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'NOT A MERE DATE ON CALENDAR, ORIGIN OF A NEW KAAL CHAKRA'

Prime Minister Narendra Modi after inaugurating the Shri Ram Janmbhoomi Mandir in Ayodhya

January 22, 2024

Prime Minister Narendra Modi, along with Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath and RSS Sarsanghchalak Mohan Bhagwat, at the consecration ceremony of the new idol inside the Ram temple in Ayodhya. PTI

Bhagwat: Ram Rajya coming, end disputes, take all along

From CPM to TMC to AAP, Opp parties walk tightrope on Ayodhya

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, JANUARY 22



Line dividing religion and State getting thinner, says Kerala CM



BUSINESS AS USUAL

By UNNY

BJP, RSS frame a new challenge for Opp in election year

VIKAS PATHAK
NEW DELHI, JANUARY 22

JANUARY 22 was presaged, way back on November 9, 2019, when the Supreme Court cleared the way for the construction of the temple; and then on August 5, 2020, when Prime Minister Narendra Modi performed the *bhoomi pujan* at the site in Ayodhya.

Yet, on Monday, with the nation watching, the consecration of the Ram Lalla in the new temple led by the Prime Minister marked not only a milestone in the history of the BJP-RSS but also a new chapter in national politics.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

CALLING FOR "hosh" (reason) at a time of "josh" (excitement), RSS Sarsanghchalak Mohan Bhagwat on Monday underlined the need to end disputes and take everyone along, including those with "different beliefs".

Speaking in Ayodhya after the consecration ceremony, Bhagwat said India's "swa" (self) had returned, and the temple would represent the rise of a "new Bharat". "Ram Rajya is coming," he said.

"We are all children of Bharat Varsha. We have to maintain good conduct and end disputes. We have to stop the habit of fighting over things," he said.

The truth is that Ram resides

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

Ayodhya puts troubled past behind, looks to present — for its future



Diyas lit on the banks of Sarayu in Ayodhya. Vishal Srivastav

'PM said the right thing,' says petitioner's son Iqbal Ansari, 'future is in vikas'

RAKESH SINHA
AYODHYA, NEW DELHI,
JANUARY 22

LISTENING TO Prime Minister Narendra Modi explain what January 22 means — and should mean — for the nation, Iqbal Ansari, a special guest at the consecration ceremony Monday, says he couldn't agree more.

The Prime Minister said exactly what should have been said...he said the right thing," says Ansari, a response that marks the enormous distance he has travelled. As the son of Hashim Ansari who spent a life-

time in courts as a litigant in the Ram Janmabhoomi-Babri Masjid title suit case before he died aged 95 in 2016.

It was that case in which a bench of the highest court unanimously ruled in favour of the

temple in 2019. From the time Iqbal Ansari showered petals on Prime Minister Narendra Modi when he came here last month to unveil the town's new airport, its upgraded railway station and a slew of development projects, he's had no respite from reporters knocking on the doors of his little house.

He knows why — the tyranny of the soundbite. "They want me to say something controversial. I have no time for reporters who try to dig up the past. That battle is over. My father and I had said long before the ruling that whatever the verdict, we will accept it. And the Supreme Court gave an order which we accepted.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

Ram not dispute, is solution: Modi

MAULSHREE SETH & VIKAS PATHAK
AYODHYA, NEW DELHI,
JANUARY 22

MARKING A milestone in India's socio-political history, Prime Minister Narendra Modi led the nation Monday in the consecration of the idol at the new Ram

EXCERPTS OF PM'S SPEECH PAGE 13

temple in Ayodhya, underlining that it is an inspiration to "move towards a brighter future", that "Ram is not vivaad (dispute), Ram is the samadhan (solution), Ram is for everyone".

In a televised address to a gathering on the temple premises, shortly after the Pran Pratishtan ceremony where he was joined by RSS Sarsanghchalak Mohan Bhagwat, Uttar Pradesh Governor Anandiben Patel and Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath, Modi said, "January 22, 2024 is not a mere date on the calendar; it is the

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

New idol gets a name — Balak Ram

MAULSHREE SETH
AYODHYA, JANUARY 22

CARRYING A silver "chakra" (umbrella) for Ram Lalla, Prime Minister Narendra Modi entered the garba griha (sanctum sanctorum) of the new Shri Ram

Janmabhoomi Mandir at 12.10 pm Monday, signalling the start of the Pran Pratishtan (consecration ceremony) in Ayodhya.

With the completion of the ceremony, the new 51-inch idol of the child Ram will henceforth be referred to as "Balak Ram" of Ayodhya, said those associated

with the consecration ceremony. The old idol of Ram Lalla has been placed in front of the new idol inside the sanctum sanctorum.

The Prime Minister, who was later introduced as a "tapasvi rashtriya neta" (ascetic national

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

THE EDITORIAL PAGE**SEMINAL MILESTONE, JOURNEY AHEAD**

Bridging Ram, Rashtra distance needs determined exploring of common ground

PAGE 12

THE INAUGURATION

FULL COVERAGE
PAGES 15, 16, 17



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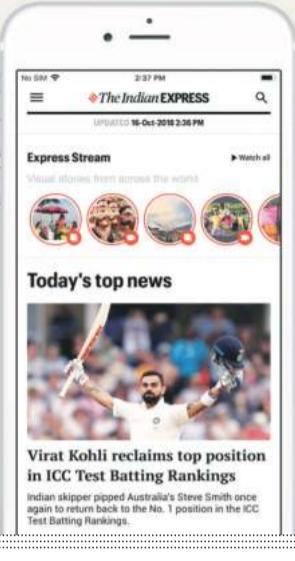
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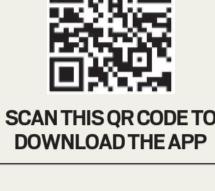
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'MANY AYODHYAS, BUT NAME OF RAM'S BIRTHPLACE SAME IN ALL VERSIONS OF RAMAYANA'

It is worth noting that apart from the present site of the temple, the name Ayodhya exists in other parts of the world as well.

TECH



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EXPRESS AUDIO

Ram Temple: What young UP thinks & why Cong is staying away

On 3 Things, we discuss opinions of young people in UP (those born after the Babri Masjid demolition) regarding the Ram Temple, and the reason why the Congress is not attending the consecration ceremony.

• Bhagwat

in "kan-kan" (every particle), he said. "So, we should all live in harmony. We should walk along with everyone else. All are ours. Compassion is important. Wherever we find that people are in grief, we should run to serve them. We should save from what we earn, and also give to society from what we earn. Others also have their beliefs that may be different from ours. It isn't necessary that we are always correct, but even if we are, let us all stay in sanyam (patience, restraint)," he said.

Quoting Mahatma Gandhi on the Earth having enough for everyone's need but not for everyone's greed, Bhagwat called for a social life of discipline and togetherness, saying this path would lead Bharat to becoming a "Vishwaguru" (world leader).

Crediting those who struggled for the Ram temple for "500 years", Bhagwat said: "Ram Lalla has come to remind us of our duties". He said Ram had to leave Ayodhya due to "kalah" (differences, strife), and reiterated the need to "stay united".

Asserting that the entire country was happy today, Bhagwat commended PM Narendra Modi for his strict fast, hailing him as a "tapasvi" (ascetic).

Bhagwat's speech reflected the tone and tenor of his write-up on Saturday, as reported by *The Indian Express*. Then too, he had called for an end to "bitterness", "dispute" and "conflict". In his last Vijayadashami address, Bhagwat had exhorted people to celebrate the consecration ceremony across the country.

FROM PAGE ONE

FULL REPORTS ON
WWW.INDIANEXPRESS.COM

January 22, 2024

origin of a new Kaal Chakra," "Hamare Prabhu Ram aa gaye hain" (our Lord Ram has come) and "will no longer be in a tent" – a reference to the makeshift temple that came up at the then disputed site after the demolition of the Babri Masjid on December 6, 1992.

"Today's occasion is not only a moment of celebration but also a moment that signifies the maturity of Indian society. For us, this occasion is not only about vijay (victory) but also about vinay (humility)... The way our country has untangled this knot of history with seriousness and sensitivity, it indicates that our future is going to be much more beautiful than our past... A thousand years from today, people will talk about this date, this moment. And how great is Lord Ram's grace that we are living in this moment, witnessing it happen," he said.

"There was a time when some people said that if the Ram temple was built, it would lead to unrest. Such people failed to understand the purity of India's social sentiment. The construction of this temple of Ram Lalla is also a symbol of peace, patience, harmony and coordination in Indian society."

"We are seeing that this construction is not igniting aag (fire), but rather it is giving birth to oorja (energy). The Ram temple has brought inspiration to every section of society to move towards a

brighter future. Today, I call upon those people... Feel it, rethink your perspective. Ram is not fire, Ram is energy. Ram is not vivad (dispute), Ram is the samadhan (solution), Ram is for everyone. Ram is not just the present, Ram is eternal."

The entire nation is celebrating Diwali today. Every household is prepared to light the Ram Jyoti in the evening."

Recalling his visit Sunday to Arichal Munai in Dhanushkodi, the starting point of Ram Setu, Modi said it was the moment which altered the Kaal Chakra.

Drawing an analogy to that moment, he said he got the belief that today's moment will also be the one to alter the circle of time and move forward.

During his 11-day anushtan, he said he attempted to bow at all the places where Ram had set foot. Mentioning Panchavati Dham in Nashik, Thripuray temple in Kerala, Lepakshi in Andhra Pradesh, Sri Ranganathaswamy temple in Srirangam, Sri Ramanathaswamy temple in Rameswaram and Dhanushkodi, he expressed gratitude for the journey from the sea to river Saryu. "From the sea to the Saryu river, the same festive spirit of Ram's name is prevalent everywhere... Lord Ram is connected to every particle of the soul of India. Ram resides in the hearts of Indians."

Modi said there must have

been something lacking in "our efforts" that it took centuries for Ram to return to Ayodhya. "Today, I also seek forgiveness from Lord Shri Ram. There must have been some shortcomings in our efforts, our sacrifices, our penance, that we couldn't accomplish this task for so many centuries. Today, that deficiency has been fulfilled. I believe Lord Ram will surely forgive us today." In the Treta Yuga, he said, Ayodhya missed Ram for 14 years, while people of this era missed him for five centuries.

Recalling that the first draft of the Constitution had Ram in it, the Prime Minister also thanked the judiciary: "I express my gratitude to the judiciary of India, which upheld the dignity of justice. The temple of Lord Ram, synonymous with justice, was also built in a lawful manner."

Thanking the kar sevaks, sants and Ram Bhaktas for their contribution to the movement for the Ram temple, Modi exuded confidence that the future of the country would be much more beautiful than its past.

"In the form of Lord Ram, today is also the Pran Pratishta of Indian civilisational values and humanity... We have to vow to build a samarth (capable), saksham (able), bhavya (grand) and divya (divine) Bharat."

"This is not just a divine temple. It is a temple of India's vision, philosophy and direction. It is a temple of national consciousness

in the form of Ram," he said.

"Moving beyond the construction of the temple, now all of us citizens, from this moment, pledge to build a capable, magnificent and divine India."

He asked people to expand their consciousness from Dev to Desh, Ram to Rashttra – from deity to nation – and learn from Hanuman's service, devotion and dedication. "These feelings of devotion, service and dedication in every Indian will become the basis of a capable, grand and divine India," he said.

He said none should think he is too small to contribute to the country, that people should take inspiration from Jayatay who fought Ravan despite being aware he could not defeat him.

He urged the youth to take inspiration from their glorious tradition and work for a country that had now reached the Moon and space: "You represent the generation of India that is hoisting the flag on the Moon, conducting Mission Aditya by travelling 15-lakh kilometres... waving the flag of Tejas in the sky and Vikrant in the sea. You have to write the new dawn of India while being proud of your heritage."

Peppered his speech with socially inclusive messages, Modi recalled the "Adivasi mother" Shabri who used to say "Ram aayenge" and (kevat) Nishad Raj who helped Ram and Sita cross the Ganga in his boat.

At the same time, there was dialing down of the rhetoric with Modi calling it a day not of vijay (victory) but of vinay (humility).

RSS Sarsanghchalak Mohan Bhagwat flagged the "hosh" (reason) amid the "josh" (passion) and the need to show restraint and work towards resolution of social disputes.

Even the Sangh's political discourse in the run-up to the consecration was reconciliatory, the BJP leader Uma Bharti, once seen as

• BJP, RSS frame a new challenge for Opp in poll year

Its message was an unprecedented Hindutva surge amid statements of reconciliation from Sangh Parivar leaders who were once seen to occupy the "fringe" of mainstream Indian politics.

The date marked a state holiday in UP, and also a half day for Central government employees – the state came across as having the kind of intimacy with religious rituals that it rarely had since independence, but for that moment when the first President of India, Dr Rajendra Prasad, was present during the inauguration of the Somnath temple on May 11, 1951.

That the consecration was shown on all TV channels and livestreamed in cities and neighbourhoods across the country deepened its symbolism. Modi's earlier call for a Diwali on the evening of January 22 also found many an echo across the country.

He urged the youth to take inspiration from their glorious tradition and work for a country that had now reached the Moon and space: "You represent the generation of India that is hoisting the flag on the Moon, conducting Mission Aditya by travelling 15-lakh kilometres... waving the flag of Tejas in the sky and Vikrant in the sea. You have to write the new dawn of India while being proud of your heritage."

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a rabble-rouser by critics, told The Indian Express that the peaceful atmosphere since the Supreme Court's title suit verdict proved to the world, which had seen India in terms of religious and caste conflict, that Hindus and Muslims could live in peace.

UP Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath wrote on Sunday, "The joint victory of justice and truth is erasing bitter memories and creating new stories, fostering harmony in society."

In a piece written days ago, veteran BJP leader LK Advani, the architect of the mandir movement, said that when Modi consecrates the temple, he would represent 140 crore people of India – all of India across faiths.

In other words, there is a clear attempt within the Sangh to be seen as steering clear of triumphalism now that the temple is here. How this translates into the election campaign that may be just weeks away remains to be seen.

For the Opposition, January 22, 2024, frames a fresh political challenge given how since 1992, in the wake of the Babri Masjid demolition, it has defined itself in opposition to the temple movement. In 1989, the BJP had said, in its Palampur resolution, that not the courts but a negotiated settlement or legislation could solve the issue, the Opposition parties had left the matter to the judiciary.

With the Supreme Court awarding the whole hitherto disputed land for a Ram temple in 2019, the opposition has been at a loss to decide what its position on the matter should be. From the Congress declining the invitation to attend the consecration to Samajwadi Party saying it would attend at a later date, from TMC's inter-faith rally to AAP's shobha yatra and community kitchens in the capital, each member of the Opposition is trying to figure its own way out.

Having invested over three decades in hardening the line over the temple issue – allies forced the Atal BJP to put it on the backburner -- and at the same time not wanting to be seen as insensitive to "Hindu sentiments," the Opposition parties are having to tease out strategies to strike a balance. That's easier said than done especially in the run-up to the general elections.

The consecration of the temple has been accompanied by a sense of resignation within the Muslim community with most of its leaders saying they want to move on. As of now, the disputes around Mathura and the Gyanvapi mosque in Varanasi are making their way through the courts. How these are handled by the courts, the respective communities, the BJP and the Opposition, will have a bearing on what follows after January 22, 2024.

• Opp parties walk tightrope on Ayodhya

framed the Ram Temple as a symbol of peace, patience, harmony, and linked it to the country. "Ram is not a dispute, but a solution", "Ram does not belong only to us, but to all", Modi said, making repeated exhortations of "Dev to deth, and Ram to Rashttra".

Not surprisingly, the one who put the furthest distance between his government and the Ayodhya celebrations was Pinayari Vijayan, the CPI(M) stalwart and Chief Minister of Kerala, where the electoral landscape is largely divided between the Left and Congress, and the BJP is not yet a powerful force.

"We had a strong tradition of maintaining separation between religion and the State. But that line... seems to be getting thinner," Vijayan said in a video message. "It has come to a point in time when the inauguration of a religious place of worship is being celebrated as a State event... As those who pledged to preserve and protect our Constitution, let us reaffirm our commitment to its secular character by declining to participate in the event and upholding our constitutional responsibilities."

The CPI(M) had been the first to turn down an invitation for the Ayodhya event, and had criticised the government for announcing a partial holiday on Monday to mark the occasion.

The Trinamool Congress, which has seen the emergence of the BJP as its biggest threat, was also sharply critical of the temple event. Ahead of the all-faith rally held by the party in Kolkata on Monday, as a counter to the BJP's consecration celebrations, its national general secretary Abhishek Banerjee posted that his religion did not teach him to "accept and embrace a place of worship... which has been built over hatred, violence and the dead bodies of innocents".

Addressing the rally later, TMC supremo Mamata Banerjee said religion and politics should be kept separate.

The Congress found itself caught in a war of words with the BJP government in Assam over a temple that its leader Rahul Gandhi, who is on a Manipur to Mumbai Yatra, wanted to visit on Monday to offer prayers. The Congress, which turned down the consecration invite for its top leadership, has been at pains to

emphasise that it is not against Ram but the BJP's politicisation of the event, and questioned the denial of permission to Rahul to visit a revered shrine.

"Will PM Modi now decide who will visit a temple and when?" Rahul asked as he sat on a protest surrounded by supporters, who sang 'Raghupati Raghav Raja Ram', before the Yatra finally decided to move along.

Incidentally, at least two Congress leaders – Himachal Pradesh minister VKramanand Singh, and former Uttar Pradesh Congress chief Nirmal Khatri – attended the Ayodhya event.

Shiv Sena (UBT) chief Uddhav Thackeray offered prayers at the Kalaran Temple in Nashik, located at the site where Ram was said to have stayed during his exile. He was accompanied by his wife Rashmi Thackeray, and sons Aaditya and Tejas. Party Rajya Sabha MP Sanjay Raut was also present.

Earlier in the day, he visited the memorial of VD Savarkar in Bhagur, the birthplace of the late Hindutva ideologue.

Samajwadi Party chief Akhilesh posted on X a short animated video showing Lord Ram arriving in Ayodhya with Laxman and Sita, and said: "Siyamara resides in that pure heart which respects customs, ethics and decorum... Those who follow 'Riti (custom), Niti (policy) and 'Maryada' (decorum) shown by Lord Ram are his true devotees."

AAP supremo Arvind Kejriwal shared a picture of the newly unveiled Ram idol in Ayodhya, captioning it: "Hearty congratulations and best wishes to all of you on this sacred occasion." He also said he would be "serving the people of Delhi by taking inspiration from the concept of Ramrajya".

Many others, like JD(U) leader and Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar, NCP chief Sharad Pawar and DMK chief and Tamil Nadu Chief Minister M K Stalin maintained a tactical silence. This is despite a row erupting on social media between the BJP and Udhayanidhi over his earlier statement saying he did not agree with a masjid being demolished to build a temple".

Odisha Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik shared a photo watching the live telecast of the Pran Pratishta ceremony.

• New idol gets a name — Balak Ram

Hema Malini, Jackie Shroff, Ranbir Kapoor and Alia Bhatt, Madhuri Dixit, Chiranjeevi, Katrina Kaif and Vicky Kaushal; singers Annu Malik, Sonu Nigam, Shankar Mahadevan and Anuradha Paudwal; industrialists Mukesh Ambani and family, Anil Ambani and Kumar Mangalam Birla; sports personalities Sachin Tendulkar, Ravindra Jadeja and Sunil Shetty.

Former Prime Minister H D Deve Gowda, his son and former Karnataka Chief Minister H D Kumaraswamy, former Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu, BJD leader Ravi Shankar Prasad, Uma Bharti and Sadhvi Niranjan Jyoti were among those present.

Army helicopters showered

flower petals on the temple as the Pran Pratishta went on inside.

While the entire ceremony lasted a little over an hour, the main Pran Pratishta took place during the 48-second Abhijit Muhrat. Also present in the sanctum sanctorum were Anil Mishra, the Pradhan Yajman of the ceremony, his wife Usha Mishra, Shri Ram Janmabhoomi Teerth Kshetra Trust chief Niraj Gopal Das, Trust treasurer Govind Dev Giri Maharaj and Trust members Kameshwar Chauhan and Swami Vishwanarayana Teertha Ji Maharaj. Ganeshwar Shastri David, astrology and Vedic scholar from Varanasi, who had chosen the date and timing for the consecration ceremony, was among those present.

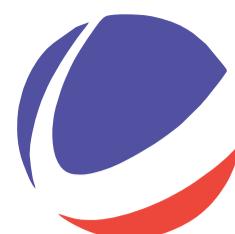
Archarya Sunil Shetty Dixited

People who buy the khadas go back happy and I sell it cheap, knowing that those who wear these are holy men who have very little money. So these are priced up to Rs 100 a pair," says Azam.

The lack of hotels and the rush for the inauguration has led to the sprouting of homestays – around 600 such lodgings have come up in Ayodhya. The city and adjoining Faizabad are counting on speedy construction of hotels, and the influx of tourists, not just pilgrims, via air and rail to boost incomes.

"The new Ayodhya Dham railway station and the Maharishi Valmiki International Airport should be the springboards for the town's development. The coming months will provide a clearer picture" says Sharad Kapoor of Shyne Avadh, one of the two hotels in Faizabad that used to be the haunt of reporters and photographers covering the Ayodhya developments.

"My father, forefathers made khadas. And I am doing the same – mine is the fifth generation in this trade, and I want my children to take this forward. The front portion of my shop was demolished during the road-widening work. I am getting



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GLAD RAM LALLA'S IDOL HAS BEEN CONSECRATED: CM Yatras, bhandaras: CM, AAP leaders hold Ayodhya events

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, JANUARY 22

A NEW statue of Lord Ram, several community kitchens distributing food across the city, recitals of the Sundarkand and shobha yatras — as the Ram Temple in Ayodhya was consecrated on Monday, Delhi saw myriad events to mark the occasion.

Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal, who participated in programmes organised in the New Delhi constituency, posted a photo of the Ram idol at the Ayodhya temple on X and wrote, "Hearty congratulations and best wishes to all of you on this sacred occasion of installation of Maryada Purushottam Lord Shri Ram in the grand temple. Jai Siya Ram."

While he was at the ceremony to install a Lord Ram statue at Albert Square, RK Ashram Marg, he said he couldn't go for the ceremony. "I'm so glad that Ram Lalla's idol has been consecrated. Last week, we conducted Sundarkand recitations at many places in Delhi... Due to the high VVIP movement at the Pran Pratishtha ceremony, many of us couldn't go there but we are worshipping 'Ram Lalla' in our own ways," he said.

The CM also participated in a Ramayana recitation and kirtan program at Udyam Marg and a Sundarkand recitation organised by the Sanyas Ashram Shiv Hanuman Mandir Trust.

Other AAP ministers, MLAs, and councillors also organised different events. Minister Saurabh Bharadwaj held a shobha yatra in Chirag Dilli in the evening and Sunderkand recitals earlier in the day. "This is a matter of great joy for everyone," he said.

Bharadwaj recalled CM Kejriwal's 10-point Delhi Assembly agenda, presented two-and-a-half years ago, in which the CM had talked about Tulsi das ji's vision of the Ramayana. "We are among the biggest devotees of Lord Shri Ram," he added.

AAP minister Atishi also par-



(Clockwise from top) CM Arvind Kejriwal addresses people during a bhandara, Saurabh Bharadwaj at a Shobha Yatra; and Atishi at a havan, in New Delhi. X/Express/Tashi Tobgyal

ticipated in a havan at Kalkaji. "Lord Ram does not belong to anyone, he resides in the heart of every human being. We can learn from his life, behaviour, love and sacrifice... we will be able to contribute significantly to the progress of our society and nation if we can implement those lessons in our lives," she said.

Markets in Delhi also organised bhajan-kirtans, aartis, bhandaras and various other programmes. Live telecasts of the ceremony were displayed on LED screens across the capital.

At Khan Market, a bhandara was organised at 11 am by the traders' association. Many devotees gathered to watch the live

telecast. "This is the moment I had been waiting for since decades... after witnessing the consecration of Lord Ram, I can die in peace," said a teary-eyed Sanjay Nigam (74). Ella Eisenberg from Germany, who is visiting India for a 25-day trip, said, "I do not understand the history of Ayodhya but it is great to witness the celebrations."

In celebration, devotees also danced to the tunes of Nagadas. Satish Upadhyay, vice-chairperson of the New Delhi Municipal Council, was also present during the celebrations.

At the popular Janpath Market, devotees, while savouring the chole-chawal being served at the bhandara, also danced to the tune of Ram-bhajans.

ganised a Deepotsav at 6.30 pm where 1.25 lakh clay diyas were lit. Aradhna Sharma and her two kids, who had travelled from Faridabad to attend the festivities, said, "It is great to see the heart of the national capital celebrating this landmark occasion with so much passion."

