmiri sellers are also victims of anti-encroachment drive by civic authorities. On December 17, sellers at Samta Mulak Chowk were rounded up by the Lucknow Municipal Corporation. They were assaulted and jailed. Fortunately, a group of lawyers from Tanveer Law Chambers secured their release on bail (source: Hindustan Times). Talking to Expressions, Lawyer Tanveer said, "It was a daunting task to bail out innocent vendors. Even after such fortifying action, the police forcibly took away their dry fruits worth thousands of rupees."

Despite constraints, these sellers go about their daily business with a panache so telling of the Kashmiri spirit. ■

Starting the day right with...

# LUCKNAWI BREAKFAST!



Pictures: SUPRIYA SRIVASTAVA

## SUPRIYA SRIVASTAVA

Bachelor of Journalism & Mass Communication

One is familiar with the age-old adage 'eat breakfast like a king, lunch like a prince and dinner like a pauper'. The City of Nawabs has taken the breakfast aspect of the wise saying very seriously.

As the sun rises over this city, that is Lucknow, its streets come alive with the aroma of delectable breakfast offerings catering to every palate.

The day begins with a cup of piping hot tea, and Sharma Ji Ki Chai is the go-to spot for tea lovers. This traditional tea house, located near Novelty cinema crossing, offers delicious assortment of items from bun-maskas to unique round shaped samosas with a warm and welcoming environment. Manoj Sharma's (owner) grandfather started this business around 70 years ago. The shop opens at 6:30 am and tea drinkers just throng and throng there. A helpful sug-

gestion before visiting this location is to ensure you leave room for a delightful breakfast after a revitalizing cup of tea.

From here, the food adventure can lead the individual to the bustling lanes of Aminabad. These lanes offer a surfeit of breakfast options.

One such famous spot for some scrumptious kachoris 'Sahu Khasta Corner', near Latouche Road.

Talking to Expressions, Diksha Singh, resident of Aminabad says, "I come here every other day to have breakfast. I am obsessed with the Masala Aaloo." Another option is the famous 'Bajpaaye Kachori Bhandaar' near Leela Cinema, Hazratganj. It is an ideal spot to have very fresh crisp puri kachori as well as khasta kachori. It is reasonably priced and serves some spicy but tasty aloo sabzi.

Talking to Expressions, Vivek Sinha stated that, "The quality of food is good. Always crowded and worth the wait but there is no seating facility so be ready to eat while standing."

Sharma Ji Ki Chai in Lucknow is 50 years old and has only 6 items to offer.

[ CurlyTales.com ]

The Roastery Coffee House is different from other coffee houses as it roasts and brews coffee beans in its own coffee house.

[ lucknowwale.com ]

The mystical interiors of The Romeo Lane has been inspired by the Garden of Eden with 'bajri' flooring in one area to make you feel as if you're in the woods.

[ knocksense.com ]

Bajpaaye Kachori Bhandar sells hundreds of kachoris in one day and the food never gets wasted.

[ justdial.com ]

For those seeking a contemporary twist to their breakfast, Roastery Coffee House in Gomti Nagar is a must-visit. Known for its fusion dishes and innovative takes on traditional favorites, Roastery introduces Lucknow to global breakfast trends. An enticing selection of coffee flavors and pastries awaits, including must-try items such as Cranberry Cold Brew, Coffee Mojito, Onion Rings, and Cheese Poppers. Many places in Lucknow have started offering a variety of healthy food options, like 'Romeo Lane'. It is located in the Summit Building in Gomti Nagar. It offers from Protein Smoothies to Quinoa Salads.

Talking to Expressions, Soumya Verma, a college goer said, "This is my constant place to have breakfast, there are many offers on various food items, and they are so freshly cooked. I visit this place with my friends and family and they also love the experience."

So from the traditional touch to the contemporary, Lucknow's breakfast palate has it all. ■