In celebration, devotees also danced to the tunes of Nagadas. Satish Upadhyay, vice-chairperson of the New Delhi Municipal Council, was also present during the celebrations.

At the popular Janpath Market, devotees, while savouring the chole-chawal being served at the bhandara, also danced to the tune of Ram-bhajans.

WITH FIRECRACKERS going off all evening, diyas and candles outside storefronts, and lights strung from balconies of homes, parts of Delhi marked what looked like Diwali, against a backdrop of saffron flags, on Monday evening after the Ram Mandir consecration ceremony.

Near Mayur Vihar Phase I flyover, a nursery running by the roadside had candles and diyas placed among potted plants and flowers. Kamlesh Verma, 51, who runs the nursery, and is from Pratapgarh in Uttar Pradesh, was huddled around a fire nearby with his wife. "We are very happy about the temple in Ayodhya. Around 8-10 of us who run nurseries here distributed food during the day. Pratapgarh is around 120 km from Ayodhya and I have been there twice. I would like to spend a few days there now," said Verma, who has been running a nursery in Delhi for 20 years.

While lamps illuminated parts of the otherwise nearly pitch-dark Yamuna floodplain near Verma's nursery, several homes in Mayur Vihar Phase I, across the road, were lit up with lights and diyas placed before them, with saffron flags.

Nearly 10 km away, at Connaught Place, crowded on a Monday evening, nearly all storefronts had diyas placed before them, with saffron flags.

Meanwhile, an entire line of

rickshaws on Panchkuin Marg had diyas placed on the metal between the wheels at the back; vendors with toys and clothes along pavements, and small tea shops had candles and diyas lit up beside them.

In Karol Bagh, the facade of a bakery was decorated with yellow and orange balloons, and

strung between the pillars of the blocks.

Crowds gathered for pictures of diyas that were lit to form the words 'Jai Shri Ram' outside Palika Bazaar and garlands and candles that formed the word 'Ram' near a stage set up by the New Delhi Traders' Association.

Nearby, a row of diyas in Connaught Place; (L) a Shobha Yatra in Karol Bagh. Abhinav Saha/Aruni Mehra

sweet shops with storekeepers wearing saffron scarves, greeted customers.

As fireworks went off incessantly in parts of South Delhi, the Lajpat Nagar market where some shops remain shut on Mondays, was decorated with yellow and orange balloons.

cycle rickshaws on Panchkuin Marg had diyas placed on the metal between the wheels at the back; vendors with toys and clothes along pavements, and small tea shops had candles and diyas lit up beside them.

In Karol Bagh, the facade of a bakery was decorated with yellow and orange balloons, and



Delhi L-G VK Saxena and family at the celebrations at Yamuna Ghat, Monday. Tashi Tobgyal

At BJP office, selfie point, fireworks show

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, JANUARY 22

THE BJP Monday organised a fireworks show at its state headquarters in Delhi to commemorate the Ram Mandir consecration. Union Home Minister Amit Shah, BJP national president JP Nadda, Union Defence Minister Rajnath Singh, and party MPs took part in community viewing events where the ceremony in Ayodhya was telecast alongside other events.

The party said it illuminated and decorated all its offices in the city apart from setting up screens at 2,486 temples and public spots.

A Ram Mandir selfie point was set up at the HQ where Delhi BJP president Virendra Sachdeva was among the first individuals to click a selfie. He then joined a Sunderkand Paath organised by



BJP President JP Nadda on Monday. X

the Delhi Hindustani Merchantile Association at Ghanta Ghar Chowk.

"Today is a memorable day in the life of all Sanatan Dharma followers with all Hindus enjoying the day. Some political parties like the Congress and its anti-Santana Dharma stance stand exposed as the party has boycotted it," Sachdeva alleged.

Among invitees from Delhi, children of two late BJP stalwarts with key role in movement

JATIN ANAND
NEW DELHI, JANUARY 22

TWO YOUNG faces associated with the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) from the Capital were among a handful of invitees from Delhi to be part of the Ram Temple Pran Pratishta ceremony in Ayodhya Monday.

According to party sources, veteran BJP leader Arun Jaitley's son Rohan, who was accompanied by his mother Sangeeta, and party stalwart Sushma Swaraj's daughter Bansuri were asked to join the ceremony to honour the contribution of their respective parents to the Ram Mandir movement.

A majority of Union ministers and senior party hands, from Home Minister Amit Shah to BJP national president Jagat Prakash Nadda, took part in various events related to the ceremony in Delhi alongside the party's MPs from the Capital and office bearers.

According to a senior BJP leader, several MPs and leaders who had been dispatched to Ayodhya in the run-up to the ceremony were, in fact, asked to ensure they flew down to their respective Parliamentary constituencies in time for pre-scheduled events that they were to lead there instead of staying back on the day of the ceremony.

"While Sushma ji was the co-



Bansuri Swaraj (R) & Rohan Jaitley (in the background) in Ayodhya Monday. Express

ordinator of the Rath Yatra led by Lal Krishna Advani in 1990, Jaitley lent his legal expertise to the adjudication related to the matter," a party leader, who did not wish to be named, said.

"Apart from directly being associated with the movement, both leaders kept its spirit alive through their respective speeches with regard to how close the Ram Mandir was to the BJP's political agenda in both Houses of Parliament on innumerable occasions," the leader added.

This, a party source pointed out, was not the first time Rohan and Bansuri had rubbed shoulders with "special invitees at a significant event" at the instructions of the party's national leadership.

They had taken part in the G-20 Summit in the Capital in October last year as part of special engagement groups – Think20 and Women20.

In a first, Ravan-worshipping temple in Greater Noida village welcomes Ram

DHEERAJ MISHRA
NOIDA, JANUARY 22

SITUATED AROUND 56 kilometres from the national capital, Greater Noida's Bisrakh village has a unique distinction. Believed to be the birth place of Ravan, the village is known for worshipping the demon king. And even as most parts of the country celebrate 'Ravan Dahan' (burning of the effigy of Ravan) on Vijayadashami, the residents here give the celebrations a miss.

But on Monday, in an unprecedented move, idols of Lord Ram, Sita and Lakshman were installed inside the ancient Shiva temple here, to coincide with the Ram Temple consecration ceremony in Ayodhya.

According to the chief priest of the temple, Mahant Ramdas, both Ram and Ravan give the same message to the society – of wisdom, valour, perseverance and respect for all.

"Ravan Maharaj came in my dreams and he said that we



At the Shiva Temple in Bisrakh on Monday. Express

should make way for statues of Bhagwan Ram, Sita ji and Lakshman ji," Mahant Ramdas told The Indian Express.

While the main gate of the temple is adorned by different statues depicting key moments in Ravan's life, the sanctum does not have any statue of the demon king. This too is set to change.

"This Vijayadashami, we will install a statue of Ravan inside. Ram and Ravan share the same values, but different ideologies.

Just like in today's politics – the netas keep fighting in public but they meet each other cordially on different occasions," said Mahant Ramdas.

"Today is a historic day as thousands of people came to the temple and celebrated the occasion," he added.

While drawing a connection between Ram and Ravan from the mythology, he further said, "When Ram setu was being built to enter into Lanka, Ravan had

performed a puja of Shri Ram. We want to give this message to the society that both can co-exist."

It is believed that Ravan's father Vishrava was from Bisrakh village and was invited by Lord Shiva to perform rituals of Grih Pravesh when Lanka was being built for Goddess Parvati. According to mythology, after performing the puja, when Lord Shiva asked Vishrava what he wanted as a Dakshina (gift), he demanded Lanka, which he later gave to his son Kuber. Lanka was taken over by Ravan later.

It is believed that the Shivaling in the Shiva temple is the same where Ravan had offered his head 10 times as Tapasya.

Meanwhile, the village has no plans of burning the effigy of Ravan ever. "Though we have installed the statue of Ram, Ravan's effigy will never be burnt in this village ever. Also, no Ramila will be performed here. We will worship both (Ram and Ravan)," said Mahant Ramdas, who has been associated with the temple for around 40 years.

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Bag, Briefcase, Pens थैला, ब्रीफकेस, पेन	Alcohol, Perfume, Spray, Aerosol / Gel / Paste शराब, इत्र, स्प्रे, एरोसोल / जेल / पेरस्ट
Radio Transistor, Tape Recorder रेडियो ट्रांजिस्टर, टेप रिकॉर्डर	Dagger, Sword, Drills, Hammer Sharp/Pointed Edged Material, Screw Drivers खंजर, तलवार, आरी, ड्रिल, हथौड़ा नुकीला हथियार, पेक्कास, रस्कु ड्राइवर
Camera, Binocular, Handycam कैमरा, दूरबीन, हैंडीकैम	Umbrella, Replica Fire Arms, Toy Gun, Ammunition छाता, खिलौना पिस्टॉल, गोला बारूद
Digital Dairies, Laptop, Computers, I-Pad डिजिटल डायरी, लैपटॉप, कंप्यूटर, आईपैड	Knives, Scissors, Razors, Blades, Wires etc. चाकू, कैंची, रेजर, ब्लेड, तार इत्यादि
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माननीय मुख्यमंत्री, झारखण्ड

—०६— विशेष अतिथि —०७—
श्री आलमगीर आलम
माननीय मंत्री, ग्रामीण विकास, ग्रामीण
कार्य, पंचायती राज तथा संसदीय कार्य विभाग

—०८— गणपति उपस्थिति —०९—
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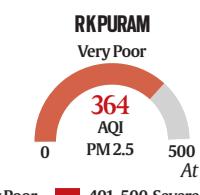
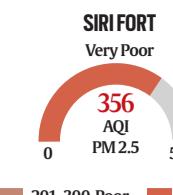
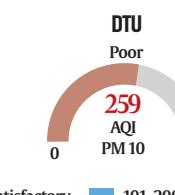
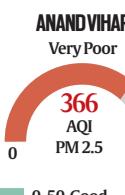
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S K Y W A T C H
FORECAST: January 23
Mainly clear sky. Moderate to dense fog in the morning
AQI: Very poor

MAX: 18 2.3°C below normal | **MIN: 7** 0.5°C below normal

BRIEFLY

HC directs inspection of ashram run by absconding 'godman'

New Delhi: The Delhi High Court Monday directed the inspection of an ashram run by absconding "godman" Virendra Dev Dixit while hearing a plea moved by the mother of a woman stated to be living in the ashram, alleging that her daughter had been "influenced" and "tutored" by some persons to join the ashram. A division bench of Justice Suresh Kumar Kait and Justice Manoj Jain said, "Adhyatmik Vishwa Vidyalaya, which is located at Palam colony, has only five girls including respondent no. 6 (woman). Since there is an FIR under a serious offence against the in-charge of the said ashram, therefore, we hereby direct the state to inspect the said ashram along with the SDM and DCP concerned". The HC directed the State of Delhi to file a status report and listed the matter on January 24. ENS

Delhi's winter peak power demand hits all-time high

New Delhi: The unrelenting cold conditions in Delhi pushed the city's peak winter power demand to its highest-ever level of 5,816 megawatts (MW) Monday morning, discom officials said. The previous 'winter' records in Delhi were 5,798 MW on January 19, 5,726 MW on January 17 and 5,701 MW on January 12. Discoms had estimated the peak demand in Delhi to be 5,760 MW. PTI

ARNABJIT SUR

NEW DELHI, JANUARY 22

THE CARJACKERS who dragged a 43-year-old cab driver for around a kilometre under his own vehicle, resulting in his death, targeted the victim's sedan to fund mounting legal costs of the cases already lodged against them, the police chargesheet has revealed.

The incident took place last October near the IGI Airport.

The chargesheet, filed before Metropolitan Magistrate Animesh Tripathi of Patiala House Court, names accused Mehraj Salmani, 34, and Asif Anwar, 24, both of whom hail from Meerut. The deceased, Bijender Shah, was a resident of Surya Colony in Faridabad.

The chargesheet stated that Mehraj and Asif have been involved in several cases of carjacking and burglary in UP, and "in order to fund the legal costs of cases under trial", both planned to rob a vehicle in Delhi and sell it to another accomplice in Meerut at a prof-



Bijender Shah (R) was dragged for around a kilometre under his own vehicle last October, resulting in his death. Express

itable price.

According to the chargesheet, "Asif stated that he took to crime at a very young age after he got into bad company and he, along with his accomplices Mehraj, Farman and Abid, committed several crimes. The cases started taking a financial toll on them, after which he and Mehraj planned to rob a vehicle which they will give (were planning to give) to one Nadim in Meerut at a prof-

itable price... Mehraj then came to Asif's house in Noida on October 10... Asif stayed in Noida's Bhangel along with his wife... both the accused made the plan on the same day, around 4.30 pm, after which they boarded a cab from Saket, where they first consumed alcohol and then asked the cab driver to drive towards the IGI Airport. Mehraj was sitting in the front seat while Asif was sitting in the backseat."



bid and got dragged after his seat belt got stuck," added the chargesheet.

Police added murder charges to the case after it surfaced that both the accused persons knowingly kept driving the car despite knowing that Shah was stuck to the seat belt and was being dragged.

Police arrested Mehraj and Asif with the help of CCTV cameras and a 44-second video clip shot by the driver of a vehicle which was right behind Shah's Swift Dzire. The driver of the second car kept honking at the vehicle as Shah was being dragged away following which the accused suddenly hit the brakes, as a result of which Shah's body got dislodged and was later found by the police on NH-48.

The chargesheet further said that the accused had plans to rob several other persons at the IGI Airport by posing as cab drivers of the stolen car and luring their targets inside the vehicle for a ride. The accused were arrested in a joint operation of the Meerut and Delhi Police, a day after Shah's body was found with severe head injuries.

Shah, who worked with a taxi aggregator, is survived by his wife and five children. His family hails from Bihar's Motihari district.

Man burnt to death after car hits divider, catches fire in Noida



EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
NOIDA, JANUARY 22

A 30-YEAR-OLD man died after his car caught fire when he collided with a divider while taking a U-turn under Noida Sector 59 Metro station Monday. Police said the incident took place at 3.45 am. The driver could not get out of the Toyota Corolla Altis and was burnt to death, they said.

The victim, Sahit Modem, was a resident of Sector 75 and worked with his father in HR consulting. Additional Deputy Commissioner of Police (Central Noida) Hridesh Katheriya said the cause of the fire is yet to be ascertained.

"A passerby called the emergency helpline number and informed that a Toyota Corolla car had hit the divider near the Sector 59 Metro station U-turn. As soon as we received the information, personnel from the Phase 3 police station and fire

(L) The victim, Sahit Modem; the burnt Toyota Corolla Altis

service department were immediately rushed to the spot and they doused the blaze. Prima facie, it seems that the car collided with the divider and went over it," said Katheriya.

The officer further said the man was taken out of the car and rushed to a nearby hospital, where doctors declared him dead on arrival. Police contacted his family through the vehicle number as there was no other way to identify him and his kin.

The ADCP added that the deceased was returning from Ghaziabad after meeting a friend when the incident took place.

Police said that after completing legal formalities, the body was handed over to the family.

Doctor held for sexual assault was running clinic using fake papers

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
GURGAON, JANUARY 22

FOLLOWING A doctor's arrest a month ago for allegedly sexually assaulting a woman and forcing her to undergo an abortion, Gurgaon Police have now found that he was running a clinic using a fake Medical Council of India (MCI) certificate.

According to police, last November, the woman filed a complaint alleging that a person, on the pretext of marriage, sexually assaulted her over 8-9 months and forced her to undergo an abortion for Rs 8,000 in a hospital. The accused then absconded with her mobile phone and gold chain.

Police said they went to check the hospital, but found it closed. "When we enquired further, we came to know that the doctor who ran it was named Mohamad Sohrab (37)," police said.

"During questioning, it was revealed that Sohrab obtained an MBBS degree from China. Upon failing the MCI exam in India, he forged the certificate. He practised with the fake certificate at a private hospital in Islampur from 2014 to 2017," said Inspector Sandeep, SHO of Sector 9A police station.

Police checked with the hospital and after seeking information from MCI, they confirmed it was forged. The main accused, Veer alias Navin, was already arrested in connection with the case.

NewsClick HR head seeks to withdraw plea against arrest

ANANTHAKRISHNANG
NEW DELHI, JANUARY 22

WEEKS AFTER he turned an approver in a case filed under provisions of the stringent UAPA against NewsClick, the news portal's HR head Amit Chakraborty Monday informed the Supreme Court that he wanted to withdraw his application against the Delhi High Court ordering upholding his arrest.

Allowing the request, a bench of Justices B R Gavai, Sanjay Karol and Sandeep Mehta adjourned the hearing till January 30.

Chakraborty and NewsClick founder and editor-in-chief Prabir Purkayastha were arrested in October last year in a case under the anti-terror law for allegedly receiving Chinese funding to promote anti-national propaganda.

"Let him withdraw if he wants to withdraw," Additional Solicitor General S V Raju, appearing for the Delhi Police said, adding that Purkayastha's case will have to be heard by the court

In shootout at Sarai Kale Khan, 2 who killed Noida man nabbed

The police team fired almost 11-12 rounds even as the gangsters fired back

to the Bishnoi-Jitender Gogi gang, allegedly attacked Suraj to avenge an old murder and a 15-year-old property dispute.

During questioning, the accused revealed they were in contact with gangster Kapil Mann alias Kalli Kheda, who is presently lodged in jail, through one of his friends. Police said Parvesh and Kalli have a long-standing rivalry over a 100-yard of plot in their village in North Delhi's Khera Khurd, which spiralled into violence.

DCP Goel said the accused were involved in multiple thefts and robberies and were "used" by gangs to commit bigger crimes and indulge in gang rivalry. Police seized semi-automatic pistols from their possession.

C P Amit Goel (Crime) said his team, led by ACP Umesh Barthwal, Inspectors Rampal and Yogesh Kumar, were closely tracking the movements of the

student of Amity International School in Delhi's Pushp Vihar, was felicitated for developing a unique solar-operated Agro Vehicle called "SO-APT". It can be used by farmers to operate fodder-cutting machines, centrifugal pumps, fans, lights and charge mobile phones.

A statement released by the school on Chauhan's behalf said, "Having a research-oriented and scientific temperament, I wanted to create something unique that can contribute to the development of our country. I understood the plight of farmers in our country... this vehicle will help increase their crop produce and decrease the cost of production."

Amita Chauhan, chairperson of Amity International Schools,

assailants who were on the "lookout for their next target".

On Sunday night, the team found that the accused were in Delhi and would come to Sarai Kale Khan bus stand to flee the city.

"In the early hours of Monday, our team laid a trap near the bus stand. None of the locals were allowed in the area and our informers were activated. In the morning, the duo came on foot and we waylaid them. We tried to warn them but they fired at us. More than 12 bullets were fired. Inspector Yogesh was shot at but escaped injuries as the bullet grazed his jacket. We retaliated and fired at them. Both were injured and caught," said an officer.

Chief Electoral Officer (CEO) of Delhi PK Krishnamurthy said the Special Summary Revision of the Electoral Rolls with January 1, 2024, as the qualifying date, recorded an addition of 67,930 young voters (18-19 age group)—accounting for 26.7% of the total addition of 2,54,470 names. The enrolment of young electors in this age group, the Delhi CEO said, had increased by 9.69% compared to the final roll of last year.

As many as 9,335 prospective electors—who are going to attain the age of 18 years with respect to the qualifying dates of April 1, July 1, and October 1—had also filed advance claims for

More young voters, women among Delhi's 1.47 cr electors

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, JANUARY 22

THE FINAL electoral roll for the national capital published on Monday recorded a significant increase in the number of young electors and women voters.

Chief Electoral Officer (CEO) of Delhi PK Krishnamurthy said the Special Summary Revision of the Electoral Rolls with January 1, 2024, as the qualifying date, recorded an addition of 67,930 young voters (18-19 age group)—accounting for 26.7% of the total addition of 2,54,470 names. The enrolment of young electors in this age group, the Delhi CEO said, had increased by 9.69% compared to the final roll of last year.

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THE NUMBERS

Category	Final roll published on 05.01.2023	Final roll published on 22.01.2024
Male electors	80 lakh	79 lakh
Female electors	67.36 lakh	67.30 lakh
Third Gender	1,155	1,176
No. of total electors	1.47 crore	1.471 crore
Service electors	12,042	12,115
18-19 age group electors	1.34 lakh	1.47 lakh
EP Ratio	69.29	67.71
Gender Ratio	838	843

inclusion, Krishnamurthy said.

Meanwhile, the overall number of electors on the final electoral roll stood at 1,47,18,119 including 79,86,572 male, 67,30,371 female, and 1,176 third-gender electors.

Krishnamurthy said the electoral roll had also been 'purified'

with the removal of 3,97,004 entries, including 3,07,788 names permanently shifted electors, 56,773 dead electors, and 32,443 multiple entries. The CEO advised all residents to use digital services like the Voter Helpline App and CI website for quicker access to various electoral services.

and Culture. He is the youngest to have solved 100 multiplication sums and the youngest author with a trilogy of books.

Also among the awardees was 13-year-old Hetvi Kantibhai Khimsuriya from Gujarat who has cerebral palsy. She has created 250 works of free-hand painting and has received numerous awards. She has also donated her monthly disability pension to support differently abled children.

Also among the recipients in the field of Art and Culture was eight-year-old Anushka Pathak from Uttarakhand, a Katha Vachan (text narrator). Following in her father's footsteps, she has performed across 22 states. Contributing to society, nine-year-old Garima from Haryana, a visually impaired girl, is dedicated to providing education to underprivileged children through her initiative called 'Sakshar Pathshala'. She too was among the awardees.

trekked to the Mount Everest base camp at the age of seven, Avinash Tiwari from Madhya Pradesh, who has Down Syndrome, received the Shresth Divyanshu Bal Puraskar in 2022 for his exceptional social service.

R Surya Prasad from Andhra Pradesh, who commenced mountaineering training at the age of five, accomplished the feat of scaling Mount Kilimanjaro at the age of nine. He received the award for excellence in sports.

Contributing to society, nine-year-old Garima from Haryana, a visually impaired girl, is dedicated to providing education to underprivileged children through her initiative called 'Sakshar Pathshala'. She too was among the awardees.



President Droupadi Murmu presented the Pradhan Mantri Rashtriya Bal Puraskar, Monday. X/President of India

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, JANUARY 22

A TEENAGER who invented a machine to help farmers, a six-year-old math whiz, and two young mountaineers were among 19 recipients of the Pradhan Mantri Rashtriya Bal Puraskar at Vigyan Bhavan Monday.

President Droupadi Murmu presented the national awards to them for their exceptional achievements. They included one child each in the categories of Bravery, Science & Technology and Innovation; four children in the category of Social Service; five kids in the category of Sports and 7 for Art and Culture.

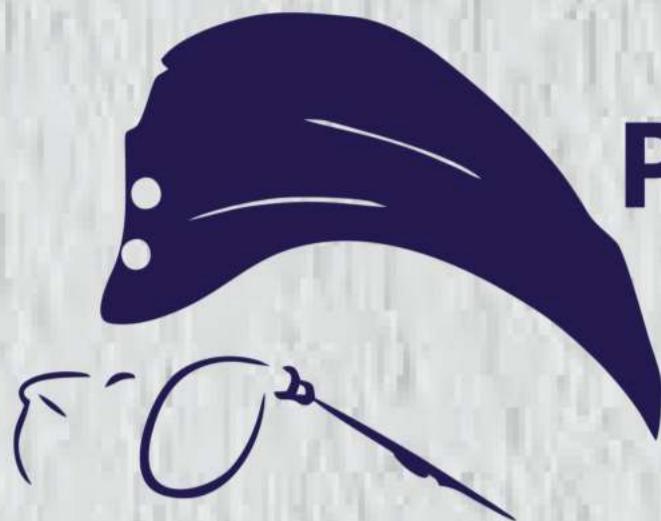
Suhani Chauhan, a Class XI

FOR ACHIEVEMENTS IN FIELDS RANGING FROM ART, SCIENCE & BRAVERY

Inventor, whiz kid, mountaineer: Meet the 19 'PM Bal Puraskar' recipients



Honouring the bravery and courage of
Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose - an epitome of patriotism.



PARAKRAM DIWAS

January 23

On the occasion of the
127th birth anniversary of Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose

PRIME MINISTER NARENDRA MODI

will inaugurate the 9-day Parakram Utsav

• On •

23 January 2024 | 4 PM | Red Fort, Delhi

The programme will be live on Doordarshan.



Subhas Chandra Bose was such a great man who was beyond the challenge of position and resources. His acceptance was such that the whole world considered him a leader. It is our effort that Netaji's energy should guide the country today. 

Prime Minister Narendra Modi

• Key highlights of the Parakram Utsav from January 23 - 31 •

10 AM to 6 PM daily

- **Books, Pictures and Archival Exhibition**

An exquisite exhibition of books, rare pictures and documents on the life and struggles of Netaji.

- **Live Art and Sculpture Workshop**

Featuring painting and skilled sculptors showcasing their expertise in working with clay, wood, and stone.

- **AR, VR exhibition**

Enthralling exploration of Netaji's life journey portrayed through Augmented and Virtual reality.

- **Live Performance with Projection Mapping Show (6:00 PM to 6:30 PM)**

Experience the fusion of cutting-edge light and sound show with live performances by National School of Drama (NSD) artists, narrating stories from Netaji life.

- **Honouring INA Veterans**

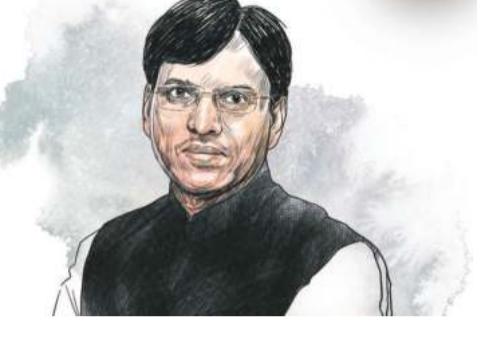
- **Digital Launch of Bharat Parv 2024**

You are all Cordially Invited

FREE ENTRY



DELHI CONFIDENTIAL



ONE NAME, TWO SEATS

WITH THE BJP planning to field ministers who have completed two Rajya Sabha terms in the coming Lok Sabha elections, the name of Union Health Minister Mansukh Mandaviya is being proposed for either Surat or Bhavnagar seat in Gujarat. The minister hails from the Bhavnagar district but shares a Saurashtra connection with Surat. Five of the seven Assembly constituencies that make up the Surat Lok Sabha seat have a high Saurashtra population. Mandaviya's name was suggested for the two seats after several rounds of meetings of senior party leaders and cluster leaders. The BJP has created seven clusters of the 26 Lok Sabha seats in Gujarat and the leaders are tasked with finding candidates who are likely to win with a margin of 5 lakh votes in each seat.

LIVE DARSHAN

WATCHING THE Ram Mandir consecration live from his official residence in Delhi, Union Minister Hardeep Singh Puri was joined by family, friends and colleagues. India's G20 Sherpa and former NITI Aayog CEO Amitabh Kant, Petroleum Secretary Pankaj Jain, Indian Oil Chairman Shrikant Madhav Vaidya, NBCC India CMD KP Mahadeva Swamy and Delhi BJP leader Neelkanth Bakshi were among those present at the minister's bungalow. Later in a tweet, Puri said watching the ceremony was a "once in a lifetime moment" made possible by Prime Minister Narendra Modi's leadership.

DEVOTIONAL CONNECT

UNION MINISTER for Science and Technology Dr Jitendra Singh celebrated the Pran Pratishta at Delhi's Nehru Place. He participated in a havan organised at the venue and performed an aarti in front of a TV screen showing the ceremony live from Ayodhya. The minister donned a white kurta with a saffron turban and a matching stole.

ASSETS COMPLAINT AGAINST JMM CHIEF

Delhi HC refuses to interfere with Lokpal proceedings against Shibu Soren

MALAVIKA PRASAD
NEW DELHI, JANUARY 22

THE DELHI High Court Monday refused to interfere at this stage with proceedings before the Lokpal of India against Jharkhand Mukti Morcha chief Shibu Soren after BJP leader Nitishkumar Dubey filed a complaint alleging that Soren had in his name and in the name of his family members, associates and various companies etc. acquired several immovable properties in various districts of Jharkhand.

After Dubey filed a complaint in September 2020, the Lokpal had subsequently directed the CBI to conduct a "preliminary inquiry" against Soren to ascertain whether there exists a "prima facie case for proceeding in the matter", which had submitted its report in June 2022. Soren had moved the HC challenging Dubey's complaint and various orders passed therein primarily contending that the complaint itself should not have been entertained by Lokpal since it was time barred (being made 7 years after the alleged acquisition of properties as mentioned in the complaint) under the Lokpal and Lokayuktas Act. Soren had also alleged that the CBI's report was given only on June 29, 2022 "which is way beyond the time limit prescribed" under the Act.

Meanwhile, the JMM on Monday said it may move a higher court. **WITH PTI INPUTS**



JMM chief Shibu Soren

A single judge bench of Justice Subramonium Prasad observed that the Lokpal is "yet to apply its mind on the material provided by the CBI as to whether an investigation is necessary or not".

"Writ courts cannot substitute themselves as an authority which has been vested with a duty under the Statute to consider as to whether there is material in it or not for ordering investigation. The writ petition, therefore, is premature in nature," Justice Prasad further observed.

The HC further said it is for the Lokpal to take a decision on whether there is sufficient material to proceed further for investigation or not in order to subserve the purpose for which the Act has been brought out. The HC thereafter disposed of the plea "without making any observation on the merits of the case".

Meanwhile, the JMM on Monday said it may move a higher court. **WITH PTI INPUTS**

TO MITIGATE man-elephant conflict, emerging as a key challenge in Odisha, the state government has sought four Kumki elephants and their mahouts from Tamil Nadu, given the state's success in training and utilising them for wildlife conservation.

Kumkis are trained captive elephants used in operations to trap, rescue and tranquillise wild elephants. "They can be deployed strategically to help manage and drive wild elephants, thereby re-

ducing damage to crops, human habitation and the potential loss of both human and elephant lives. These elephants can also be deployed for forest patrolling and rescue operations," said additional chief secretary of Odisha's forests and environment department, Satyabrata Sahu.

In a letter to Supriya Sahu, his counterpart in Tamil Nadu, the Odisha officer said the Kumki elephants will serve as an invaluable asset to the state's wildlife organisation and aid its efforts to minimise conflicts.

As Odisha lacks trained ma-

houts, the state has also re-

Cong yatra Assam leg hiccups continue, shrine out of bounds

Rahul stopped from visiting revered shrine; yatra enters Meghalaya

SUKRITA BARUAH
NAGAON, JANUARY 22

IMPEDED BY barricades and stopped by the police, Congress leader Rahul Gandhi had to forego his plan to visit the Batadrava Than in Assam on Monday morning as part of his ongoing Bharat Jodo Nyay Yatra.

After spending the night at a camp in Rupahi in Assam's Nagaon district, the Yatra convoy began moving towards the Batadrava Than located around 26 km away at 8.25 am. The Congress had announced earlier that its Yatra schedule for January 22 would include a morning visit to the than in Nagaon district – the birthplace of revered Vaishnavite reformer-saint Srimanta Sankardeva, and one of the most sacred sites for Assamese Vaishnavites. However, en route, the convoy was met with police personnel behind barricades blocking the road at Haibargaon.

Rahul, along with several other leaders including Jairam Ramesh, Supriya Shrinate, Gaurav Gogoi, Srinivas B V, Kanhaiya Kumar, Yogendra Yadav and Jitendra Singh Alwar, got off their vehicles when the convoy was stopped.

It eventually remained stuck at the barricades for over two hours. While some local party supporters joined the yatra, Rahul sat down on road surrounded by supporters singing the bhajan 'Raghupati Raghav Raja Ram' in chorus.

"What have I done that I can't visit the temple?" Rahul asked the police personnel at the barricades.

Incidentally, on Sunday, the president of the Than management committee had alerted the Congress MLA from Batadrava constituency, Sibamoni Bora, that Rahul would not be permitted to enter the premises before 3 pm



Police personnel stop Congress leader Rahul Gandhi from visiting Batadrava Than during his ongoing Bharat Jodo Nyay Yatra, in Nagaon district of Assam on Monday. ANI

on Monday, stating that thousands of people were expected to gather at the temple in the morning to mark the consecration of the Ram Mandir in Ayodhya.

Assam CM Himanta Biswa Sarma, while addressing the media in Guwahati, had also suggested that Rahul should visit the shrine after the Ayodhya programme, and not in the morning. "... we request that he goes to the Batadrava Sattru only after the Ram Mandir programme is over. There is no competition. He should not come and create an image of a

competition," he had said.

After long exchanges with Congress leaders, the police allowed Gaurav Gogoi and Sibamoni – the local MP and MLA respectively – to go past the barricades and visit the than.

According to AICC leader Jairam Ramesh, while the original plan was for Rahul to visit the than, in the end, only the two Assamese leaders were allowed to go, and it was decided that the Yatra would proceed only after they returned.

Later that afternoon, while the Yatra prepared to move from Jagiroad in Morigaon district to Jorabat at the Assam-Meghalaya border, it was brought to a halt for some time when Nagaon MP Pradyut Bordoloi raised an alarm on January 30. Chief Minister Nitish Kumar has confirmed his participation in the Purnea rally, Mishra told reporters, adding that Rahul would further travel to Araria and Katihar before re-entering West Bengal on February 1.

This was confirmed by Congress MLC and senior party leader Prem Chandra Mishra on Monday. "Rahul Gandhi will enter Bihar (from West Bengal) on January 29 through Kishanganj and will attend a rally in Purnea on January 30. Chief Minister Nitish Kumar has confirmed his participation in the Purnea rally," Mishra told reporters, adding that Rahul would further travel to Araria and Katihar before re-entering West Bengal on February 1.

The Kishanganj Lok Sabha seat is currently held by the Congress. It is the only seat that the Mahagathbandhan won in the 2019 general elections. The Congress has focused on the Seemandehali region, comprising the Lok Sabha seats of Kishanganj, Araria, Purnea and Katihar. At present, the JD(U) represents Purnea and Katihar seats,

Lack of consensus on seat-sharing in Bihar. Nitish Kumar and Tejashwi Prasad Yadav



while the BJP represents Araria.

Lack of consensus on seat-sharing in Bihar for the Lok Sabha elections has led to speculation of frosty ties between the Congress and the JD(U).

A JD(U) leader said: "We were never averse to Congress's yatra, but had wanted to make it an INDIA bloc march. Now that Rahul Gandhi has decided to address a meeting in Purnea, Nitish Kumar would attend it. It will be a great sign of solidarity."

An RJD leader said: "Deputy CM Tejashwi Prasad Yadav will attend the Purnea rally. We all are trying to put up a unified show for the INDIA bloc."

Congress leader Mishra said Rahul's yatra would cover 425 km and seven districts of Bihar in two phases. "In the second leg, of which the schedule will be shared in due course, the Yatra will cover south Bihar districts of Aurangabad, Kaimur and Rohtas," he said.

From anti-BJP rally, Mamata trains guns on INDIA allies

Attacks BJP for 'politicising' religion, accuses CPI(M) of 'controlling' INDIA meetings, raps Cong over seat-sharing tangle

ATRIMITRA
& RAVIK BHATTACHARYA
KOLKATA, JANUARY 22

ON THE day of the inauguration of the Ram Temple in Ayodhya by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, West Bengal Chief Minister and Trinamool Congress (TMC) supremo Mamata Banerjee led an all-faith "Sanhati (harmony) rally" in Kolkata, from where she not only launched an attack on the BJP but also went after her INDIA alliance partners.

Mamata slammed the BJP for its bid to "politicise" religion ahead of the Lok Sabha polls.

At the same time, she also said she felt sad to see the CPI(M) "controlling" the INDIA bloc's meetings and that some people would not listen to her over seat-sharing for the upcoming polls.

In the context of Bengal, apart from the TMC, the Congress and the CPI(M) are the other major constituents of the Opposition INDIA grouping formed to take on the BJP in the Lok Sabha elections.

The INDIA allies have run into a seat-sharing hurdle in Bengal, with the TMC having declined to engage in talks with the Congress's national alliance committee over the issue while offering the party just two of its sitting seats – Berhampore and Malda Dakshin.

State Congress president Adhir Ranjan Chowdhury, who is also the party MP from Berhampore, has rejected the TMC's offer, saying the grand old party had won those seats on its own in 2019 fighting against the TMC and the BJP, and that the Congress does not need any "grace or generosity" from Mamata to win them again.

In the 2019 polls, the TMC

bagged 22 seats out of the state's total 42 as against the BJP's 18, with the CPI(M)-led Left Front drawing a blank.

On her part, Mamata, while

addressing a public rally in Park Circus Maidan where the Sanhati rally ended, ruled that none of the Opposition leaders hit the streets

in protest to counter the BJP

head-on, like she did on the day of the Ayodhya event.

"I suggested the name INDIA. But I am sad to say that when I attend the INDIA meetings I see CPI(M) controlling it. I cannot agree with those with whom I fought for 34 years," the CM said.

"I have been told what they think they will do. I tell them not to help the BJP. If you do so, the people of India will not pardon you. If I can have the guts to take on BJP why can't you? I have shown courage. So many political parties, but did they show this courage?" Mamata asked.

She went on: "I have the power to fight with BJP and I do so. I have repeatedly said that

whoever is in power in whichever state (regional parties) should decide. I had said you (Congress) fight in 300 seats, we will help you. But some people do not want

to listen to us on seat-sharing, I am ready to give blood, but I will not let BJP have one seat."

The TMC chief also asked: "How many politicians today took on the BJP frontally? How many politicians hit the streets? Somebody went to a temple and thinks that is sufficient. It is not so. I am the only one who took out a rally and visited a temple, a gurdwara, a church and a mosque."

On Monday morning, Mamata offered puja and performed "art" at the Kalighat temple and took out the Sanhati rally of thousands of TMC workers from Hazra in South Kolkata. She walked with people belonging to different religions. She was accompanied by her nephew and TMC general secretary Abhishek Banerjee, ministers and other party leaders. The CM also visited a gurdwara, a church and a mosque.

'Abrogate SoO agreements': Manipur MLAs after violence

JIMMY LEVION
IMPHAL, JANUARY 22

FOLLOWING A fresh bout of violence this month, 32 of the 60 MLAs in the Manipur Assembly unanimously adopted several resolutions on Sunday. These included the demand for immediate abrogation of Suspension of Operations (SoO) with armed militants who have allegedly killed civilians and calling for replacement of the Assam Rifles.

The development comes on the day a special team of the Union Home Ministry arrived in the state for talks between the Meitei and Kuki communities, who have been engaged in a protracted standoff since May last year.

The statement by the MLAs argued that the SoO agreements with Kuki armed militant groups, and the resulting immunity they provide against a "firm

reaction" from Central forces, is the "main cause of the never-ending cycle of violence".

The SoO militants who "indulge in killing of innocent civilians and violation of ground rules should be abrogated immediately," it said.

The statement also added that SoO agreements with militant groups "who also indulge in anti-state activities" should not be extended beyond their expiry date of February 29, 2024.

The joint statement further demanded a "complete disarmament of all illegal arms in the possession of miscreants and unauthorised persons in the entire state at the earliest by the Central and state forces".

"Armed attacks (using sophisticated weaponry such as Rocket Propelled Grenade launchers) on Indian soil, Indian citizens and state security forces by Myanmar based armed militants must be

stopped at all costs. It will be to the detriment of the prestige of the Republic of India if this cannot be achieved in short order," it stated.

The MLAs also accused the Assam Rifles, a central armed police force, for not being "responsive". They alleged that members of the force were "mute spectators when unarmed civilians (particularly farmers) are being indiscriminately fired upon frequently".

They said that the Assam Rifles and their leadership (chain of command) need to give strict instructions and be held accountable".

It suggested the Assam Rifles be replaced with "forces that have the ability to act by returning suppressive fire when they observe that unarmed civilians are being fired upon".

The MLAs urged the Centre to take up "appropriate action at the earliest".

"Failing this", the statement said, "the legislators will take appropriate action."

The statement also added that

the "legislators will take appropriate action at the earliest".

"Even though, the BSF was al-

lowed to complete all the DPCs'

meetings for 2024 by December

31 last year, it has been observed

that the BSF is yet to conduct 24

DPCs of various cadres for the

2024 vacancy, which is a serious

violation of DOP&T instructions

and directions issued by the

MHA," states the letter.

The regular promotion of

government employees is gen-

erally decided based on recom-

mendations made by the DPCs.

Functions such as the conduct

DPCs for promotions, cadre

clearance for deputations, ac-

ceptance of resignations, volun-



MINISTRY OF MINES GOVERNMENT OF INDIA



"Self-reliance is not possible without a strong mining and mineral sector as the two are important pillars of our economy"

Narendra Modi
Prime Minister of India



Mining Reforms for Aatmanirbhar Bharat Under Modi Government



Transparency & Fairness

Auction introduced for grant of mineral blocks, 336 blocks auctioned



Revenue to States

₹ 1,60,000 crores mining revenue earned by States



Focused development of people

District Mineral Foundations (DMF) set up



Mineral development & exploration

550 geological reports handed over to States



Geo-science data in public domain

23 lakh sq. km data on web portal



Ease of Doing Business

43,500 faceless submissions by mining companies

2nd State Mining Ministers' Conference

23 January 2024, Bhopal

Presided by

Shri Pralhad Joshi

Union Minister of Parliamentary Affairs, Coal and Mines

Chief Guest

Dr. Mohan Yadav

Chief Minister
Madhya Pradesh

In the august presence of
State Mining Ministers

Event Highlights

Exhibition on "Mining & Beyond"

Handing over of 122 Geological Reports

Handing over certificates to 4 new private mining exploration agencies

Handing over of 20 mining exploration blocks

Pradhan Mantri Khanij Kshetra Kalyan Yojana (PMKKKY)

PMKKKY addresses the need for inclusive growth & participative development of people in mining areas through welfare projects on Health, Education, Skill, Drinking Water, Sanitation, etc.



Building Social Trust

644

districts covered

₹47,500Cr

spent

2,40,000

welfare projects

CBC 26/01/13/0008/2324



FIR against CRPF for 'violating' orders during Soren questioning

ABHISHEK ANGAD
RANCHI, JANUARY 22



Jharkhand CM Hemant Soren

"This act was a premeditated conspiracy... This is at the behest of the Central government, which is an attempt to destabilise the state government and is a cowardly attack on the federal structure," the release had alleged.

More than 500 supporters of the CMs sat outside CM's residence, including those carrying bows and arrows, but there is no word on the violation of prohibitory orders against them. A CRPF official, on the condition of anonymity, had told *The Indian Express*: "We were there at the behest of the ED and they had given it to us in writing. There is nothing more to it."

Meanwhile BJP state president Babul Marandi said: "CRPF officers... came to protect the ED officers and to protect them from hired people armed with bows and arrows... this attempt to misuse police power to intimidate the central agency and central security forces will prove costly."

A press release signed by party general secretaries Supriyo Bhattacharya and Vinod Pandey had stated that if the JMM workers had not shown restraint, a violent situation could have arisen.

HOURS AFTER Jharkhand Mukti Morcha (JMM), one of the ruling coalition parties of the state, Sunday demanded "strict legal action" against the CRPF for committing "excesses", police registered an FIR against 500 personnel for allegedly violating prohibitory orders of the administration.

The FIR was registered Sunday evening, a day after CM Hemant Soren was questioned for more than seven hours by the Directorate of Enforcement in a money laundering case, under IPC sections 188 (disobedience to order by public servant), 353 (assault or criminal force to deter public servant from discharge of his duty) among other sections.

Ranchi SP Chandan Sinha said, "We registered an FIR Sunday at the instance of one of duty mag-

Cops: Teen shot in Meerut, search on for accused

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
MEERUT, JANUARY 22

A 17-YEAR-OLD woman was shot dead allegedly by a 20-year-old man after he tried to molest her at a market in a Meerut town on Monday, police said. The police identified the accused as Usman Malik, who they said was apparently in a relationship with the woman earlier.

Police said she resisted Malik's advances when she was on her way to a store and he then shot at her with a country-made weapon. She died instantly, police said. Several local residents and the woman's family members soon reached the spot but the accused managed to flee by then, police said. They staged a blockade at the market demanding the arrest of the culprit and refused to hand over the body to the police for post-mortem examination.

"We persuaded them to call off the protest. We have formed two teams to nab the culprit. We hope to arrest him soon," said Kamlesh Bahadur, SP (Rural).

Teacher detained for teen's rape, murder in Rajasthan: Police

HAMZA KHAN
JAIPUR, JANUARY 22

murdered her, and threw her body in the taanka (well)."

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RAM TEMPLE INAUGURATION

Maharashtra: Incidents of violence at Mira Road, Nagpur, Panvel; 13 held

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
MUMBAI, JANUARY 22

VIOLENT INCIDENTS of communal nature were reported from different parts of Maharashtra, ahead of the "Pran Pratishta" ceremony at the Ram Temple in Ayodhya on Monday, following which Deputy Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis said 13 people were arrested.

According to a senior IPS officer, communal incidents were reported from Mira Road, Panvel and Nagpur,

apart from minor incidents in other parts of the state that included sloganning and tearing posters. One person sustained serious injuries in the attack in the Naya Nagar area, while a few others received minor injuries.

According to police, two incidents were reported from Mira Road – one on Sunday night and the other Monday evening. Violence was also reported from Naya Nagar and Bhayander. "Two FIRs were registered

and more may be lodged soon. We stopped rallies of Hindus from entering lanes and areas where Muslim population is high to prevent any untoward incident," said a police officer.

Police said in the incident that occurred at around 11 pm Sunday, a group was passing by in their vehicles with saffron flags, chanting "Jai Shri Ram". They were stopped by local people and an argument broke out with people of another community. Soon a crowd gathered on both sides, said a senior police officer.

Several unverified videos were widely shared on social media, with "Mira Road" trending on X.

Two groups were also involved in stone pelting on Mira Road on Monday, police said, adding additional forces had to be called in for security.

In one of the videos, an injured motorist, who was part of Sunday's Shobha Yatra, was seen saying they (attackers) had swords and knives. "I have seen the video. After verification, we will take action," a police officer added.

In a statement, Fadnavis who also holds the Home portfolio, said, "Police were instructed to take strictest action against the culprits... 13 individuals have been arrested so far and detailed analysis of CCTV footage is underway to identify and arrest others involved... Law and order is the highest priority and concern of the state government... There will be zero tolerance against anyone who tries to take the law into their own hands."

BJP leader posted a message on social media platform X, seeking revenge.

In the Panvel incident, a group were holding a rally, shouting slogans of Jai Shri Ram that passed by the Kachchi mohalla area, a Muslim-dominated region. When they shouted slogans opposite a mosque, local residents confronted them. During the arguments, there was some scuffle, resulting in minor injuries to three persons. Police have not registered a case yet.

In another incident at Panvel railway station, members of two communities were seen chanting slogans.

Andaman couple booked for Rs 4.8-cr fraud

Mumbai: The Bandra Kurla Complex (BKC) police Sunday registered a case of fraud against a couple based in Andaman & Nicobar islands, along with two others for allegedly defrauding a city-based non-banking finance company to the tune of

Rs 4.8 crore and later not repaying it. The complainant, Suhas Ohwal, manager from Shriram City Union Finance Ltd, said Prakash Raj and his wife Sandhya took loan in April 2018 by submitting fake property documents.

ENS

Ministry of Culture
Government of India

Prime Ministers Museum and Library

Cordially invites you to a Public Lecture

on

Development Challenges and the Policy Response: An Economic Perspective on India's Journey

by

Prof. Rajeev Malhotra

Senior Fellow, PMML

Wednesday, 24 January 2024 at 3:00pm

Venue:

Seminar Room, Library Building
Prime Ministers Museum and Library

Teen Murti House, New Delhi

All are Welcome.

Those wishing to have their names added to the email list may please email us at: ccs2nmml@gmail.com

CBC 09142/12/0053/2324

PUBLIC NOTICE
Property Tax, MCD
DELHI PROPERTY OWNERS
TIME IS RUNNING OUT

Just 9 Days left!

Dear Residents and Property Owners,
Have you completed the Geo-Tagging process for your property?
If not, Please Hurry up! Last date for Geo-tagging of properties is
31st January 2024, Properties not geo-tagged cannot avail rebate on
timely payment by 30th June in next financial year.
Is your property not registered with A&C department?
Please log in to www.mcdonline.nic.in to register your property and create Unique
Property Identification Code (UPIC) latest by 31st January 2024 and pay your
outstanding dues to avoid legal action including prosecution and imprisonment.
RWA & GHS must register on www.mcdonline.nic.in to avail
10% developmental incentive and additional 5% waste disposal
incentive under "Sahbhagita" scheme.

Be Compliant and Self-Reliant!

MUNICIPAL CORPORATION OF DELHI
ASSESSMENT & COLLECTION DEPARTMENT

G20

RO No.: 710PM/2023-24

CHANDIGARH POLICE
ADVERTISEMENT FOR 144 POSTS OF
CONSTABLE (EXECUTIVE)(IT)

Online applications are invited for direct recruitment to 144 Temporary posts of Constable (Executive)(IT), under domain specialization "IT Support", of Group "C" in the pay scale of Central Pay Level-3 as per 7th CPC plus allowances as applicable from time to time, through URL mentioned on the website of Chandigarh Police i.e. <http://chandigarhpolice.gov.in> from 23.01.2024 to 13.02.2024 till 11:59 PM.

Item(s)	Timeline
Date of publication of advertisement and Opening date for submission of online application	23.01.2024
Closing date for submission of online application	13.02.2024 (till 11:59 PM)
Tentative date of Written Exam	3.3.2024
Tentative schedule of Physical Efficiency & Measurement Test (PEMT)	Last week of March

Detail of vacancies is as under:-

	Male	Female	Ex.SM	Total
General	37	21	07	65
SC	15	09	03	27
OBC	22	13	04	39
EWS	08	05	-	13
Total	82	48	14	144

Minimum Educational Qualification: Bachelor's/Masters degree in the fields of Computer Science/Electronics/Instrumentation/Communication/IT/Mechatronics/Computer Applications/Data Sciences/allied fields

Note:- The detailed Recruitment Notice (containing eligibility standards, criteria for selection, etc.) along with Instructions/guidelines for filling up of online application form will be available on official website of Chandigarh Police i.e. <http://chandigarhpolice.gov.in>.

ISSUED BY
CHANDIGARH POLICE

EXPRESS
CareersSOMAIYA
VIDYAVIHAR UNIVERSITYTEACHING POSITIONS
K J Somaiya College of Engineering

We are looking for qualified, dedicated and inspiring faculty to join us in building a new future that is built on inter-disciplinary knowledge marked by innovation in teaching-learning outcomes and leadership in research.

Professor/ Associate Professor/
Assistant Professor

Computer Engineering | Information Technology

We are accepting applications online only. For more details and application submission please visit us on www.somaiya.edu/en/career/ and apply within 15 days from the date of advertisement.

The qualifications for the post of Professor, Associate Professor and Assistant Professor are as per the UGC, AICTE and Somaiya Vidyavihar University norms.



Together as one

Bharat Parv begins today,
celebrating India's spirit of
Ek Bharat Shreshtha Bharat

"Internalizing the Mantra of 'Ek Bharat Shreshtha Bharat', we are moving ahead with the determination to always put India first."

Narendra Modi
Prime Minister

The nine-day Bharat Parv will be inaugurated today at the Red Fort. Be there to celebrate the spirit of our great nation.

Folk Dance | Crafts Bazaar | Armed Forces Bands | Studio Kitchen
Multi-cuisine Food Court | Cultural and Musical Programs

BHARAT 20 PARV 24

23rd - 31st January 2024

Venue: Red Fort, Delhi

Date: 23rd January 2024, 8:00 pm

Entry free. Please carry your identity proof.



The Indian EXPRESS

FOUNDED BY

RAMNATH GOENKA

BECAUSE THE TRUTH INVOLVES US ALL

A SEMINAL MILESTONE,
THE JOURNEY AHEAD

January 22 asks nation for nothing less than a new self-description. Bridging distance between Ram and Rashtra, as PM framed it, needs determined exploring of common ground

JANUARY 22 2024 will no more be just another day in the life of a nation. It will be the moment when a temple was consecrated in Ayodhya and when a country in the throes of a transition arrived at a seminal milestone. A political movement that began as a challenge to the ruling consensus, having made its way to the system's centre, stamped its dominance and become the establishment, has now, almost 10 years later, brought a never-before convergence – of popular will, state power, religion.

In a country where secularism was defined not as the strict separation of the state and religion, but, in its best version, as equal respect for all religions, and where, 73 years ago, its first Prime Minister cautioned its first President against state involvement in a temple inauguration, the just consecrated temple in Ayodhya, the prime minister doing the honours, calls for a new word in place of the old. January 22 asks the nation for nothing less than a new self-description.

As consequential as this moment is, however, as transformative as it is in its larger significance, it has not caught the nation by surprise. The BJP's serial electoral victories since it first won the Centre with a single party majority in 2014, steadily paved the ground for it. A Ram temple on the site where the Babri Masjid was felled in 1992 was the party's promise to voters, even when its coalition allies forced it to push that commitment onto the backburner, and later when consecutive decisive mandates made it possible to bring it squarely front and centre. This was the manifesto with which the BJP rose and rose, politically and electorally. After the early years, its ascendance sidelined not its "core" issues, but its political opponents, who, even as another parliamentary election draws closer, have yet to find the language to fight it, or to regain their own lost equilibrium.

PEAKING AT AYODHYA on January 22, both Prime Minister Narendra Modi and RSS chief Mohan Bhagwat, marked the end of a long wait and the present celebration. They also sought to expand the moment of the temple consecration into something more encompassing. Saying that it fell on him to inject a cautionary note, "josh ke mahaul mein hosh ki baat", Bhagwat asked: "Ab ham kya karenge (now what will we do)?" He spoke of the need to sidestep "ahankaar" or arrogance, to act with "karuna (compassion)" and "sayam (restraint)", and to banish conflict and controversy. He spoke of "sahmati ka samvaad (dialogue that forges common ground)".

The figure of Ram, PM Modi said, was the binding thread for the nation ("desh ko samayojit karne wala sutra"), and that this was a moment not just of victory but also of humility, "vinay" as well as "vijay". Many countries get trapped in their own pasts, the PM warned, "Kaiy desh apne hi itihash mein ulajh jaate hain". India must continue to untangle the knots of history, "itihash ki gaanth", as it has already done, with "bhavukta" and "gambhirta", seriousness and sensitivity, he said.

For PM Modi, the temple was joined to rashtra or nation, and together they would turn to the future. "Ram aag nahin, oorja hain", Ram is creative energy, not destructive fire. "Ram hamare nahin, sabke hain (Ram is not ours alone, he belongs to everyone)". "Dev se desh", "Ram se rashtra" – the temple will inaugurate a new and better chapter for the whole of India, and for all its citizens.

THESE INVOCATIONS OF larger wholes, and those exhortations to face the future, will have to face the challenges of history and the imperatives of politics. The temple that has been consecrated at Ayodhya was built not on a clean slate, but on a troubled back story that must be acknowledged and remembered if it has to be transcended. It cannot be erased. The BJP-led movement has vanquished its political opponents and won the day, but its government's slogan of "sabka saath, sabka vikas, sabka vishwas" will not automatically segue into "sabka mandir" or "sabke Ram". For that, much work still needs to be done.

The distance between Ram and rashtra, as the Prime Minister framed it, will be bridged not just by words but on the ground. It will call for outreach to the Muslim community; those who were not a part of the Mandir movement; and all those who remain apprehensive about the reverberations of temple consecration. It will require, in an age of polarisation, the determined exploring of common ground.

That task involves all – political parties, civil society, communities, the nukkad and the street – but it must necessarily be led by the BJP. A prime minister who performed the rituals of temple consecration has underlined the responsibility of tempering triumph with generosity and wisdom. He needs to hold that line and everyone to it. So that the winner does not take all, nor is seen to do so. And so that in a large and diverse country, every voice is heard and democracy's argument can go on.

FIRST, LISTEN

One Nation, One Election panel will be seen as a rubber stamp unless it gives space to Opposition, which must join the process

THE OFFICIAL CONSULTATION process set in motion for gauging the viability of simultaneous elections is unfolding like a chronicle foretold. According to the Union Law Ministry, 81 per cent of the 20,000-plus responses received by the High Level Committee on One Nation, One Election have favoured the idea. The Committee headed by a former president, Ram Nath Kovind, issued a public notice asking for suggestions between January 5–15. Unfortunately, given its constitution, manner of functioning and the larger context of one-party dominance, the Kovind Committee gives the impression of being partisan at best and a rubber stamp at worst. The blame for the lack of robust debate on the proposal also lies with the Opposition, particularly Congress. On an issue with far-reaching consequences, it has refused to engage.

The eight members of the Committee have either openly expressed support for simultaneous polls – as president, Kovind did, in Parliament, in 2019 – or are seen to be close to the government and therefore broadly in agreement with its pet projects. Congress Leader in the Lok Sabha, Adhir Ranjan Chowdhury, refused to be a part of the Committee arguing that it is imbalanced. The Committee's very terms of reference assume that One Nation, One Election is in "national interest". But despite this, an Opposition leader could have played an important role – by voicing concerns the government may not want heard and by pushing for greater transparency in the process. As things stand, the concerns of the Opposition and the states look scattered and are being voiced piecemeal: Congress has called it "undemocratic", AAP has said it will give an "unfair advantage" to the ruling party, the DMK has labelled it "dangerous", and the TMC described it as "against the federal structure".

Admittedly, a near-constant election cycle, and the short-termism this engenders, places a great burden on the exchequer. But while these issues are important, they cannot be used as an excuse to artificially keep governments that lose the support of the legislature and by extension, the people, in power. Certainly, such a fundamental change in the democratic structure and process must not be brought about without adequate engagement with the Opposition's concerns. The legitimacy of the electoral system does not flow only from the Treasury Benches or the corridors of power at Kartavya Path. It also emanates from those without executive office continuing to have a voice. The elected Opposition, all but silenced in the last session of Parliament with the expulsion of 146 MPs, must have a say, and not just a token one, in the consequential matter of the design of elections.



NEERJA CHOWDHURY

JANUARY 22, 2024, 12.20 pm was a defining moment – the rise of a Ram temple in Ayodhya that many Hindus in India and abroad had been waiting for. January 22 was also a "Modi moment", about the man who made it possible and it may come to define his leadership, as he spoke of the "kalchakra" now changing, the wheel of time which was now set to turn irrevocably.

A Ram temple in Ayodhya was inevitable and has been in the works after the Supreme Court's verdict in November 2019 cleared the ground for it to come up at the spot where the demolished Babri Masjid had once stood. Before the verdict, there were several impatient voices within the RSS and the Sangh Parivar who had pressured the government to bring about a law to empower itself to build the temple. But it was Modi who put his political foot down and said he would wait for the Court. On Monday, Modi even gave credit to the judiciary for its "nyay" in bringing it about. This legitimised the temple, he suggested, as the result of due process.

There are those who would have wanted the prime minister to be the country's First Devotee at the consecration ceremony. He chose to do the *pran pratistha* of Ram Lalla, performing all the necessary religious rituals – he had been fasting for 11 days on coconut water, sleeping on just a blanket – making an unequivocal statement that he is a Hindu prime minister. (His predecessors had never worn their religious identities at national occasions in this way).

By doing so, Modi, effectively, transformed the temple ceremony into a national occasion, not just a religious event, with *sants* and religious figures from major Hindu sects, and 7,000 eminent citizens in attendance. In the process, being seen not just as a popular prime minister but as a leader who is posi-

The Ram rekha

This is Prime Minister Modi's moment. He has made history, how he steers ahead will decide his place in it

tioning himself to acquire a moral – and spiritual – authority as well.

He pitched Ram not just as a deity but as an icon of governance and spoke evocatively about Ram representing the "prestige of India", "nation-building", and the "solution, not controversy". He talked feelingly about moving from "dev" to "desh" and "Ram to rashtra" for India's reconstruction. In a message to those who opposed the temple, he said it was not a "fire" that evoked fear, but "urja" (energy) that needed to be harnessed – and inspire India's youth.

Every Prime Minister has had moments that defined their premiership and reshaped the contours of the nation – Nehru when he took over as PM and made a "trust with destiny" on August 15, 1947; Indira Gandhi when she made geopolitical history by carving out the new nation of Bangladesh in 1971; Rajiv Gandhi when he got the locks opened at the disputed Babri Masjid to allow *darshan* of Ram Lalla who had been smuggled into the mosque in 1949, giving a fillip to Hindu nationalism; Vishwanath Pratap Singh, when he adopted the Mandal report, which made the empowerment of the OBCs an irreversible phenomenon and force in politics and society; P V Narasimha Rao who allowed the Babri Masjid to fall, leading to the rise and rise of the BJP; Rao again who opened the economy to global winds of change; Atal Bihari Vajpayee who put the BJP's core agenda including "Ayodhya" and the abrogation of Article 370 on the backburner to run a coalition government. And Manmohan Singh who had his way in enacting the Indo-US nuclear deal to forge a new and strategic relationship with the US. This is Modi's moment.

In 2014, Modi had reverently touched his forehead to the steps of Parliament, which he called a temple of democracy, when he

entered the building for the first time, and called the Constitution his only holy book.

On January 22, he made history by consecrating the Ram temple. It was not so much the Prime Minister's powerful and stirring speech which came as a surprise, for he is an ace communicator with a mass connect. With his words, PM Modi drew a new line – a Ram rekha? – redefining the relationship between the state and religion, flagging off "religious (not just cultural) nationalism" as a force for change. But he also talked about moving towards an inclusive "rashtra" to lay the foundations of a civilisational India for the next 1,000 years.

Where does this leave the minorities, who have accepted the court verdict but feel insecure and beleaguered in an assertive Hindu India? How will Modi's words be heard at the highest level and heeded by those on the street? Will triumphalism push the boundaries of social discord? Or, will the Sangh Parivar, now that it has attained the long sought after Ram temple, which it saw as an assertion of Hindu identity and a symbol of freedom from "slavery", now reach out to the "others" in a spirit of reconciliation?

Today, Modi stands on the threshold of a third term in office. If he is victorious, he will be the first non-Congress Prime Minister to make it to a third term, Nehru was the first Congress PM to be elected for three terms. While Modi made history on January 22, what follows in the coming weeks and months, how he steers on the road ahead, could very well decide his place in it.

The writer is contributing editor, The Indian Express and author of How Prime Ministers Decide



DEVDUTT PATTANAIK

THE GANGA RIVER basin contains 50 per cent of India's electorate. So the only Ramayana that really matters to Hindutva politicians is the 16th century Ramcharitmanas of Goswami Tulsidas written in Awadhi, a dialect of Hindi. There are, however, several hundred Ramayanas beyond the Hindi belt, composed in the last 2,000 years, that deserve equal respect. Here is a sampling of over a dozen retellings, with their dramatic variations, of Valmiki's ancient tale.

In the 5th century Vishnu Purana, Ram and his three brothers are all considered forms of Vishnu. However, in the 15th century Adhyatma Ramayana, only Ram is a form of Vishnu while Lakshman is a form of Sesa, the serpent, and Bharat and Shatrughna are forms of Vishnu's conch and discus.

In the 19th century, the Shankara and Prakash Ramayanas were written in Kashmiri. They state that Sita was Ravana's daughter who he cast away as oracles predicted she would be the cause of his death. The child survived and found its way to Janaka's home. This idea is found in many Jain and Southeast Asian Ramayanas.

In the 8th century Sanskrit play *Mahaviracharita* by Bhavabhuti, Ram and Sita meet in a garden before Ram breaks the bow. They fall in love and this adds to Sita's anxiety as she wonders if the man she loves will be able to succeed in the challenge posed before him.

In the 4th century Sanskrit work, *Raghuvansha* of Kalidas, Dashratha notices grey hair near his ears and decides it is time to crown Ram and retire to the forest.

In the Buddhist *Dasharatha Jataka*, Ram-Pandita is told by the king to leave the palace, and return only the king's foretold death 12 years later. This is to save the prince from the

MANY, NOT ONE

Beyond Ayodhya, there are several hundred Ramayanas composed in last 2,000 years

In 18th century Odia Ramayanas, Ram elongates the neck of the crane who does not give him information on the whereabouts of Sita, and he gives a crown to the rooster who does share

information. There is a folktale among fisherfolk in coastal Odisha that Ram shot arrows at Ravana's Pushpak Vimana and caused his umbrella to fall on the earth. What fell on earth turned into mushrooms.

king's junior wife who plans to kill him.

In the 17th century folk Sinhalese narrative, *Kohomba Yakkama*, Ram goes to a forest to escape the ill-effects of the planet Saturn (Shani). He has to take the form of an elephant and while he is away Ravana abducts Sita. In this version, Sita has three children, not two.

The 7th century Tamil songs of Alwar poet-saints state that as a child, Ram playfully threw clay balls at Manthara to straighten her humped back but she misunderstood his intentions, got angry, bore a grudge against him, and so poisoned Kaikeyi's mind against him.

In the 3rd century *Paurava Charitra* of Virmalasuri, a Jain monk, Lakshmana, accidentally kills a monk called Shambuka, who happens to be Chandranakha's son. She asks her brother to avenge his death but Ravana falls in love with Sita, roars like a lion to distract the brothers, and abducts Sita while they are away.

The idea of Lakshman rekha is a late creation found in the 12th century Sanskrit *Bhusundi Ramayana*, 15th century Ananda Ramayana and the 15th century *Krittibasa Ramayana*.

In the 18th century Burmese Ramayanas, such as Rama Thagyin and Rama Vetthu, the golden deer is a form taken not by Maricha but by Surpanakha herself, or by Trigatha, the mother of Khara and Dushan, killed by Ram and Lakshman.

In 18th century Odia Ramayanas, Ram elongates the neck of the crane who does not give him information on the whereabouts of Sita, and he gives a crown to the rooster who does share information. There is a folktale among fisherfolk in coastal Odisha that Ram shot arrows at Ravana's Pushpak Vimana and caused his umbrella to fall on the earth. What fell on earth turned into mushrooms. What fell into the sea be-

came jellyfish.

The 15th century Odia Dandi Ramayana of Balarama Das mentions Ram eating mangoes provided by a tribal woman (sabaruni), who tastes them first to ensure they are sweet. This metamorphosed into the famous story of Shabari's berries in the 18th century *Bhakti-rasa-prabodhini* of Priyadas.

In the 19th century, Giridhara composed the Ramayana in Gujarati. Here Hanuman is identified as the 11th Rudra.

In the 8th century Tibetan Ramayana, we find the only explanation why in many artworks Ravana has a head of a donkey on top of his nine human heads. This is where his life is hidden. During the war, Ravana becomes invisible. Ram challenges him to fight like a true Kshatriya and show one body part at least. Ravana shows his toe and Ram calculates where the donkey head would be located and shoots the fatal arrow.

In the 10th century *Katha-sarit-sagar*, Sita gives birth to only one child, Luv, who leaves in the care of Rishi Valmiki. Luv disappears and a frantic Valmiki recreates Luv using Kusha grass. Thus Sita ends up having twins.

In the 18th century Assamese Adbhuta Ramayana by Raghunath Mahanta, Sita misses her children while living under the Earth. So she asks Vasuki, the king of snakes, to abduct Luv and Kush and bring them to her. Hanuman follows Vasuki. A war follows and peace is restored when Sita agrees to let her children go, promising to visit them secretly.

This is but a tip of the iceberg. There is so much more. If one is willing to step out of the loud political discourse.

Pattanaik is a writer and mythologist with over 50 books



JANUARY 23, 1984, FORTY YEARS AGO

AISFF DISSOLVED

HARCHAND SINGH LONGOWAL, Akali Dal president, is likely to dissolve the All India Sikh Students Federation (AISFF), the students' wing of the party, in a day or two. Longowal has decided to take this stern action following the distribution of an "anti-Longowal pamphlet" at the state-level convention of the youth wing of the party. The AISFF is now affiliated with Jarnail Singh Bhindranwale.

PM ON THE US

THE UNITED STATES cultivates dictatorships

around the world while displaying indifference and a double standard towards India, says the Prime Minister, Mrs Indira Gandhi. "They don't seem to be bothered about India," she said. Denying that India is dependent on arms from the Soviet Union, she said: "When we need it and we get it on attractive terms, we take it, but it's not binding on us".

PUNJABIS FOR PEACE

SOME 150 WELL-KNOWN Punjabis cutting across the communal divide have put their signature to a statement calling upon "men and women of goodwill – the silent major-

ity" to speak its mind on the "dangerous" Punjab situation. The statement expresses concern at inaction in settling the Punjab issue fairly and condemns all acts of terrorism, violence and communal killing.

FAROOQ MEETS ZAIL

JAMMU AND KASHMIR Chief Minister Farooq Abdullah does not want any confrontation with the Centre, he told President Zail Singh. Abdullah met Singh to apprise him of the situation in J&K. A deputation of the state PCC-I leaders had met Zail Singh and demanded dismissal of the Abdullah government.

THE IDEAS PAGE

Ram is not fire, Ram is energy. Ram is not just ours, Ram belongs to everyone

Edited excerpts of the Prime Minister's address after the consecration of the Ram temple in Ayodhya



NARENDRA MODI

AFTER CENTURIES OF unprecedented patience, countless sacrifices and penance, our Lord Ram has arrived. Many congratulations to all of you and all the countrymen on this auspicious occasion. Our Ram Lalla will no longer live in a tent. Our Ram Lalla will now live in this divine temple, January 22, 2024, is not a date on a calendar. This is the origin of a new time cycle. A nation rising up after breaking the mentality of slavery, a nation taking courage from every bit of the past, creates history in this way. A thousand years from now, people will talk about this date, this moment. These are indelible memory lines being inscribed on the wheel of time.

Today, I apologise to Lord Shri Ram. There must have been something lacking in our efforts, our sacrifices and penance, that we could not do this work for several centuries. That deficiency has been filled. I believe that Lord Ram will definitely forgive us today.

My dear countrymen, on the arrival of Ram in Treta, Tulsidasji wrote, "Prabhu biloki harshe purbasi". That is, after seeing the arrival of the Lord, all the people of Ayodhya, and the entire country, were filled with joy. Lord Ram is present in the Constitution of India, in its first copy. Even after the Constitution came into existence, a legal battle continued for decades over the existence of Lord Shri Ram. I express my gratitude to the Indian judiciary, which preserved the dignity of justice. The temple of Lord Ram, synonymous with justice, was also built in a fair manner.

The whole country is celebrating Diwali today. This evening, preparations are being made to light Ram jyoti in every house. Yesterday, with the blessings of Shri Ram, I was at Arichal Munai, the starting point of Ram Setu in Dhanushkodi. The moment when Lord Ram set out to cross the ocean was one which changed the cycle of time. This was my humble attempt to feel that emotional moment.

While defining Ram, the sages have said, *Ramante Yasmin Iti Ram* — the one in whom one becomes engrossed is Ram. Ram is everywhere — in the memories of the people, from festivals to traditions. In every era, people have expressed Ram in their own words and their own ways. This *Ramrasa* keeps flowing continuously like the flow of life.

Dear countrymen, today, in this historic time, the country is also remembering those personalities, because of whose work and dedication we are seeing these auspicious days. We are all indebted to those countless Ram devotees, those countless *karsevaks* and those countless saints and mahatmas.

Today's occasion is not only a moment of celebration, it is also a moment of realisation of the maturity of Indian society. This is not only an opportunity of victory but also of hu-



CR Sasikumar

FOR THE RECORD

mility. The history of the world is witness to the fact that many nations get entangled in their own history. Whenever these countries tried to untie the tangled knots of their history, they faced great difficulty in achieving success. Several times, the situation became more difficult than before. But the seriousness and emotion with which our country has opened this knot of history shows that our future is going to be much more beautiful than our past.

There was also a time when some people used to say that if the Ram temple is built, it will catch fire. Such people could not understand the purity of India's social spirit. The construction of this temple of Ram Lalla is also a symbol of peace, patience, mutual harmony and coordination of Indian society. We are seeing that this construction is not giving birth to any fire, but to energy. The Ram mandir has inspired every section of society to move forward on the path of a bright future. I would appeal to those people today, reconsider your thinking. Ram is not fire, Ram is energy. Ram is not a dispute, Ram is a solution. Ram is not just ours, Ram belongs to everyone. Ram is not only present, Ram is eternal. Today, this festival of Ayodhya has also become a celebration of the global traditions of Ramayana. This prestige of Ram Lalla is also the prestige of the idea of Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam.

Today in Ayodhya, only the idol form of Shri Ram has not been consecrated. This is also the lifeblood of unwavering faith in Indian culture as manifested in the form of Shri Ram. It is also the embodiment of human values and highest ideals. This temple is not just a temple to a god. This is a temple of India's vision, India's philosophy, India's direction. This is a temple of national consciousness. Ram is the faith of India, Ram is the foundation of India. Ram is the idea of India, Ram is the law of India. Ram is the consciousness of India, Ram is the thinking of India. Ram is the prestige of India, Ram is the glory of India. Ram is flow, Ram is

This is the golden age of India's development. Today India is full of youth and energy. I will tell the youth of our country — before you is the inspiration of thousands of years of tradition. You represent that generation of India which is hoisting the tricolour on the moon, making Mission Aditya successful by travelling 15 lakh km to observe the Sun, waving the flag of Tejas in the sky and Vikrant in the ocean. You have to write the new dawn of India while being proud of your heritage.

Today, the land of Ayodhya is asking some questions to every Ram devotee, to every Indian. The grand temple of Shri Ram has been built, what next? Today, I feel that the cycle of time is changing. From this sacred time, we have to lay the foundation of the India of the next thousand years... take an oath to build a strong, capable, grand and divine India from this very moment.

Come, let us take a pledge that we will dedicate every moment of our lives to nation building. Our worship of Lord Shri Ram should be special. It should rise above the self. We have to offer our daily bravery, efforts and dedication to Lord Ram. With these we will have to worship Lord Ram daily, only then we will be able to make India prosperous and developed.

This is the golden age of India's development. Today, India is full of youth and energy. I will tell the youth of our country — before you is the inspiration of thousands of years of tradition. You represent that generation of India which is hoisting the tricolour on the moon, making Mission Aditya successful by travelling 15 lakh km to observe the Sun, waving the flag of Tejas in the sky and Vikrant in the ocean. You have to write the new dawn of India while being proud of your heritage.

My friends, the time to come is now for success, for accomplishment. This grand Ram temple will become a witness to the rise of a grand India, a developed India. This temple teaches that if the goal is justified, if the goal is born of collective and organised power, then it is not impossible to achieve that goal. This is India's time and India is going to move forward.



ABHINAV PRAKASH

A new state-people compact

Appeal of Ram mandir movement was a revolt against post-colonial power structures

JANUARY 22 MARKS a pivotal moment in the millennia-old civilisational history of India. The *prana pratishtha* of Shri Ram Lalla at the Ram mandir in Ayodhya will not only herald the return of Shri Ram after 500 years, but also mark the culmination of the struggle of the people to reclaim Bharat. The struggle for Ram Mandir in Ayodhya is the most consequential movement in the history of India after independence. It was not just a religious movement but also a political and social mobilisation against the post-colonial power structures where Brown Sahibs had simply replaced erstwhile foreign rulers. The anglicised urban elites, in alliance with the rural landed elites, dominated the levers of power after 1947, while the masses continued to remain disempowered. The elite project of reshaping the country in the image of secular-socialist dystopia produced only misery, disenchantment and marginalisation of the people's culture and aspirations.

The intensity and widespread appeal of the Ram mandir movement were a reflection of the revolt against post-colonial power structures, old elites, and their manufactured cultural hegemony. The movement was the largest subaltern struggle of our times. It was the democratic uprising of the small towns and villages against the corridors of power to which they had no access. It was the uprising of the non-English-speaking majority against the intellectual and cultural hegemony of the tiny English-speaking elite who held the masses in contempt. It was the uprising of the newly emerging middle class seeking to create a po-

litical space for itself. It was also the first time there was large-scale mobilisation of numerous smaller Dalit and OBC castes who had remained on the margins of various political movements, irrespective of their ideological moorings. The Ram mandir movement forged a new socio-political reality. It was for the first time that these castes appeared on the political map of the country and in the agenda of political parties. They were politicised and mobilised around a common Hindu identity. Their desire to see their caste narratives and history mainstreamed saw fulfilment in the Hindutva movement, which also saw a rapid expansion in its social constituency.

Unlike the fashionable rhetoric in the activist circles and academia living in its make-believe world, the appeal of a common Hindu identity has always been strong among the subaltern communities. The attempt to divert the struggle against the caste system and discrimination towards the anti-Hindu agenda was decisively defeated during the Ram mandir movement.

Shri Ram was the central deity in the medieval Bhakti movement that challenged social exclusion and still has a strong presence among the Dalit and backward castes through various *sampradayas* and traditions. It is interesting to note that in the calamitous medieval period, Shri Ram emerged as the central deity in the Bhakti movement to unite Hindus across castes and communities, and again, in the modern period, Shri Ram became the focal

point around which all Hindu castes and communities united to reclaim their liberty after centuries of foreign depredations. This religio-political phenomenon can be attributed to Shri Ram being the Maryada Purushottama, a righteous warrior and an ideal King. It is not for nothing that the imagery of "Ram Rajya" moved the people during the anti-British struggle.

During the foreign Islamic rule of the Turks and Mughals, Ramcharitmanas, the Awadhi version of Ramayana, captured the imagination of the masses. For a common Hindu, sovereignty belonged to "Raja Ram" even in this darkest hour. And in the moment of despair, to find hope and to wage the struggle against the insurmountable odds, people rally around their King. And rallied around the King they did, whether during the struggle against the Turk-Mongol rule, British imperial rule or against the post-colonial elites. From Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj to Gandhi to the nameless *karsevaks*, the valour of Shri Ram and the appeal of Ram Rajya have inspired warriors and reformers across centuries.

The consecration of the Ram mandir in Ayodhya is not just a religious ceremony but also symbolises the "return of the King", the reclamation of the sovereignty of the Hindu Rashtra. The last time a temple existed in Ayodhya, Krishnadevaraya was emperor in the South, ruling over the Vijayanagara Empire. Nuno da Cunha was governor of Portuguese India, and Suleiman the Magnificent was inaugurating the era of Ottoman supremacy in West Asia. The rebirth of the Ram mandir in

Ayodhya is happening at a time when India is rising again after centuries. The wheel of the time has turned again, and India is not only undergoing rapid economic transformation, but a popular sentiment of decolonisation is also sweeping among the youth. There is an upsurge of cultural consciousness and deepening interest in the religious and civilisational roots of modern India.

In more than one way, the struggle for Ram mandir led by the Hindutva movement was the vehicle of this modern India. Hindutva is Hindu modernity. Hindutva inherited the legacy of the Hindu proto-modernity and contemporary social and religious reform movements to imagine a modern Hindu nation. It sought to overcome the caste system and unite people towards a common goal of economic rejuvenation and civilisational renaissance. It is important to mention that the first brick of the Ram mandir in 1899 was laid by Kameshwar Chaupala, belonging to a Dalit caste, while a prime minister from a backward caste presided over the *prana pratishtha* at a time when India has a woman president from a tribal community. And at a time when more than 25 crore people have been uplifted from multidimensional poverty in just nine years. What we are witnessing is the forging of a new compact between the state and the people and the rise of a new modern republic in consonance with the ancient civilisation of Bharat.

The writer is national vice-president, BJP youth wing

WHAT THE OTHERS SAY

"In Dahal's case, a radical revolutionary who was once at home fighting in the darkest jungle for people's rights has, it seems, himself turned into an urban bourgeois he once so loathed. But Dahal and co. are fooling themselves if they think blocking out protesters makes them safe." — THE KATHMANDU POST

Turning the page with erasures

Leave the courts out of this. What does the temple in Ayodhya mean for someone who is persuaded by the aura of the new Ram?



SUHAS PALSHIKAR

SC set aside, its legal limitations notwithstanding, had the courage to ensure the co-existence of faiths despite their history of acrimony. The apex court, while delivering a not-so-legally convincing ruling, ensured that it would rather swim with the tide of separation instead of reminding the nation of the constitutional obligation to respect coexistence. The new Ram represents a new era of official and conveniently legalised ghettoisation rather than the challenge of coexistence with a possibility of a connect not just between ideas but also between communities and religions. The second erasure is the erasure of coexistence — as reality, as a dream, as a constitutional objective and a democratic challenge.

This erasure was already in the air for some time. Stories of non-Hindus being hounded out of Garba celebrations had been trickling in. We have been witnessing fierce campaigns against co-mingling of youth from different religious communities accompanied by occasional reports of economic boycotts or appeals for the same against the minority community. The new Ram unfortunately builds on this legacy. The salutation "Jai Ram, ji ki" was long replaced by the more militant "Jai Shri Ram". With the electrifying celebrations of the new temple, that militancy now constitutes the core platform of identity associated with Ram.

Since the 1990s, spaces of coexistence have been shrinking from our public sphere and private conscience. The temple celebrates the exclusivity of the "Hindu" identity — its superiority over anything else.

That takes us to the third and perhaps most tragic erasure. The collective amnesia of December 6, 1992: Nobody vandalised a structure that day. The new temple is historic in this respect. It not just absolves the society or any group or party of criminal vandalism, it simply erases that fact from history. Public opinion surveys after 1992 — even up to 1996 — showed that among Hindus, there was a sense of guilt, an admission that something wrong was done, although they would want the Ram temple at the disputed site. As time passed by, our politics made sure that the guilt was softened and then pardoned. But if there is any single most effective instrument that makes the new temple guilt-free, it is the SC ruling. What was being politically managed, the Court put a stamp of formal approval to by granting permission for the temple construction. For today's supporter of the temple, there is nothing legally wrong with its construction. After all, the highest court has not only allowed it but suggested the mechanism for it — a separate trust.

But let us leave the Court out of this for a moment. What does the new temple mean for someone who is persuaded by the aura of the temple and the arrival of the new Ram? It is the erasure of guilt. A society that witnessed the vandalisation of a disputed structure and sustained violence is happy that the temple now outshines many other places of worship, that it will become a new attraction for international tourism. Huge resources were generated by a community to avenge the past and unimaginable political investment was made into an exercise that should have been a matter of spiritual pursuit and religious learning. All this, without guilt. Some democracies are built on reconciliation, some trudge on the debris of conscience. Ours will be an outlier to have a formal democratic mechanism decorated with sumptuous erasures.

The writer, based at Pune, taught Political Science

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

THE RIGHT DOSE

THIS REFERS TO the editorial, 'The right treatment' (IE, January 22). By using careful discretion with antibiotics, doctors play a pivotal role in safeguarding public health and promoting responsible use. This helps prevent overuse, addressing the global concern of antibiotic resistance. Moreover, a prescription allows for precise dosage and duration, minimising the risk of adverse effects and promoting optimal treatment outcomes.

Shriya Tripathi, Bengaluru

NEW INDIA'S TEMPLE

THIS REFERS TO the article, 'Temple & a quest for resolutions' (IE, January 22). The Supreme Court judgment explicitly said that there was no archaeological evidence that Ayodhya was Ram's birthplace. All the developed erstwhile colonies have adopted secularism. India too became a developing nation by adhering to modernity and secularism. Buddhist, Sikh, Muslim and Hindu reformers have contributed to India's past. Colonies that became religious couldn't develop. Social unity will likely not be the next step.

Vasant Nalawade, Satara

THIS REFERS TO the article, 'Temple & a quest for resolutions' (IE, January 22). Ram temple is going to be one of the most revered sites in India. Wider political acceptance of the Ram temple in Ayodhya as the undisputed birthplace of Ram poses a different challenge to BJP. A secular-communal approach helped the party grow with Babri masjid-Ram temple disputes. Today's political situation is different. The Opposition has started taking a keen interest in temple politics too. The BJP wants to redefine the established norms of our political culture.

Sanjay Chopra, Mohali

NOT JUST POLITICS

THIS REFERS TO the article, 'January 22' (IE, January 22). The writer seems to have narrowed down the whole event around the Ram Temple to only political euphoria. It is more than that. The core of it is religious. There have been many events which had been politicised but nothing matches the public enthusiasm around the Ram temple. It has brought all the centres together under the Dharm Dhawaj. This dhawaj can be a source of re-membering the dharma.

Nayan Rathi, Dewas



GOLD

₹ 61,740



USD RATE

₹ 83.06



OIL

\$ 78.46



SILVER

₹ 71,510

Note: Gold, silver rates at Delhi spot market, gold per 10g, silver per 1kg; Crude oil (Indian basket) as of January 18

BSE & NSE were closed on January 22. International market data till 1900 IST

SENSEX: 71,423.65 ▼ 259.58 (0.36%) NIFTY: 21,571.80 ▼ 50.60 (0.23%) NIKKEI: 36,546.95 ▲ 583.68 HANG SENG: 14,961.18 ▼ 347.51 FTSE: 7,459.58 ▼ 2.35 DAX: 16,614.90 ▲ 59.77

Zee investors
may call EGM
to reshuffle
board

ENS ECONOMIC BUREAU
MUMBAI, JANUARY 22

SONY GROUP'S decision to terminate its proposed merger with Zee Entertainment brings into focus the role of institutional investors at Zee, who were backing the \$10-billion merger. Reports have suggested that some of these investors, who together hold over 71 per cent in Zee, may notify exchanges of their decision to call for an extraordinary general meeting (EGM) to reconstitute the board.

Mutual funds, including HDFC Mutual Fund, Nippon Life India Multi Cap Fund and ICICI Prudential Value Discovery Fund, hold 32.49 per cent stake in Zee. Insurance companies and foreign portfolio investors hold 10.66 per cent and 28.19 per cent each in the company. While the promoter family (Goenkas) hold 3.99 per cent in the company as per its shareholding pattern for the quarter ended December 31, 2023.

Some institutional investors have also written to the Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) highlighting how minority shareholders will be hurt with no merger happening even after two years of the Zee-Sony deal being announced.

"Indian laws permit shareholders with 10 per cent and above stake in a company to call for an EGM," says corporate lawyer HP Ranina. FE

ZEE CONSIDERING LEGAL ACTION AND CONTESTING SONY CLAIMS

Sony calls off \$10-bn merger with Zee; seeks \$90-mn termination fee

ENS ECONOMIC BUREAU

MUMBAI, JANUARY 22

JAPAN'S SONY Group Corporation has called off the proposed \$10 billion merger of Zee Entertainment Enterprises Ltd (ZEEL) with Sony Pictures Networks India Private Ltd (now known as Culver Max Entertainment Ltd), a wholly-owned subsidiary of the Sony Group. Reacting to the Sony move, ZEEL said it will take steps, including appropriate legal action and contesting Culver Max and BEPL's claims in the arbitration proceedings.

ZEEL said it received communications dated January 22 from Culver Max and Bangla Entertainment Pvt Ltd (BEPL) "purporting to terminate the merger co-operation agreement (MCA) and seeking termination fee of \$90 million on account of alleged breaches by ZEEL of the terms of the MCA, and invoking arbitration against the company and seeking emergency interim reliefs against the company".

Sony Corporation issued a notice terminating the definitive agreements entered into by SPNI and Zee Entertainment relating to the merger of ZEEL with and into SPNI, which was finalised on December 22, 2021. While Sony cited the delay in the merger for termination of the merger plan, there were disputes about the



Sony Corporation issued a notice terminating the definitive agreements. Reuters

leadership of the combined entity by Zee's managing director and chief executive officer (MD and CEO) Punit Goenka.

"Although we engaged in good faith discussions to extend the end date under the merger cooperation agreement, we were unable to agree upon an extension by the January 21 deadline. After more than two years of negotiations, we are extremely disappointed that closing conditions to the merger were not satisfied by the end date," Sony said in a statement.

While the expected completion of the deal was December 21, 2023, Zee had sought a deadline extension on December 20, which was to expire on January 20. This 30-day grace period was included in the merger pact signed in December 2021. The

definitive agreements further provided that if the parties are unable to agree upon such an extension by the end of the discussion period, any party could terminate the definitive agreements by providing written notice, Sony said.

In a filing to exchanges, Zee Entertainment Enterprises reiterated the claims and assertions made by Culver Max and BEPL regarding alleged breaches of the MCA (merger co-operation agreement), including their claims for the termination fee, and reserves all its rights in this matter.

The company is evaluating all available options and basis the guidance received from the board and will take all necessary steps to safeguard the long-term interests of its stakeholders, in-

cluding by taking appropriate legal action and contesting Culver Max and BEPL's claims in the arbitration proceedings," Zee said.

"As I arrived at Ayodhya early this morning for the auspicious occasion of Pran Pratishtha, I received a message that the deal that I have spent 2 years envisioning and working towards had fallen through, despite my best and most honest efforts," Goenka posted on X, formerly Twitter. "I believe this to be a sign from the Lord. I resolve to move ahead positively and work towards strengthening Bharat's pioneering M&E Company, for all its stakeholders." Punit Goenka wrote on the micro blogging site.

"We remain committed to growing our presence in this vibrant and fast-growing market and delivering world-class entertainment to Indian audiences," Sony said.

In June 2023, market regulator SEBI issued an interim order which restrained Punit Goenka from holding any key positions in any listed company, in a matter related to alleged diversion of funds. Goenka got a reprieve from the Securities Appellate Tribunal (SAT) on October 30, 2023, overturning a ban on him by the Sebi to hold directorships in Zee group even as a regulatory probe over allegations of fund diversion still remain.

Sony has been uncomfortable with this regulatory over-

hang in view of its corporate governance policies, sources said. It has been pushing the name of its India MD & CEO NP Singh for the top job, which Goenka opposed.

"The merger did not close by the end date as, among other things, the closing conditions to the merger were not satisfied by then. SPNI has been engaged in discussions in good faith to extend the end date but the discussion period has expired without an agreement upon an extension of the end date," it said.

As per the original merger plan, Sony would have held 51 per cent stake in the entity and promoters' share would have been 4 per cent while the rest would have been held by the public. The merger proposal was first announced on September 22, 2021 after Invesco, the largest shareholder of ZEEL, sought an extraordinary general meeting of ZEEL shareholders for the removal of Punit Goenka, MD and CEO, and appointment of six directors.

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No relook at duty remission scheme needed due to US, EU action: Official

RAVIDUTTA MISHRA

NEW DELHI, JANUARY 22

THE UNION government does not intend to relook at its Remission of Duties and Taxes on Exported Products (RoDTEP) scheme after the United States (US) and the European Union (EU) last year imposed countervailing duties on four Indian products citing breach of World Trade Organization (WTO) norms, a government official said.

The US and EU had imposed countervailing duties (CVDs) on paper file folders, common alloy aluminum sheet and forged steel fluid after an anti-subsidy investigation.

"We remain committed to growing our presence in this vibrant and fast-growing market and delivering world-class entertainment to Indian audiences," Sony said.

"When US investigators come to the manufacturing plants, the exporters should be able to show what they are getting is a remission and not an incentive. They should be able to show that they are paying electricity bills and value-added tax (VAT). But there are problems in maintaining the documents from our exporters side. We are working on a process to familiarize the exporters with the entire documentation process," the official said.

"There is no need to relook at

CVDs are tariffs on imported goods that are imposed to offset subsidies given by the exporting country's government

the scheme. It is WTO compliant. There were few exporters who could not show the documents..some people mentioned it is an incentive because there used to be incentives. So our exporters will have to adapt to the documentation mechanism and the government will be helping in the process," the official added.

The RoDTEP scheme, announced in January 2021, refunds embedded duties and taxes, such as VAT on fuel used in transportation, mandi tax and duty on electricity. It replaced the WTO-incompatible Merchandise Exports from India Scheme (MEIS) scheme, which had faced several challenges from WTO members.

The RoDTEP scheme operates under a budgetary framework and for FY 23-24, Rs 15,070 crore was allocated to boost exports of items such as pharmaceuticals, organic and inorganic chemicals and articles of iron and steel among other items.

FULL REPORT ON

[www.indianexpress.com](#)

Govt may increase agri-credit target to ₹22-25 lakh crore in interim Budget

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

NEW DELHI, JANUARY 22

THE GOVERNMENT is likely to announce in the upcoming interim Budget a substantial increase in the agricultural credit target to Rs 22-25 lakh crore for the next fiscal and ensure every eligible farmer has access to institutional credit, according to sources.

The government's agri-credit target is Rs 20 lakh crore for the current fiscal.

Currently, the government provides interest subvention of two per cent on short term agri-loans of up to Rs 3 lakh for all financial institutions. This means farmers are getting a farm loan of up to Rs 3 lakh at a concessional rate of 7 per cent per annum. An additional interest subvention of 3 per cent per annum is also being provided to farmers who repay on time. Farmers can also avail long term loans but interest rate is as per the market rate.

For the 2024-25 fiscal, there could be a sharp increase in the agri-credit target to Rs 22-25 lakh crore, sources said.

According to the sources, there is more focus on agri-credit and the government is implementing several campaigns to identify the left out eligible farmers and bring them in the credit network. The agriculture ministry has also created a separate division on 'credit' in order to give a focused approach, the sources added.

Further, the sources mentioned that the credit disbursal for various agricultural and allied activities has been exceeding the target in the last 10 years.

In the current fiscal, about 82 per cent of the agri-credit target of Rs 20 lakh crore has been achieved till December 2023.

About Rs 16.37 lakh crore credit has been disbursed by both private and public banks in the said period, the official data showed.

"The agri-credit disbursal is likely to exceed the target this fiscal as well," the sources added.

During the 2022-23 fiscal, the total farm credit disbursal was at Rs 21.55 lakh crore, surpassing the target of Rs 18.50 lakh crore kept for the same period.

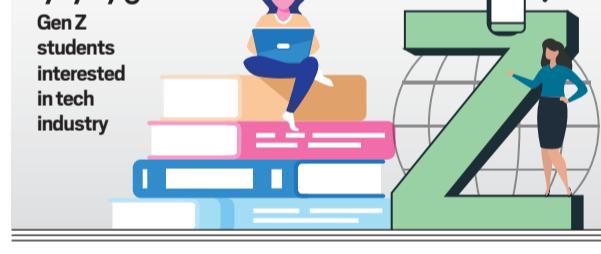
As per the data, as many as 7.34 crore farmers have availed credit through the network of Kisan Credit Card (KCC).

Spectrum allotment to BSNL

Technology industry of choice for GenZ: Report

Organisations are capitalising on gig workers in areas such as software development, data annotation, and business analytics, as per Nasscom-Indeed report

77%
Gen Z
students
interested
in tech
industry



90% Millennials and Gen Zs constitute tech workforce in India

84% Organisations are open to gig models

■ For the future workforce, career progression, compensation, and learning opportunities are the primary factors

■ There has been a rise in demand for specialist roles such as Artificial intelligence/Machine learning scientist, quantum computing researcher, and blockchain

Source: Nasscom/PTI

Govt likely to meet ₹90,000-cr telecom receipts target for FY24

JATIN GROVER

NEW DELHI, JANUARY 22

AFTER HAVING met FY23 communication receipts target of about Rs 69,000 crore by showing notional gains from 4G spectrum allotment to BSNL, the department of telecommunications (DoT) once again is expected to achieve an even higher target of around Rs 90,000 crore for FY24, through non-cash receipts of Rs 40,000 crore from BSNL for 4G/5G spectrum allotment.

For FY24, DoT's actual receipts is expected to be Rs 50,000 crore. This includes around Rs 23,000 crore from licence fee spectrum usage charges and auction money.

can be treated as non-cash receipts as the state-owned telecom operator will not pay the government in cash but offer equity in lieu of the spectrum. This is very different from actual revenues flowing to the government by private operators such as Jio, Airtel, and Vodafone Idea, who pay licence fee, spectrum usage charges and auction money.

For FY24, DoT's actual receipts is expected to be Rs 50,000 crore. This includes around Rs 23,000 crore from licence fee spectrum usage charges and auction money.

and the remaining Rs 23,000 crore includes second instalment for 4G/5G spectrum bought by operators in 2022 auctions, and instalments of earlier spectrum auctions, sources said.

The remaining Rs 40,000 crore will come from spectrum allotment to BSNL in the current financial year ending March. In June last year, the government approved the third revival package for BSNL with the total outlay of Rs 89,047 crore, which was the cost of 4G/5G spectrum allotted to the state-owned telecom operator. FE

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and the remaining Rs 23,000 crore includes second instalment for 4G

THE INAUGURATION

AYODHYA

LEADERS' SPEAK

Witnessed the auspicious #Ram MandirPranPrathista being held #Ayodhya. Delighted to see the nation coming together with religious fervor for the #PranPratishta.

NAVEEN PATNAIK
ODISHA CM

This is a historic occasion as the wait of all Indians (for a Ram temple in Ayodhya) has come to an end. We pray to Lord Ram that development works continue uninterruptedly under the leadership of the Prime Minister

BHUPENDRA PATEL
GUJARAT CM

The grand temple at Ayodhya, which was inaugurated by PM Modi, is the beginning of a new era of India's identity. It is time for all sections of society to get equal rights. Let us all go to Ayodhya to have darshan of Ram Lalla.

DEVENDRA FADNAVIS,
MAHARASHTRA DY CM

The return of Dashrathnandan Ram to His Bhava Mandir marks a turning point in our civilisation and a reawakening of national consciousness. As Hon'ble Prime Minister Shri @narendramodi ji leads the nation to restore a vital dharmaic and sanskritik link, I am eternally grateful to Prabhu Shri Ram for allowing me to exist in this particular time of history, a Swarnim Yug.

HIMANTA BISWA
SARMA, ASSAM CM

This is a day of great pride not only for the country, but for the entire world. It is a historic day. After a long struggle of 500 years, the Lord Ram idol has been consecrated (at the Ayodhya temple).

VISHNU DEO SAI,
CHHATTISGARH CM

It is a great privilege for all of us to witness the restoration of the glory of Sanatan culture in the form of the Shri Ram Mandir in Ayodhya under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi

PUSHKAR SINGH
DHAMI,
UTTARAKHAND CM

Today every Indian... is overwhelmed with devotion towards Shri Ram. The struggle of our generations and the resolve of centuries has been completed today

MANOHAR LAL
KHATTAR,
HARYANA CM



A DAY TO REMEMBER

Flower petals being showered from an IAF helicopter in Ayodhya on Monday. AP

Two Congress leaders attend Ayodhya event 4 ex-CJIs, over a dozen ex-SC judges, legal luminaries attend

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, JANUARY 22



WITH THE party's top leadership deciding to stay away from the event, Congress's Vikramaditya Singh and Nirmal Khatri were the only party leaders to attend the consecration ceremony on Monday. While Vikramaditya is a minister in the Sukhvinder Singh Sukhu-led Himachal government, Khatri is the former Faizabad MP and UP Congress president.

Earlier this month, Vikramaditya said he had accepted the invitation for the event as of his father and former Himachal CM Virbhadra Singh's links to the Ram Janmabhoomi movement. "I remain committed to my earlier statement. I intend to visit Ayodhya not as a politician but as the son of the late Virbhadra Singh, a devout follower of Ram. How can I refuse this putra dharam (son's duty)?"

Apart from Vikramaditya, who holds the sports and public works department portfolios, Himachal Panchayati Raj Minister Anirudh Singh had also declared his intention to attend the consecration ceremony.

Khatri last week pointed to the UP Congress's visit to Ayodhya on Makar Sankranti, when they took a dip in the Saryu river and offered prayers at Hanumangarhi and the makeshift Ram Temple, and questioned such politics of "event versus event" and said this had inspired him to accept the invitation.

Vikramaditya told *The Indian Express* over the phone, "I have conveyed my views to senior leaders. I received the invitation not for myself but out of respect for my late father. He was involved in the Ram Janmabhoomi movement. However, I want to clarify, I oppose the RSS-VHP, BJP's ideology of Hindu Rashtra, and their polarisation policies. I

Nirmal Khatri and
Vikramaditya Singh

am a dedicated Congress worker loyal to its ideology."

Congress leaders within the Himachal unit say there are differences between Vikramaditya and current state Congress leaders", adding that "this is the first time when Vikramaditya chose to defy the party dictat by attending the event.

Apart from Justice Khehar, three other former CJIs – Justices VN Khare, NV Ramana and UU Lalit attended the ceremony.

It is learnt that over a dozen former judges of the Supreme Court were also present for the consecration ceremony. The list included Justice Arun Mishra, chairperson of the National Human Rights Commission; Justice Ashok Bhushan, Chairperson of the National Company Law Appellate Tribunal among others.

Justice Bhushan was part of the five-judge Constitution Bench which in 2019 cleared the decks for construction of the Ram Temple.

Justice Adarsh Goel, a former judge of the Supreme Court, who incidentally was Uttar

APURVA VISHWANATH
NEW DELHI, JANUARY 22

FORMER CHIEF Justice of India J S Khehar, who had offered to personally "mediate" the Ayodhya dispute in 2017, was among several former judges who were present Monday in Ayodhya for the consecration ceremony.

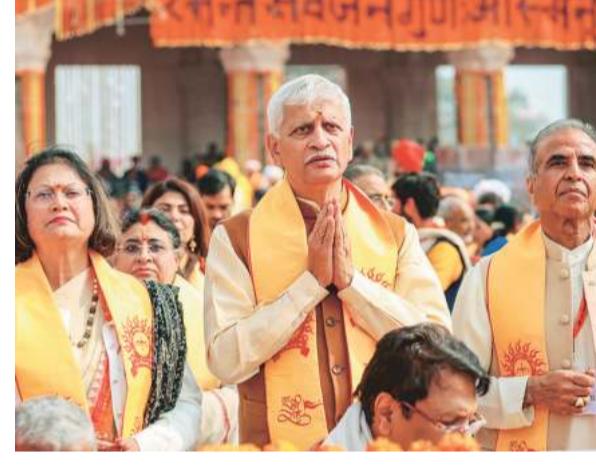
"If you want me between mediators of both sides, I am ready," Justice Khehar had said, calling for an "amicable settlement" in the case.

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Justice Sudhir Agarwal, former Allahabad High Court judge, who was part of the 2010 High Court ruling in the Ayodhya dispute also attended the temple inauguration.

In a 2:1 ruling, the High Court had called for a three-way partition of the disputed 2.77 acres of



Former CJI UU Lalit at the ceremony on Monday. PTI

Pradesh government's lawyer in 1992 when the Babri Masjid was demolished, also attended the event. It is learnt that Justices V Ramasubramanian, Anil Dave, Vineet Saran and Gyan Sudha Mishra were also present.

Justice Sudhir Agarwal, former Allahabad High Court judge, who was part of the 2010 High Court ruling in the Ayodhya dispute also attended the temple inauguration.

In a 2:1 ruling, the High Court had called for a three-way partition of the disputed 2.77 acres of

land in Ayodhya between the Sunni Waqf Board, Nirmohi Akhara and Ram Mandir. While Justice SU Khan and DV Sharma formed the majority, Justice Agarwal had ruled in favour of the Hindu side.

Former Attorney General of India and trustee of the Ram Janmabhoomi Teerth Kshetra Trust and senior advocate C S Vaidyanathan, who are part of the team that lead the arguments in the Supreme Court for the Hindu side, were among those who attended the ceremony.

He also said that Shri Ram Janmabhoomi would probably be the first such matter on which the majority community had fought at many levels for many years to build a temple at the birthplace of its deity.

Adityanath said every section of society, from saints, sanyasis, priests and naga, to in-

tellectuals, politicians and tribals, had contributed towards Lord Ram's work.

"We are overwhelmed today. The temple has been built at the same place for which a commitment had been made," Adityanath said, expressing gratitude to PM Modi for ending the long wait for the accomplishment of the resolution.

Adityanath said Lord Ram's life teaches patience of the kind the Indian community had maintained over the centuries, even as their commitment grew in strength every day.

"Today, the entire world is watching the grandness and divinity of Ayodhya," he said, adding that it was getting established as the cultural capital of the world.

Highlighting the infrastructure being developed in Ayodhya, Adityanath gave credit to the Prime Minister's commitment, willpower and foresight.

He said funds of several thousand crores were being spent for an "Ayushman, swachh, sakhsham, suramya, sugamya, divya and bhavya Ayodhya."

Adityanath also said that development of the Ram Janmabhoomi temple was a spiritual ritual in the cultural renaissance of India.

"This is a rashiya mandir. Pran pratista of Shri Ram Lalla is a historic occasion of national pride," Adityanath said.

Earlier, he welcomed Prime Minister Narendra Modi and RSS chief Mohan Bhagwat, and presented them with models of the Ram temple made of silver.

AYODHYA DIARIES

Kar sevak wears footwear after 32 yrs as temple dream fulfilled

60-YEAR OLD Vikas Bhavsar from Jalgaon in north Maharashtra had vowed in 1992 not to wear any footwear until a grand Ram temple is built in Ayodhya. On Monday, after the new Ram Lalla idol was consecrated at the Ayodhya temple, Bhavsar wore footwear for the first time in 32 years. Bhavsar, who runs a paan shop in Jalgaon, said he was happy that his vow had been fulfilled and the dream of every 'Ram bhakt' has been realised.

PTI

Ayodhya airport handled around 100 chartered flights: Officials

THE AYODHYA airport handled around 100 chartered flights Monday as many people flew into the city to attend the consecration ceremony. Around 8,000 people were invited. Business Aircraft Operators Association (BAOA) President Captain RKBali said that 100 chartered flights were booked by various individuals and entities to Ayodhya for Monday and out of them, around 50 were business jets. The grouping represents business jet operators. An executive at a leading private jet operator also said the airport handled around 100 flights Monday.

PTI

20-member UP PAC bands belts out songs, bhajans for event

A BAND from Uttar Pradesh Provincial Armed Constabulary (PAC) Monday played tunes of 'Ram Aayenge' and 'Sare Jahan se Achha' to celebrate the consecration ceremony. The 20-member band, belonging to the PAC's 4th Battalion based in Prayagraj, performed on a walkway along the Dharm Path. The PAC band belted out songs and bhajans against the backdrop of a Ram temple cut-out. The band played five songs starting with 'Raghupati Raghav Raja Ram', 'Ram Janaki Baite Hain Mere Seene Mein', 'Kabhi Ram, Kabhi Shyam', 'Raam Aayenge' and 'Sare Jahan se Accha'.

PTI

It was like a miracle... can't find words to express: 15 couples who were yajmans

LALMANI VERMA
AYODHYA, JANUARY 22



I never imagined that I would be a yajman at Ram Temple's Pran Pratishtha ceremony along with Prime Minister Modi: Kailash Yadav and wife Shobha from Varanasi. Express

Kaaloo Dom".

"I got this opportunity because of the blessings of my mother Rajmata Devi. I spent nearly three hours inside the Ram Temple and witnessed the Pran Pratishtha ceremony in the presence of Prime Minister Narendra Modi," Chaudhary told *The Indian Express*.

Doms, a Scheduled Caste community, have been lighting pyres for generations at the Manikarnika and Harishchandra Ghats in Varanasi. They also claim themselves to be the inheritors of the legacy of mythological king

It is a divine feeling. Since my family was a part of the ceremony, it is a moment of pride."

Among those who performed the rituals as yajmans inside the garbhagriha (sanctum sanctorum) of the newly built temple included Ram Kui Jemi, a member of the Naga community, from Assam; Lingayat leader Lingraj Vasavaraj Appa of Kalaburagi (Karnataka); president of 52 "Pals" of Haryana, Arun Chaudhary (Palwal); Krishna

Mohan from Hardoi in UP who belong to the Ravidasi samaj and Dilip Valmiki, a Scheduled Caste, from Lucknow.

Other yajmans included Sardar Guru Charan Singh Gill from Jaipur, Ramesh Jain (Multani), Adalarasan from Tamil Nadu, Vithalrao Kamble from Mumbai (Maharashtra), Mahadev Rao Gaikwad of Ghumtum Samaj from Latur (Maharashtra).

The Yadav couple from Varanasi – Kailash Yadav (52) and wife Shobha Yadav (50) – said they were "not finding words" to describe their experience as yajmans.

"It was amazing. I had never

imagined that I would be a yajman in the Pran Pratishtha ceremony of the Ram Temple in Ayodhya. We got a lot of respect. When we came out of the temple, prominent dignitaries greeted us because we were in the Pran Pratishtha rituals with the Prime Minister," said Kailash Yadav, who is a director of the district cooperative bank of Varanasi, and convenor of Govardhan Puja Samiti of Varanasi that organises Govardhan Puja at Namo Ghat. His wife is a homemaker. The

PTI

Today every Indian... is overwhelmed with devotion towards Shri Ram. The struggle of our generations and the resolve of centuries has been completed today

MANOHAR LAL
KHATTAR,
HARYANA CM

PTI

THE INAUGURATION

AYODHYA

CELEB SPEAK

Ranbir Kapoor Happy to be at the new Shri Ram Mandir in Ayodhya. Its astounding architecture is set to impress anyone who pays a visit. Glad to have received Shri Ram's blessings.

SACHIN TENDULKAR CRICKET LEGEND

...Ayodhya means 'free from war'. Our resolve should be to make the world violence free. Ram was an ocean of compassion. Let us leave all the old discrimination, animosity and distance from today and make a new beginning.

KAILASH SATYARTH NOBEL PEACE LAUREATE

I feel blessed to have attended the historical and spiritually enriching Pran Pratishtha of Ram Lalla — an event awaited by our nation for 500 years.

HEMA MALINI ACTOR AND BJP MP

At Ayodhya for the Pran Pratishtha ceremony. Historic occasion for the country.

GENERAL MANOJ NARAVANE (RETD) FORMER ARMY CHIEF

We are very fortunate to have @narendramodi as our PM. The leadership that was required to ensure this unfulfilled dream of 500 years gets fulfilled provided by him and the

anushthan that he has followed for the last 11 days, wow...

VENKATESH PRASAD FORMER CRICKETER

Feeling humbled and grateful standing before the divine... Ram Mandir. Truly blessed to be here...

SANJEEV KAPOOR CHEF

An incredible day in Ayodhya, witnessing the sacred #RamMandirPranPrati

shtha. Feeling truly blessed to seek divine blessings from Bhagwan Shri Ram at his majestic temple. This day shall stay with me forever.

MITHALI RAJ FORMER CRICKETER

Can't believe I'm lucky enough to witness something as historic & auspicious as #RamMandir PranPrati ishtha in my lifetime. Proud to see how our entire nation has united to welcome our Ram Lalla back home in Ayodhya!

AJAY DEVGN, ACTOR

STAR-STUDDED



(Clockwise, top) Directors Rohit Shetty and Rajkumar Hirani with actor couples Ranbir Kapoor and Alia Bhatt, Vicky Kaushal and Katrina Kaif, actor Madhuri Dixit with husband Shriram Madhav Nene, and Ayushmann Khurrana among others take a selfie in Ayodhya on Monday; cricket legend Sachin Tendulkar with actor Rajinikanth; businessman Mukesh Ambani with wife Nita Ambani; actor Kangana Ranaut; superstar Amitabh Bachchan greets Prime Minister Narendra Modi. PTI

'Punya ka kaam': PM hails temple workers, showers petals on them



PM Narendra Modi with workers in Ayodhya on Monday. ANI

BHUPENDRA PANDEY
AYODHYA, JANUARY 22

"AAP SABNE punya ka kaam kiya hai (you have done a pious job)," said Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Monday, speaking to a group of over 400 people representing the workforce of 5,000 men, who are building the Ram Temple in Ayodhya.

As a gesture of gratitude, Modi, after the rituals of idol consecration were over, showered rose petals on each worker — ranging from artisans to project managers.

The group included 150 workers and 150 staff members of Larsen & Toubro and 50 staff members of Tata Consulting Engineers. While L&T is the construction company, Tata Engineers provided project management consultancy for the construction.

Two other key persons the PM met are Arun Yogiraj, the sculptor from Bengaluru who made the Ram idol, and Sharad Babu of Anuradha Timbers, Hyderabad, who carved the main doors of the temple.

Modi met the men around 3.20 pm, shortly after visiting the lord Shiva temple at Kuber Teela. Carrying a basket full of rose petals in one hand, he moved

through the rows where the workers were sitting on chairs, showering petals on each one.

L&T Deputy General Manager Srinivas A, who was in the group, recalled the PM as saying, "Aap sab se milne aaya hoo. Aap sabne punya ka kaam kiya hai. Aur kuchh bhi banna hai, jaise tez gati se abhi banaya hai, aage bhi banayein (I have come to meet all of you. You have done a pious job. More has to be built. The way you have completed this work at the earliest, continue the work in the future.)"

Srinivas said the PM stayed with them for five-ten minutes and thanked them for completing the work in record time to ensure the consecration happened as per schedule.

A senior official said the background and personal details of each labourer, contractor and artisan who met the PM were verified for security reasons.

The workers included project directors, section in-charges and construction managers.

Srinivas also said that more than 5,000 people are engaged in the construction, including skilled and unskilled workers and artisans.

There is also a workshop nearby where work for carving and inscription is being done.

From temple visits to watching live telecast — how CMs marked the day

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, JANUARY 22

AGAINST THE backdrop of the Ram Temple consecration ceremony in Ayodhya on Monday, chief ministers (CMs) had a busy day — from visiting prominent temples in their respective states to attending events to mark the occasion. Some also took the opportunity to mark their dissent.

A look at what their day was spent doing:

Madhya Pradesh

CM Mohan Yadav, state BJP president Vishnudutt Sharma and the party's state organisation secretary Hitanand participated in an event at the BJP's media centre in Bhopal, during which they recited the Hanuman Chalisa, Ramdhan, and Ram Rakshasutra. They also presented sanitation workers with fruits and blankets. Later, Yadav performed rituals at Ram Raja Temple in Orchha; and watched the live telecast of the temple consecration programme.

Haryana

CM Manohar Lal Khattar paid obeisance at Karneshwar Mahadev temple and addressed a gathering there. He watched the live telecast of the temple consecration ceremony.

Odisha

CM Naveen Patnaik, along with his former private secretary and current 5T chairman V K Pandian, watched the live telecast of the pran pratishtha ceremony at Naveen Niwas — the BJD chief's residence. "Witnessed the Ram Mandir Pran Pratishtha being held at Ayodhya..." Patnaik said in a post on X.

Gujarat

CM Bhupendra Patel watched the live telecast of the ceremony at an event in Shilaj village, in his Ahmedabad district's Ghatlodia constituency.

Uttarakhand

CMPushkar Singh Dhami took



Maharashtra CM Eknath Shinde in Thane on Monday; Himachal Pradesh CM Sukhvinder Singh Sukhu performs aarti at a temple in Shimla. Pradip Das, ANI

virtual darshan from Tapkeshwar, and prayed to Lord Ram for the happiness and prosperity of the state. After the ceremony in Ayodhya, Dhami distributed prasad to devotees in Tapkeshwar.

Tripura

CM Manik Saha joined a Ram puja and maha yagna at Durgabari in Agartala, which used to be the temple of the state's erstwhile Manikya monarchs during the princely period. Saha said, "We can make sense of good governance if we speak of Ram Rajya..."

Assam

CM Pramod Sawant participated in a religious ceremony at the Rudreshwar Temple, Haravalem, and visited Kothambi's Shri Dev Chandreshwar temple; Rampurshwar Devasthan in Bhamai, and Gurunath Devasthan in Rumad, among other temples.

Kerala

CM Pinarayi Vijayan said India has had a "strong tradition of maintaining separation between religion and state", and lamenting that the line between the two was

"getting thinner". "Now, it has come to a point when the inauguration of a religious place of worship is being celebrated as a state event..." the CPI(M) leader said.

Himachal Pradesh

CM Sukhvinder Singh Sukhu of the Congress paid obeisance at the renowned Jakhoo temple dedicated to Hanuman and recited Hanuman Chalisa. He urged the people to light lamps in celebration of the Ayodhya temple.

Punjab

For CM Bhagwant Mann, it was business as usual on Monday, chairing meetings at his official residence. The AAP government in Punjab had not announced any holiday in the state on Monday.

Bihar

CM Nitish Kumar did not attend any official or unofficial event on Monday, nor did he make any comment on the consecration ceremony. However, JD(U) leader and state Water Resources Minister Sanjay Kumar Jha posted his congratulations to people of the country on the occasion.

■ Message to the opponents of the temple

There was a time when some people said that if the Ram temple was built it would lead to un-

5 key talking points from Modi's speech at event

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, JANUARY 22

PRIME MINISTER Narendra Modi on Monday issued a new mantra linking the Ram Temple in Ayodhya and the prosperity of the nation — "Dev se desh; Ram se Rashtra (from God to country, and from Ram to nation)" — and said the opening of the temple was a moment not just of "vijay (victory)" but also "vinay (humility)". He invited those who opposed the Ram Janmabhoomi movement to visit the temple and experience the feeling. Here are the major talking points from the PM's speech:

■ End of 'slavery mentality'

A nation rising by breaking the mentality of slavery, a nation drawing courage from every affliction of the past, creates a new history in this manner. A thousand years from today, people will talk about this date, this moment. And how great is Lord Ram's grace that we are living in this moment, witnessing it happen.

■ Thankful to the judiciary

In India's Constitution, in its first copy, Lord Ram is present. Even after the advent of the Constitution, legal battles over the existence of Lord Shri Ram continued for decades. I express my gratitude to the judiciary of India, which upheld the dignity of justice. The temple of Lord Ram, synonymous with justice, was also built in a judicial manner.

■ Temple of national consciousness'

This is not just a divine temple. It is a temple of India's vision, philosophy, and direction. It is a temple of national consciousness in the form of Ram. Ram is the faith of India, the foundation of India. Ram is the thought of India, the law of India. Ram is the consciousness of India, the contemplation of India. Ram is the prestige of India, the might of India. Ram is the flow, Ram is the influence. Ram is the norm, and Ram is the policy. Ram is the permanence,



PM Narendra Modi and UP CM Yogi Adityanath greet Mahant Nitya Gopal Das in Ayodhya on Monday. PTI

rest. Such people failed to understand the purity of India's social sentiment. The construction of this temple of Ram Lalla is also a symbol of peace, patience, harmony, and coordination in Indian society. We are seeing that this construction is not igniting any fire, but rather it is giving birth to energy. The Ram Temple has brought inspiration for every section of society to move towards a brighter future. Today, I call upon those people... Feel it, rethink your perspective.

and Ram is the continuity. Ram is vast, Ram is expansive. Ram is all-encompassing, Ram is the soul of the universe. And therefore, when Ram is established, its impact lasts not just for years or centuries. Its impact is for thousands of years.

■ Towards nation-building and a call to the youth

Moving beyond the construction of the temple, now all of us citizens, from this moment, pledge to build a capable, magnificent, and divine India. The thoughts of Ram should be in 'Manas' as well as in the public psyche — this is the step towards nation-building.

I tell the youth of my country. You have the inspiration of thousands of years of tradition in front of you. You represent the generation of India... that is hoisting the flag on the moon, that is successfully conducting Mission Aditya by travelling 15 lakh km to the Sun, that is waving the flag of Tejas in the sky and Vikrant in the sea. You have to write the new dawn of India while being proud of your heritage.

THE INAUGURATION

AYODHYA

Kerala govt orders probe after school declares Jan 22 holiday

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM,
JANUARY 22

THE KERALA government ordered a probe into the declaration of a holiday on Monday at a high school in Kasaragod district on account of the Prana Pratishtha ceremony in Ayodhya.

The CPI(M)-ruled state did not declare any holiday for government offices and educational institutions to mark the temple ceremony on January 22. However, Sri Gopalakrishna high school at Kudlu in Kasaragod declared a holiday for its students.

Taking a serious note of it, General Education Minister V Sivankutty sought a report from the director general of public education. The minister, in his Facebook post, said the director general was told to submit a report within 24 hours on why the particular school had announced a holiday despite no official direction from the general education department.

The school at Kudlu is situated at Madhur panchayat, which is ruled by the BJP. Of the 20 wards in the panchayat, 13 are represented by the BJP.

Sources said the headmaster of the school was forced to declare a holiday on Monday due to the "pressure from the BJP-ruled panchayat and a section of parents" of the students. The school had sought a permission from the department for declaring a holiday on Monday, but the district-level authorities at the general education department had rejected the demand, said the sources.

Kerala Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan had declined to observe the Pran Pratishtha ceremony as a state event. "As those who pledged to preserve and protect our Constitution, let us reaffirm our commitment to its secular character by declining to participate in the event and upholding our constitutional responsibilities," he said.



TEMPLE TOWN CELEBRATES

Fireworks on the banks of the Saryu river after the Ram temple consecration in Ayodhya on Monday. Vishal Srivastav

At all-faith rally, Mamata takes aim at BJP: 'Objection if someone politicises worship'

ATRI MITRA AND RAVIK BHATTACHARYA
KOLKATA, JANUARY 22



TMC chief and West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee leads an all-faith rally in Kolkata on Monday. Partha Paul

WEST BENGAL Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee on Monday targeted the BJP for attempting to politicise religion ahead of the Lok Sabha elections and asked if the party was "anti-women" for "omitting" Goddess Sita from the discourse on Lord Ram, whose temple was inaugurated in Ayodhya, earlier in the day. Mamata made the comments at a public rally after leading an all-faith "Sanhat Yatra" in Kolkata.

"I am not against Ram. I respect Ram and Sita but they don't take the name of Sita. So, are you anti-women? Do not forget, she is Sita who accompanied Ram during his 14 years of exile. Had there been no Kaushalya, Ram wouldn't have been born... I don't mind if someone wor-

ships Ram and someone worships Rahim. But I have an objection if someone politicises it."

The CM said, "I do not agree with their (BJP) priority when crores of people are unemployed in the country and so many peo-

ple die every day; in a country where some people are trying to dictate what I will wear or eat, I cannot agree with them."

Mamata said it was easier to stoke fire than to douse it and remembered the riots that were

triggered by the demolition of the Babri Masjid on December 6, 1992, and the lives lost in subsequent riots. She said, "The BJP tries to divide the Hindu vote and they have created some middlemen who are also trying to divide the Muslim vote here. I never did that. When the NRC (proposed National Register of Citizens) came, I fought against that. No one fought like I did. We stopped NRC here."

During the yatra, Mamata visited a temple, masjid, gurdwara, and church along the way. In her speech, She referred to her nephew and MP Abhishek Banerjee's post on X the day before, in which he wrote, "My RELIGION has not taught me to accept and embrace a place of worship, whether it be a MANDIR, MASJID, CHURCH or GURUDWARA, which has been built over HATRED, VIOLENCE and the dead bodies of innocents. Period!"



(Clockwise from top) Union Home Minister Amit Shah at Birla Mandir; Defence Minister Rajnath Singh; BJP chief JP Nadda at Jhandewalan temple, in New Delhi. Amit Mehra, ANI & PTI

Rajnath, Nadda, other ministers watch Ayodhya ceremony live in national Capital

UPASIKA SINGHAL
NEW DELHI, JANUARY 22

EMPHASISING THAT the wait and promise of five centuries was fulfilled on Monday with the consecration of Ram Lalla idol at Ayodhya, Home Minister Amit Shah said many generations sacrificed so much waiting for this moment.

Shah offered prayers at Birla temple in Delhi and watched the Ram Temple consecration ceremony live. The Lakshmi Narayan temple near the Gole Market in central Delhi was adorned with marigolds, with a motif of the Ayodhya temple made of flowers greeting the visitors.

In a message on X, Shah said that today, this resolve has been fulfilled under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi and for this, he expressed his gratitude to him. "On this auspicious day, I also pay my respects to all those great men who kept this struggle and determination alive for centuries, endured many insults and tortures, but did not leave the path of religion," he said.

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He said the Ram Temple will remain a unique symbol of "imperishable eternal culture" for ages. "The wait and promise of

five centuries was fulfilled today. Today is an unforgettable day for crores of Ram devotees. Today, when our Ram Lalla is seated in his grand temple, like countless Ram devotees, I too am overwhelmed with emotions. It is not possible to express this feeling in words," he wrote.

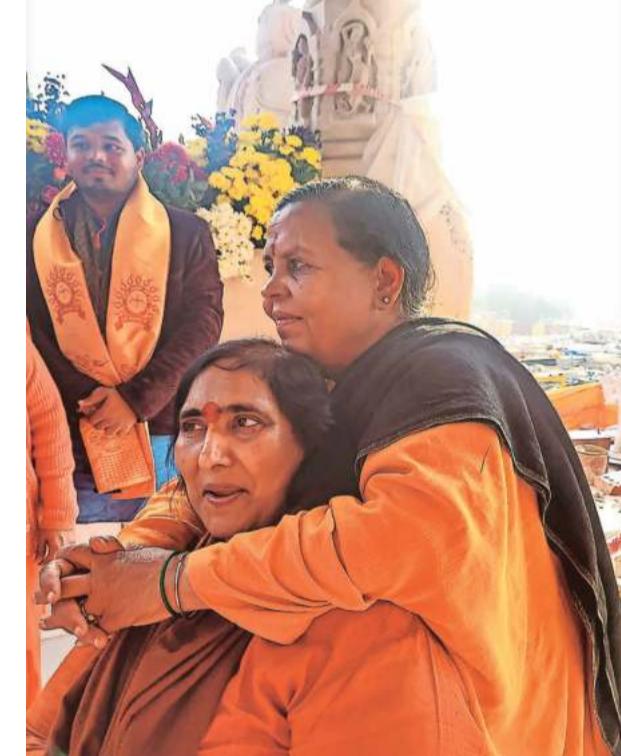
There was tight security around the Birla Temple and only a select number of people could attend the live-screening of the Ayodhya consecration ceremony. Shah, along with others, took part in the 'Sundarkand' reciting ceremony at the temple.

Shah was accompanied by Minister of State Meenakshi Lekhi and Delhi Assembly Leader of Opposition Ramvir

Singh Bidhuri. Meanwhile, senior BJP leaders including national president Jagat Prakash Nadda, Union Defence Minister Rajnath Singh, Delhi BJP president Virendra Sachdeva apart from other Union ministers and both national and state unit leaders witnessed the Ayodhya

event live at various venues across the capital. Nadda joined devotees at Jhandewalan Mandir. BJP MP Anil Baluni, among others, was also present.

The Union Defence Minister joined devotees at a similar programme at Darya Ganj. Railway Minister Ashwani Vaishnav at Jagannath Temple, Hauz Khas; and Dr Jitendra Singh at the Nehru Place Market.



BACK IN AYODHYA

BJP leader Uma Bharti and sadhviji Rithambra, both of whom played a significant role in the Ram temple movement, at the consecration ceremony in Ayodhya on Monday. PTI

You're against Dalits': Villagers bar BJP MP from Mysuru temple event

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
BENGALURU, JANUARY 22

BJP MP Pratap Simha on Monday faced the ire of villagers in Karnataka's Mysuru district after he was stopped from participating in a foundation laying event of a temple held in a village, ahead of the Ram temple consecration ceremony in Ayodhya.

In Gujeogwadapura village, under Harohalli panchayat in Mysuru district, a stone block used to carve the idol of Ram Lalla — by Karnataka sculptor Arun Yogin — for the temple construction was mined from four guntas of land donated by 70-year-old Radams H, a Dalit farmer.

While elected representatives including former minister SR Mahesh and local MLA GT Devegowda took part in the ceremony, many "unhappy" villagers of Harohalli asked Simha, who represents Mysuru-Kodagu constituency in the Lok Sabha, on his arrival.

Suresh, former taluk panchayat member, said, "You have never visited the village in 10 years and you are here now for political reasons. Other elected representatives, including BJP MLAs, have come here and been involved. You never bothered to listen to us, and we do not want you to come here."

Swamy Harohalli, a villager, told *The Indian Express* that "villagers were unhappy with the MP". "During Mahisha Dasara last year, Pratap Simha spoke against the community and its leaders. Some of our villagers were also arrested at his behest. He never cared to visit the village or address our issues. But now, ahead of the Lok Sabha elections, he came here from nowhere... Besides, JD(S) leaders, even BJP MLAs Srinivas and even BJP

BRIEFLY

Historic moment for devotees across the world: Israel envoy

ISRAELI AMBASSADOR Naor Gilon Monday said the Ram temple consecration was a historic moment for devotees across the world. On X, Gilon said he looked forward to visiting the Ram temple. "Surely, it will be more grand and beautiful than this model I have," Gilon said, sharing a photograph of his with a model of the temple. UN General Assembly president Dennis Francis said he was delighted to arrive in India when the country was celebrating its "second Diwali." PTI

Rajasthan: Protest after man removes saffron flag from pole

Jaipur: A group of people in Rajasthan's Barmer staged a protest after a man allegedly removed a saffron flag fixed on a pole while the consecration ceremony at the Ayodhya Ram temple was underway, according to police. The man has been detained, they said, adding the protesters demanded action against the man. ASP Barmer, Satyendra Pal Singh, said the man was detained and being questioned. PTI

Bihar Governor releases special postal cover on Ayodhya temple

Patna: Bihar Governor Rajendra Vishwanath Arlekar on Monday released a special cover of the Postal Department (Bihar Circle) on the 'Shri Ram Janmabhoomi temple' after the consecration ceremony of the Ram Mandir in Ayodhya. "The country has witnessed a historic moment today...the Pran Pratishtha of Ram Temple in Ayodhya. It is a privilege for me to release the special cover..." Arlekar said. PTI

TN govt says no curbs on celebration; Governor joins BJP offensive

R N Ravi talks of 'pervasive sense of fear'; hearing BJP functionary plea, Supreme Court pulls up TN govt over denial of permission to a temple

overnment also threatened legal action against a prominent Tamil daily that reported Sunday that it had banned special pujas and live telecasts of the Ayodhya event.

Reacting to this report, Sitharaman first attacked the DMK government, slamming its "anti-Hindu, hateful action". "In TN there are over 200 temples for Shri Ram. In HR&CE managed temples, no puja, bhajan, prasadam, annadanam in the name of Shri Ram is allowed. Police are stopping privately held temples from organizing events. They are threatening organizers," she tweeted.

Union Minister Nirmala Sitharaman led the allegations, and Governor RN Ravi took up the matter, talking of a "pervasive sense of fear", even as the state government denied having issued any such order.

The M K Stalin-led DMK gov-

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
BENGALURU, JANUARY 22

UNDER FIRE from the BJP for not declaring a holiday on January 22, Karnataka Chief Minister Siddaramaiah on Monday inaugurated a Ram Sita Lakshman temple and a 33-ft monolithic idol of Hanuman at Mahadevapura in Bengaluru.

Condemning the "misinformation campaigns" meant to "maligned" the image of Congress leaders, Siddaramaiah said Congress leaders worshipped the Ram of Mahatma Gandhi, not BJP's version of the mythological figure.

Unlike the Ram Sita Lakshman temple constructed by the Sri Rama Temple Trust and inaugurated by him, the temple of Ayodhya was built only for Ram. "Sri Ram cannot be alone. Sita devi, Lakshman and Anjaneya should be there for it to be complete. They are dividing Sri Ram himself. This is not correct," he said, adding that Ram cannot be separated from Sita and Lakshman.

On BJP branding him "anti-Hindu" for not declaring a holi-

day for the consecration event, he said the Central government, too, had declared a half-day. "The event is being held in UP. Have the states of Punjab, Kerala, West Bengal, Tamil Nadu or Telangana declared a holiday?" he said.

Speaking at the inauguration of the temple, he said the slogan 'Jai Shri Ram' was not the private property of anyone. "That is the property of every devotee," he said, raising the slogan and asking the gathering to do so.

Noting that there were repeated questions on whether he would go to Ayodhya, he said he would visit the temple. "(But), is the idol (of Ram) not the same in all temples? Is Sriramachandra different from the idols in other (Ram) temples?" he asked, adding that there were many Ram temples across the state. "I have built one in my village too," Siddaramaiah said.

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Express that "there was absolutely no such ban" anywhere, but that a "standard rule" had been enforced. "We insisted on permission if huge screens were put up for telecasting the Ayodhya event in public places. Otherwise, we have nothing to do with a temple or murti organising events on their own premises," the official said.

The BJP-DMK war of words was also taken up by minister Udhayanidhi Stalin who posted an old photo of his wearing a T-shirt saying: "Don't understand Hindi. Leave."

Courts dragged in

The Supreme Court was approached by a BJP functionary, alleging that the DMK government

had "issued oral orders / directions to the police" not to permit prayers, alms distribution or live telecast of the consecration ceremony in all temples.

After it clarified that it had not issued any such order, the Bench asked the DMK government to record reasons for accepting or rejecting applications seeking permission. "We believe and trust that authorities will act in accordance with law and not on the basis of any oral instructions," the court said.

The court termed the reasons cited by the police as "atrocious", noting: "If the order at page 21 (of the petition) is to be made applicable across TN, wherever there are minorities, they will never be able to hold special almsgiving to mark

the consecration.

The police note said, "The area of A Vellodu village, where you have requested permission to conduct the event, is predominantly inhabited by Christians. Due to the lower number of Hindu residents, there is a possibility of encountering cultural sensitivities or legal complications related to public peace and morality when organizing events that are perceived as deviating from the prevailing religious practices."

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Swamy Harohalli, a villager, told *The Indian Express* that "villagers were unhappy with the MP". "During Mahisha Dasara last year, Pratap Simha spoke against the community and its leaders. Some of our villagers were also arrested at his behest. He never cared to visit the village or address our issues. But now, ahead of the Lok Sabha elections, he came here from nowhere... Besides, JD(S) leaders, even BJP MLAs Srinivas and even BJP

MLAs have come here and been involved. You never bothered to listen to us, and we do not want you to come here."

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MLAs have come here and been involved. You never bothered to listen to us, and we do not want you to come here."

EXPLAINED GLOBAL

WEF meeting in Davos 2024: 5 key takeaways



Dignitaries at the 54th annual meeting of the World Economic Forum in Davos, Switzerland, on January 19. Reuters

YASHEE
NEW DELHI, JANUARY 22

THIS YEAR'S edition of the World Economic Forum (WEF) annual meeting was held from January 15 to January 19. Every year, leaders from various fields gather in the Swiss ski resort to discuss challenges facing the world and explore the ways forward. The event has faced criticism for its elite and expensive nature, but the meet remains relevant, if only for the glimpse it offers into how the rich and powerful react to the most pressing issues.

This year, some key themes dominated proceedings.

Artificial Intelligence

The one issue that took centre stage was Artificial Intelligence (AI). While its many transformational abilities for human welfare were discussed, so were the need for regulation, fear of job losses, the risks of impersonation and misinformation, and the inequalities it can potentially worsen.

Sam Altman, CEO of OpenAI, who until a few months ago was raising warnings of "the risk of extinction from AI", struck a positive note: "Humans know what other humans want. Humans are going to have better tools. We've had better tools before, but we're still very focused on each other."

War and uncertainty

Business leaders spoke of the risk posed by a fragile geopolitical situation,

wars in the Middle East and Europe, the threats to global supply chains, and the uncertainty around food security. Yet, no plans or roadmaps for peace were offered about the Israel-Gaza conflict.

Climate change

The need for businesses to adapt to climate change and for countries to unite for action against it was another hot topic. Ajay Banga, President, World Bank Group, said, we have an "existential climate crisis" on our hands and "a sense of urgency is our only saviour."

Others spoke about the ultimate benefit businesses will reap from adopting sustainable practices and about the need to allocate resources correctly in the fight against climate change.

China's economy

Facing a slowing economy, China tried to attract more investment from the West. At 5.2%, China's GDP growth in 2023 is still below pre-pandemic levels, and it is battling American attempts to isolate it, as evidenced in the semiconductor trade standoff.

And finally, India

An assessment of Davos 2024 by consulting firm McKinsey and Company said, "India is transforming rapidly as one of the fastest growing large economies in the world. When it comes to technology, talent, healthcare, and other areas, its future in 2024 – and beyond – is worth paying attention to."

Multivitamins can boost memory, cognition: study

A STUDY published last week has reported that people ages 60 and older who took a daily multivitamin for two years scored higher on memory and cognitive tests than those who took a placebo – a rare example of a clinical trial finding that a nutritional supplement might actually benefit healthy people.

"It suggests that multivitamins can be a safe, affordable and accessible approach to protecting cognitive health in older adults," Dr Chirag Vyas, lead author of the study, said. ('Effect of multivitamin-mineral supplementation versus placebo on cognitive function...': *The American Journal of Clinical Nutrition*) But experts not involved in the trial cau-

tioned that the benefits were small, and it was not clear that they would translate to tangible improvements in people's lives. The research was part of a trial involving more than 21,000 older adults that looked at whether supplements can protect against age-related diseases, called the COCOA Supplement and Multivitamin Outcomes Study (COSMOS). People in both the multivitamin and placebo groups improved their cognitive scores over two years, possibly because they were already familiar with the tests. But the participants taking the multivitamin showed a slightly greater gain, with the biggest bump coming on memory assessments.

THE NEW YORK TIMES



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Free Movement Regime along Myanmar border: rationale and criticism

agreed that it needs better regulation.

The FMR on border

The 1,643-km IMB runs in four states – Mizoram, Manipur, Nagaland, and Arunachal Pradesh. The FMR allows tribes living along the border on either side to travel up to 16 km inside the other country without a visa.

The FMR was implemented in 2018, when diplomatic relations between India and Myanmar were on the upswing. The regime, part of the government's Act East policy, was to have come into force in 2017, but was deferred after the Rohingya refugee crisis began in August of that year.

Basis for the FMR

The India-Myanmar border, drawn by the British in 1826 without consulting the residents of the region, arbitrarily divided people of the same ethnicity and culture into separate nations. Today's IMB reflects the line drawn by the British.

People have family and community ties

on both sides of the border. In the Moreh region of Manipur, the IMB runs through several villages and, in Nagaland's Mon district, the border actually splits the home of the chief of Longwa village into two.

The FMR was intended to facilitate people-to-people contact and provide impetus to local trade and business. The region has a long history of trans-border commerce through customs and border haats, and the commercial exchange is crucial to sustain livelihoods in the low-income economy.

People living along the border in Myanmar often find Indian towns closer for business, education, and healthcare than those in their own country.

Problem with FMR

The FMR, though beneficial to the local population, has also ended up aiding illegal immigration, drug trafficking, and gun running across the border. The IMB runs through

forested and undulating terrain, is mostly unfenced currently, and difficult to monitor.

The military junta in Myanmar has persecuted the Kuki-Chin peoples since the coup d'état of February 1, 2021, and the intensified fighting between government forces and the rebel alliance of ethnic armed groups has resulted in an influx of large numbers of Myanmarese tribes into Manipur and Mizoram.

Mizoram, where a section of the population has close ethnic and cultural ties with people across the border, has set up camps for tens of thousands of refugees. Manipur has pushed back thousands of illegal Myanmarese migrants, and the state government last year asked the Assam Rifles for increased vigilance to prevent people from crossing over.

On May 2 last year, a day before violence erupted in Manipur, Chief Minister Biren Singh told a press conference: "Illegal immigration from Myanmar to Manipur is such

that we have so far detained 410 people from that country who have been staying in the state without proper documents. There is an additional 2,400 of them seeking shelter in detention homes along the border areas... who have fled Myanmar..." We have reasons to believe that there must be many more Myanmarese residing illegally in Manipur..."

The Manipur government has accused village chiefs of illegally settling migrants from Myanmar in new villages in the hills. An eviction drive against these new villages became the flashpoint between Kukis in the hills and the government last March, leading to violence in the state.

Drugs and terrorism

According to a paper published by Anuradha Oinam of the Centre for Land Warfare Studies (CLAWS), several insurgent groups such as the United National Liberation Front, People's Liberation Army, the United Liberation Front of Assam, National Socialist Council of Nagaland, and

small groups of Kukis and Zomis have built camps in Sagaing Division, Kachin State, and Chin State (in Myanmar).

"They took shelter there, obtained arms, trained cadres, and... engaged in... smuggling drugs and selling weapons... This is possible because of the porous borders and frequent misuse of FMR. Therefore, managing and administering the border areas effectively is pertinent for reducing drug trafficking and illegal cross-border movement on unfenced borders," the paper said. (*Revisiting Free Movement Regime (FMR): Challenges and Implications*, November 2022)

Data from the Manipur Chief Minister's Office show that 500 cases were registered and 625 individuals were arrested under the NDPS Act in Manipur in 2022. A large quantity of narcotics were seized, and several thousand acres of poppy were destroyed during the same period. The value of the drugs seized or destroyed is estimated at more than Rs 1,227 crore in the international market.

EXPLAINED ECONOMICS

Drivers of food inflation

Global food prices have crashed in the last one year or more, but inflation remains sticky and elevated in India. The factors responsible for India's food inflation are more domestic than global now



HARISH DAMODARAN

WORLD FOOD prices have crashed from the peaks scaled in 2022, especially after Russia's invasion of Ukraine.

The UN Food and Agriculture Organization's (FAO's) widely-tracked food price index averaged 143.7 points in 2022 and 125.7 points in 2021, compared with 98.1 and 95.1 in the preceding two calendar years. But the index – a trade-weighted average of world prices of a basket of food commodities over a base period value, taken at 100 for 2014-16 – fell 13.7% to 124 points in 2023.

The decline is even more, at 25.8%, if one compares the latest monthly value of 118.5 points for December 2023 over the all-time-high of 159.7 points reached in March 2022, immediately after the war broke out.

Contrast with domestic inflation

Globally, food inflation based on the FAO index has been in negative territory since November 2022. In India, it's been the opposite: the official consumer food price index inflation has remained stubbornly sticky and elevated at 9.5% in December 2023, compared with minus 10.1% in the former case.

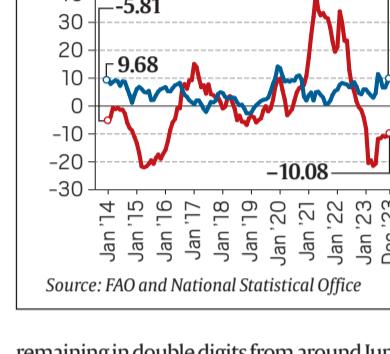
The chart plots both global and domestic food inflation over a 10-year period. It can be seen that international food price increases have exhibited far more volatility relative to domestic inflation. During the last three years alone, global food inflation has oscillated from a high of 40.6% to a low of minus 21.5%. Domestic food inflation, in contrast, has been somewhat range-bound between 0.7% and 11.5%.

One reason for this apparent divergence is the limited transmission of international prices to food inflation or deflation in India. The usual route by which that happens is imports and exports. Take vegetable oils, where India imports more than 60% of its annual consumption requirement. It's no surprise that global supply disruptions, first due to Covid and then the Russia-Ukraine war, resulted in domestic retail edible oil inflation

FOOD INFLATION:
DOMESTIC vs GLOBAL

(% year-on-year)

■ Domestic (Consumer Food Price Index)
■ Global (FAO Food Price Index)



Source: FAO and National Statistical Office

STOCKS IN CENTRAL
POOL ON JAN 1

(lakh tonnes)

	Wheat	Rice**	Total
2017	137.47	296.75	434.22
2018	195.62	332.52	528.14
2019	271.21	366.60	637.81
2020	327.96	423.99	751.95
2021	342.90	457.51	800.41
2022	330.12	541.12	871.24
2023	171.70	444.40	616.10
2024	163.53	516.48	680.01
Norm*	138.00	76.10	214.10

*Minimum operational stock plus strategic reserve for January 1;

**Includes rice equivalent of un-milled paddy.

Source: Food Corporation of India.

way around the African continent, adding 15-20 days of voyage time and \$18-20 per tonne to freight cost.

But sunflower's share in India's total edible oil imports of 16.5 million tonnes (mt) in 2022-23 (November-October) was only 3 mt, way behind palm oil (9.8 mt) and soyabean (3.7 mt). Also, there are reports of the Houthi rebels sparing Russian cargo ships that are continuing to take the shorter Black Sea-Mediterranean-Red Sea route.

Domestic factors

In the coming months, the course of food inflation is likely to be determined more by domestic production, not global factors.

The crops of concern are primarily cereals, pulses, and sugar – or *roti-dal-cheeni*. Retail cereal and pulses inflation, at 9.9% and 20.7% year-on-year respectively in December, are ruling higher than the overall 9.5% food inflation. Pulses inflation has been in double digits since June 2023, while cereals recorded the same for 15 consecutive months from September 2022 to November 2023.

The government can take comfort from the area sown under wheat this time crossing 34 million hectares (mh), surpassing the 33.5 mh of 2022-23 and the normal five-year-average of 30.7 mh. The weather and crop conditions so far appear conducive to a bumper harvest. But wheat is highly sensitive to heat stress, more so during March at the time of grain formation and filling. Any sudden temperature spikes when the kernels are accumulating starch and protein can translate into yield loss through premature ripening, as it happened to the 2021-22 crop.

A repeat of that, or even last year's unusual heavy rain in March leading to the lodging (bending) of the standing crop in many places, can put further pressure on cereal stocks with the government. These are already at a seven-year-low for wheat (See Table). In sugar, too, mills started the new season from October 2023 with six-year-low stocks and no clarity on actual production when they stop crushing by April-May.

As for pulses, the current elevated prices (*arhar* and *chana* or chickpea) are trading at Rs 9,000-9,200 and Rs 5,300-5,400 per quintal, as against Rs 7,000-7,200 and Rs 4,500-4,600 respectively a year ago) aren't helped by farmers planting less area this rabi season (15.5 mh versus 16.3 mh in 2022-23).

Clearly, the drivers of food inflation are more domestic than global now.

Assam shrine Rahul was stopped from visiting

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE

NEW DELHI, JANUARY 22

CONGRESS LEADER Rahul Gandhi was Monday prevented from visiting Assam's Batadrava Than, where he was going as part of his Bharat Jodo Nyay Yatra. The yatra was stopped for over two hours at Haibargaon in Nagaon, and around 9.30 am, only Congress leader Gaurav Gogoi and Batadrava MLA Sibamoni Bora were allowed past the barricades to visit the Than.

On Sunday, the president of the Than management committee had written to Bora, saying Rahul would not be allowed inside the premises before 3 pm on Monday since thousands of people would gather there in the morning to mark the *pran pratishtha* at the Ram temple in Ayodhya. Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma too had said Rahul should visit the Than after the Ayodhya ceremony had concluded.

What is the Batadrava Than?

QUICK SINGLES

Visa delay: Bashir yet to join Eng squad

Hyderabad: A delay in paperwork has forced England's uncapped off-spinner Shoaib Bashir to stay back in the UAE ahead of their five-Test series against India, starting on Thursday.

The 20-year-old Bashir, whose parent's are of Pakistani origin, has been left behind following the conclusion of an England training camp in Abu Dhabi. Stuart Hooper, who has recently joined the ECB as their new managing director of cricket operations, is accompanying Bashir, reported *ESPNcricinfo*.

England's red-ball head coach Brendon McCullum informed that the ECB has raised the issue with the relevant authorities in the BCCI as well as the Indian government, while expecting the issue to be resolved within 24 hours. Although the delay will cause Bashir to miss out on preparations for around two days, McCullum has assured that the Somerset player will remain in contention for selection for the first Test.

PTI

Lifetime achievement award for Shastri

Hyderabad: Former India coach, ex-allrounder and current commentator Ravi Shastri will be bestowed with the lifetime-achievement award by the Board of Control for Cricket in India's (BCCI) in Hyderabad on Tuesday. The BCCI will conduct its award ceremony for the first time since 2019, the initial delay being because of Covid. Shastri, 61, has worn multiple hats during his illustrious career on and off the field. Shastri played 80 Tests and 150 ODIs for India and his international career span was from 1981 to 1992. Post retirement he took up commentary.

DEVENDRA PANDEY

Anderson's reaction 'triggered team': Bumrah on 2021 Test

OPENING UP on the infamous 10-ball over he bowled to James Anderson in the Lord's Test in 2021, a moment that lit a spark for the rest of the series, Jasprit Bumrah said tried to check up on the England bowler but did not get a 'good response'. That, Bumrah added, 'triggered the whole team'.

Besides bowling four no balls in the over, Bumrah had targeted Anderson with a barrage of bouncers, hitting the tailender on the helmet, ribcage and his left hand. Anderson has himself admitted that the Bumrah over was 'up there for intimidation'.

Speaking to *The Guardian*, Bumrah said: "I was tired, I thought the last wicket was there, I tried to push to bowl fast. I went up to him (mid-over), asked 'Are you OK?' and didn't get a good response. So that brought back some young memories; trying to be the nice guy and it not being taken well. And it triggered the whole team. It was red mist but it was channelled. Fighting and playing is second nature to us; controlling that is self-taught." India went on to win that Test by 151 runs, before the five-match series ended 2-2.

ENS

Kohli pulls out of first two England Tests citing 'personal reasons'

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
JANUARY 22

WITH JUST two days left for the first of five home Tests against England, India received an unexpected blow when star batsman Virat Kohli pulled out of the first two games citing personal reasons.

"Virat Kohli has requested the BCCI to be withdrawn from the first two Tests of the upcoming Test series against England, citing personal reasons," the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) said in a statement.

The first Test begins in Hyderabad on Thursday and the board said it will announce a replacement soon.

In the release, BCCI said that the former captain has informed the captain, team management and selectors about his decision, which will necessitate some contingent planning ahead of the first Test.

"Virat has spoken to Captain Rohit Sharma, the team management and the se-

lectors and has emphasised that while representing the country has always been his top priority, certain personal situations demand his presence and undivided attention," read the statement.

"The BCCI respects his decision and the Board and team management have extended their support to the star batter and are confident in the abilities of the remaining squad members to step up and deliver commendable performances in the Test series.

"The BCCI requests the media and fans to respect Virat Kohli's privacy during this time and refrain from speculating on the nature of his personal reasons. The focus should remain on supporting the Indian cricket team as they embark on the upcoming challenges in the Test series. The Men's Selection Committee will name a replacement soon."

Wicketkeepers KS Bharat and Dhruv Jurel have been classified as the spare batsmen in the 16-man squad, but it's likely that the selectors will have to look at someone from outside the group if they want a like-for-like

With spin-friendly pitches expected for the Tests against England, playing with just five specialist batsmen may be considered a risk

replacement for Kohli.

With spin-friendly pitches expected for the Tests against England, playing with just five specialist batsmen may be considered a risk. There's already uncertainty about who will don the wicketkeeping gloves – KL Rahul or KS Bharat.

Rohit and Yashasvi Jaiswal are slated to open the innings with Shubman Gill coming at No.3. Rahul and Shreyas Iyer are the designated middle-order batsmen, and it remains to be seen if one of them slots into Kohli's No.4 position or if someone is parachuted there.

Previous instances

This is not the first time Kohli has taken a break from international cricket. One of those instances was during the tour of Australia in 2020-21. India had been bowled out for 36 in their second innings to lose the first Test. Kohli, who was the captain then, had announced beforehand that he will leave the tour after that game to be with his wife who was expecting. In his absence, Ajinkya Rahane led a turnaround in Indian fortunes and engineered a memorable 2-1 series triumph.

The other noteworthy instance was when Kohli took a break in 2022 to tend to his mental health, after a poor run of form by his standards and being relieved of the India captaincy in all formats. During this period, the star batsman said he didn't touch his bat for a month "for the first time in 10 years."

"I came to realise that I was trying to fake my intensity a bit recently," he said. "I was convincing myself that 'no, you had the intensity.'"

Kohli returned rejuvenated from the break and became prolific with the bat again.

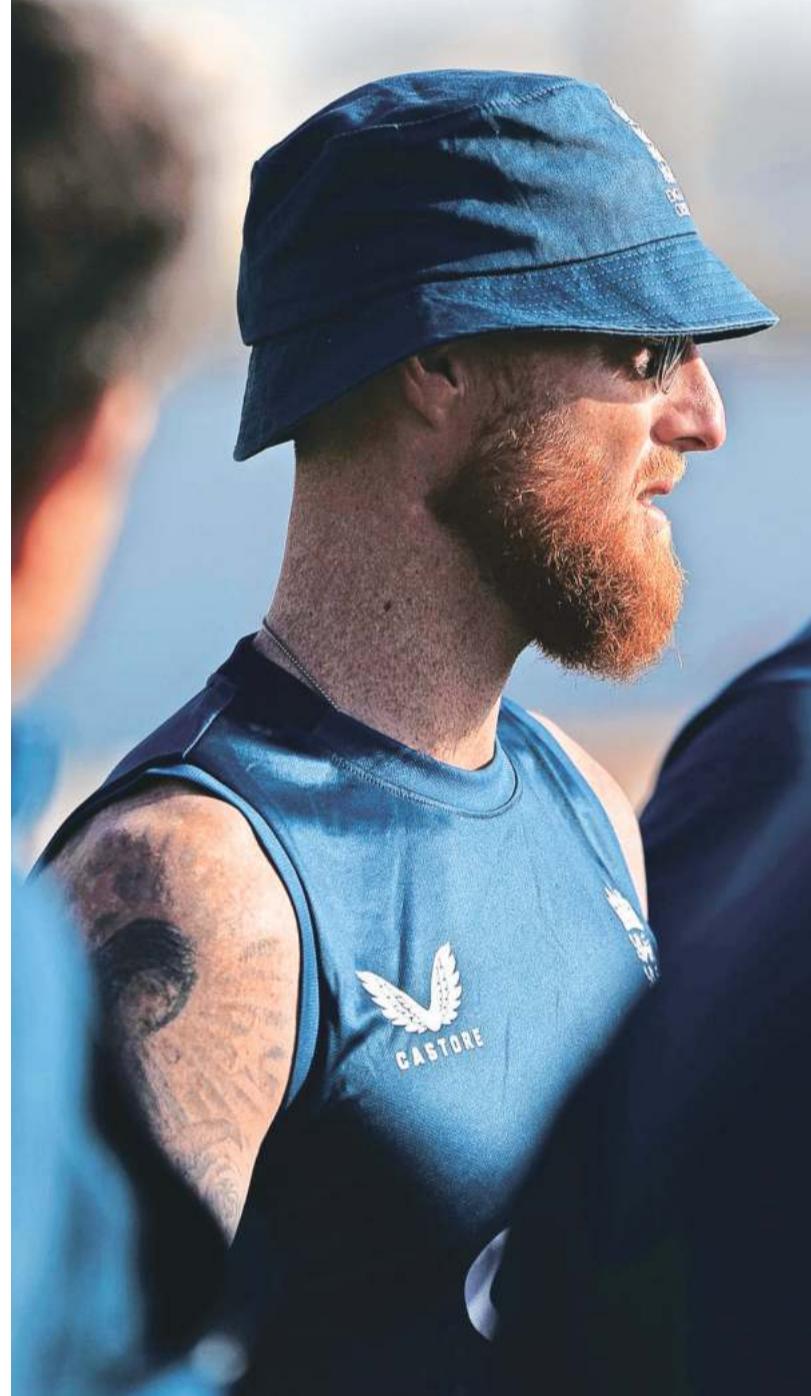
The options

If a fresh face is needed, recent form could point towards Madhya Pradesh's Rajat Patidar. He has already made his white-ball debut for India and is coming off a 151 for India A in the game against England Lions. Just before that, Patidar had hit 111 in a two-day warm-up fixture against the same opponents. The 30-year-old has domestic pedigree and played a key role in his state team winning the 2021-22 Ranji Trophy, where he hit a hundred in the final against Mumbai.

Sarfraz Khan's name is never far from the reckoning during selection meetings. His proficiency against pace and bounce is a question mark, but his ability against spin could be useful in the middle order on turning tracks. Cheteshwar Pujara continues to churn out runs in first-class cricket and could be an option if the selectors eye someone tried and trusted.

India enter Bazball universe

For the hosts, who have a team in transition, England's Test philosophy could be the most challenging one in recent times



Under Ben Stokes and Brendon McCullum, England have binned all conventions associated with Test cricket. englandcricket/x

VENKATA KRISHNA B
JANUARY 22

IT HAS been nearly 12 years since India lost a Test series at home. Since Alastair Cook's England rallied to defeat them 2-1 in a four-match series, India have won 16 on the bounce – a feat that not even the all-conquering West Indies and Australia sides of the past – could come close. For 11 years, with a core of their XI remaining intact, they have looked truly invincible, having lost only three Tests at home. Beginning with Michael Clarke in 2013 to Pat Cummins in 2023, 14 captains have made attempts to win a series here. And among them only Steve Smith, Joe Root and Cummins have at least managed to win a Test here.

As the Bazball lands in India, with the first Test set to begin on Thursday in Hyderabad, all things point out to why the series could be the most challenging one for India. Like in 2012, when Andy Flower and Cook masterminded a sensational series win, defeating the hosts in their own game, India are team in transition. And for the first two Tests in Hyderabad and Visakhapatnam, they will also be without Virat Kohli, meaning they will have the combined experience of their No 3, 4, 5, 6 will be only 86 Tests. And making it the most complicated for them is the Bazball approach from England, which is making them ponder over a lot.

While India have mostly preferred to play on turners since the World Test Championship came into picture, ahead of the England series there is an element of doubt if they stick to the same formula. Under Ben Stokes and Brendon McCullum, England have binned all conventions associated with Test cricket. The concept of following something just because it has been the norm before doesn't exist in the Bazball universe.

Despite breaking barriers, there are already questions flying from all directions in the Old Blighty if England are stretching it too far. For a series of this significance, they landed in India only on Sunday night and have just three training sessions before they take the field in Hyderabad. In Bazball universe, all the preparations for a gruelling India tour happened at Abu Dhabi from mid-January.

There is a rationale, not just bravado behind it. They feared that India might serve batting tracks with a second-string attack against them in practice games. And even if there was a turning track, it's said that they feared the scenario where batsmen get out cheaply without facing many balls and are mopping around on the field without much practice. Instead, in Abu Dhabi, they have

NUMBER PLATE
13

England have won 13 of the 18 Tests since coach Brendon McCullum and captain Ben Stokes teamed up. They have lost four Test matches and drawn one. Prior to the Bazball philosophy, England had one win in 17 Tests.

gone about training on custom-made tracks, working on a batting routine they hope to adopt in the Tests.

In the 24 matches since McCullum took over and has redefined how England play Test cricket, they have an overall strike-rate of 75.48 with the bat. In the same period, India's is 54.57 and Australia 54.14.

This approach, where England's batting unit never takes the pedal off, has put opposition bowlers off guard. The noise and buzz around it only adds to their aura.

From having just one win out of 17 before McCullum and Stokes took charge, they have now won 13 in the next 18, including three in Pakistan and one in New Zealand. So this isn't confined to home. Of course, the upcoming five in India will be a stern test, especially in conditions where the Bazball is yet to be tested.

And it is this unknown element that is making India fret a bit. They are blinded as to what to expect and are huddled in conversations. All things point to India playing on a turner in Hyderabad, but it is understood that this could well turn into a series where the hosts will take stock match after match. While India will heavily rely on the spin trio of R Ashwin, Ravindra Jadeja and Axar Patel, unlike the past there are deliberations if playing on turners could close the gap between the two sides, especially given India's brittle middle-order.

On turning pitches, apart from toss becoming a crucial factor, it is one quick-fire innings from a batsman that has proved to be a big difference. It is the approach that even India's batsmen are known to take on such

conditions before they rely on the trio of spinners to do their job with the bat. However, with this high-risk game being England's bread and butter, with their No 1 to No 11 following it to the T, there is more reason to be fearful of this approach as the game could unravel far more quickly than India have experienced at home.

With all the venues having black soil pitches, for now India believe the lack of bounce and pace off the pitch could keep England's batting in check. Such tracks where the batting unit have to force the pace could also unsettle England's plans of playing taller batsmen – long reach against spinners – to an extent.

There were even deliberations whether India should go back to their traditional flat decks, which they used to great success during the 2016/17 season where they defeated New Zealand, England and Australia. But even that comes with its own risk element, especially with Bazball. Apart from toss being a factor as batting last on a deteriorating surface could be quite risky, the Bazball

has thrived especially in such conditions. Even back home in England, they have moved on from playing on green tracks, instead opting for flat decks that suit England's stroke-makers.

"I don't really relate to the term Bazball... As a bowler, what I think is that it keeps me in play. And if they're going for it, playing so fast, they won't tire me out, I could get heaps (of wickets)."

JASPRIT BUMRAH
IN AN INTERVIEW TO THE GUARDIAN

play. And if they're going for it, playing so fast, they won't tire me out, I could get heaps (of wickets). I always think about how I can use things to my advantage. Kudos to them but, as a bowler, you're in the game." Well, that's one way to look at it, but there are concerns for India.

That they are facing their biggest ever test in over a decade without their best batsman makes it all the more interesting. Of course, given the calibre of India's spinners which also includes Kuldeep Yadav, there is still every reason to believe they can extend their unbeaten streak at home. That Australia managed to keep the Bazball in check until Nathan Lyon was around at the Ashes last year would make India all the more hopeful, provided their batting unit steps up without their best Test batsman.

Ranji Trophy: Fog, harsh winter playing spoilsport in North India

PRATYUSH RAJ
NEW DELHI, JANUARY 22

THE HOSTEL Ground in Jammu hosted two games in the ongoing Ranji Trophy. In eight days, only 107.3 overs were bowled due to poor visibility. In the second round game between Jammu and Kashmir and Delhi, only two overs of play were possible on the first three days.

Jammu and Kashmir is not the only home side suffering due to the fog that has affected visibility. In the first-round match between Haryana and Rajasthan at Lahli, only 42 overs were possible. At the Sector 16 Cricket Stadium in Chandigarh, only 159.3 overs were bowled in the first round game against Railways, while only 26 overs of play were possible in the third round match played between Chandigarh and Gujarat.

At the end of the third round, thirteen matches in venues including Delhi, Jammu, Mohali, Chandigarh, Meerut and Kanpur were affected due to poor weather and there have been days where not a single ball was bowled.

Veteran BCCI administrator Ratnakar Shetty says that Sunil Gavaskar, when he was chairman of the BCCI's technical committee, had recommended not to organise Ranji Trophy matches in north and some parts of central India during peak winter when visibility is likely to be poor and matches weather-affected.



Only 115 overs were bowled during Uttar Pradesh vs Bihar Ranji match at Victoria Park Stadium in Meerut. PTI

in matches played in the north. I have been associated with the coaching for the last 25 years and in my opinion first-class cricket is not anymore the priority of the board. White-ball tournaments have been given priority because of the IPL. I feel both Vijay Hazare and Syed Mushtaq Ali should be played in February and March so that a team can enjoy home advantage in the Ranji Trophy, otherwise there is no point," Shetty told *The Indian Express*.

A veteran Ranji Trophy coach said games should be played up north only after January 26.

White-ball tournaments like the Syed

Mushtaq Ali Trophy and Vijay Hazare have become talent-spotting opportunities for IPL scouts before the auction. Earlier Ranji Trophy would begin from the first week of October. But with IPL auctions usually scheduled in the last quarter of the year, the BCCI advanced the Syed Mushtaq Ali and Ranji Trophy was pushed further down.

However, Ratnakar Shetty said that the Ranji Trophy is still relevant.

"I don't agree with this argument that Ranji Trophy is losing its significance. There are people who still want to play Ranji Trophy. States units are also doing their best to ensure that teams play well," he said.

Scheduling requirements

"Scheduling is something that is normally based on the requirements of international cricket. The number of matches has increased substantially in recent years. Scheduling has become a huge problem. With U-16, U-19, U-23 and Ranji Trophy, multiple days cricket is being played across the age-group and it is not easy to get enough grounds," he added.

Delhi who were supposed to play their next round (January 26) match against Uttarakhand at Roshanara Club Ground but it has been now shifted to IS Bindra Stadium in Mohali.

The iconic Roshanara Club, where the BCCI was formed back in 1928 has been sealed by the DDA (Delhi Development Authority) after its lease expired.

"We don't have grounds after Roshanara was sealed. Arun Jaitley Stadium will be hosting the CK Nayudu match against Vidarbha from January 28. So, we have requested the PCA and they have agreed to host us," said a DDCB official.

Interestingly, the matches in Dharamshala and Dehradun were not affected by the weather. Uttarakhand played a draw against Madhya Pradesh, while they lost the second game against Pondicherry by 55 runs. Uttarakhand also defeated Himachal Pradesh in Dharamsala. At the same venue, Baroda drubbed the home side by an innings and 18 runs.

"We have played two games in Dehradun and one in Dharamsala and thankfully weather didn't affect us. Now we are going to Mohali and let's see how the weather behaves," Manish Jha, Uttarakhand coach, said.

Although Pondicherry has registered their first outright win in the elite group in Delhi, the team management was not happy with the playing conditions.

"We arrived in Delhi with an eye on the chill and were well-equipped to tackle it, especially given that the winter temperatures back home don't go below the mid-twenties, even at night," an official of the Cricket Association of Pondicherry said. "With the weather like this, the matches should be played at a neutral venue at this time of the year. There is no point wasting time waiting for better weather," he added.

ROUND-UP

First win for J&K

Abdul Samad helped Jammu & Kashmir overcome a tricky chase with an unbeaten 66, steering his team to a two-wicket win over Odisha. It was the first win of the season for J&K after sharing points with Delhi and Himachal in their two home games marred by bad light in Elite Group D.

BRIEF SCORES: Odisha 130 and 198 lost to Jammu & Kashmir 180 and 149/8 in 23.2 overs (Abdul Samad 66 not out; Rajesh Mohanty 5/61) by 2 wickets

Mumbai beat Kerala
Spin duo of Shams Mulani and Tanush Kotian exploited the conditions beautifully to trigger a stunning batting collapse as Mumbai registered a handsome 232-run win after skittling out Kerala for 94.
BRIEF SCORES: Mumbai 251 and 319 bt. Kerala 244 and 94 (Rohan Kunnummal 26; Shams Mulani 5/44, Dhawal Kulkarni 2/32, Tanush Kotian 2/6) by 232 runs
PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

BRIEFLY

Hockey: India grouped with Aus, Bel, Arg at Paris Games

Lausanne: Asian Games champions and Tokyo Olympics bronze medallists India are placed in a tough Pool B in the men's hockey competition at this year's Paris Games. Eight-time champions India, who clinched a historic bronze medal in Tokyo after a hiatus of 41 years, have been clubbed with reigning Olympic champions and world no.2 Belgium, mighty Australia, Rio Games gold medallist Argentina, New Zealand and Ireland. The Indians are currently ranked third in the world, behind Belgium and the Netherlands, and they had found it tough to beat Tokyo silver medallist Australia and Argentina in the past. PTI

India beat France 4-0 in 4-nation tourney

Cape Town: Skipper Harmanpreet scored a brace as Indian men's hockey team thrashed France 4-0 to begin its campaign in the Four-Nation Tournament on a rousing note here on Monday. The Indian defence produced a resolute performance with France failing to get past veteran PR Sreejesh and Krishan Bahadur Pathakat the goalpost. Harmanpreet (13th, 26th minutes) converted two penalty corners while Lalit Upadhyay (42nd) and vice-captain Hardik Singh (49) were the other goal-getters for India. PTI

Bopanna-Ebden duo enter quarterfinals

Melbourne: Rohan Bopanna and his Australian partner Matthew Ebden entered the men's doubles quarterfinals of the Australian Open with an impressive 7-6 7-6 victory over Wesley Koolhof of the Netherlands and Croatia's Nikola Mektic here on Monday. The 43-year-old Bopanna and Ebden, who are seeded second in the draw, were broken early in both sets but showed themselves to be up to the task with some great returns against the 14th seeds. The Indo-Australian pair will next meet the sixth-seeded duo of Maximo Gonzalez and Andres Molteni. PTI

NAMIT KUMAR

JANUARY 22

FOLLOWING HER 6-0, 6-3 win over France's Oceane Dodin in the fourth round of the Australian Open on Monday, Zheng Qinwen has emerged, in terms of both ranking and form, as the front-runner to reach the final in Melbourne this week.

The lopsided top section of the draw, which has seen all the top seeds bow out early, has opened up an unlikely opportunity for the 21-year-old World No.15, who has a big serve, topspin-laden groundstrokes, and aggressive playing style, to become the first Chinese player since Li Na to reach the latter stages of a singles Major.

The achievement would be an early culmination of China's recent tennis boom — where an emerging set of talented players of a sport with increasing popularity have been given institutional support.

Tennis enjoys unprecedented popularity in China. A report published by the International Tennis Federation (ITF) in 2021 states that nearly a quarter (22.9%) of global tennis is played in China, despite the country not boasting of a high number of courts, clubs, or academies. According to Vogue, the country's tennis boom is as much about the sport as it is about it being a "lifestyle and fashion phenomenon", pointing to its ties to aspirations of upward mobility of social status.

But recreational popularity hardly translates to professional sporting success; the same ITF report's 2019 edition stated that 9.2% of global tennis is played in India, a country that has not been produced a top 100 singles player in the four years since. And China was never a historical tennis destination. Olympic sports and other racquet sports like badminton and table tennis have enjoyed greater success in the region. Despite some successful doubles players, two-time Major winner Li Na is the only global tennis star from the country.

She retired in 2014. Until 2022, no Chinese man had ever won a main draw singles match at a Grand Slam.

More recently, however, tennis has received major government backing. Facilities were overhauled, grassroots academies have been provided focus, more tournaments have been organised, former players and foreign experts have been roped in as coaches. China also has the advantage of dominating the Asian swing of the professional tours. One of the 9 Masters 1000 ATP events takes place in



Zheng Qinwen reached the second quarterfinal of her career on Monday. AP

Shanghai, and until recently, the year-ending WTA Finals took place in Shenzhen. Many other big-ticket events also take place there in September and October.

The results of all of the above are there to see. Eight players, seven women and one man, are currently in the top 100. Nine Chinese players were in the singles main draw of the Australian Open. Collectively, 2023 may have been Chinese women's best-ever season, with three separate tour-level title winners.

No Sino star is displaying the success of the country's recent boom more than Zheng, who is knocking on the door of a top 10 debut this week. While players of Li's generation all came with one-dimensional aggressive baseline playing styles, Zheng, who is now based out of Barcelona and has worked with foreign coaches, is markedly different. She can smash down aces on demand, plays with more topspin as opposed to flatter hitting, and prefers to shorten points with variety.

She herself credits this to exposure. "Obviously, 15 years ago in China, tennis was just beginning, so we don't have much opportunity to improve our system of coaching," Zheng was quoted as saying by the WTA website. "Now after 15 years, we know more about the world, we know how everybody is playing, we try a lot of different coaches to really

improve our games. So all of us are starting to have more knowledge about tennis."

Her quarterfinal is against the 75th-ranked Anna Kalinskaya on Wednesday. No other player in her half of the draw is ranked above 50. A gaping opportunity has presented itself to take her career and Chinese tennis to the next level this week, but either way, the country is on its way up.

KEY RESULTS

Day Eight

Men's Singles

2-C Alcaraz bt M Kecmanovic 6-4, 6-4, 6-0; 6-A Zverev bt 19-C Norrie 7-5, 3-6, 6-3, 4-6, 6-7(3); 9-H Hurkacz bt A Cazaux 7-6(6), 7-6 (6), 4-6; 3-D Medvedev bt N Borges 6-3, 7-6(4), 5-7, 6-1

Women's Singles

12-QZheng bt O Dodin 6-0, 6-3; A Kalinskaya bt 26-J Paolini 6-4, 6-2; L Noskova bt 19-E Svitolina 3-0 (RET); D Yastremska bt 18-V Azarenka 7-6(6), 6-4

On wing & prayer, India in last-chance saloon vs Syria

SHASHANK NAIR

JANUARY 22

IFIN Australia and Uzbekistan, India found top Asian teams looking to win the biggest football prize in the continent, against Syria, they find kinship in goals moving forward, even though both teams have found goals hard to come by.

While Syria have a point from two games thanks to a 0-0 draw against Uzbekistan and can go through to the Round of 16 with a win against India, it's a lot tougher for Igor Stimac's team, who have conceded five goals over two games and not scored a single one of their own.

The top two teams from each of the six groups go through. With these 12 teams, four of the best third-placed teams will comprise the Round of 16.

Even a win against the Syrians can't guarantee a spot in the last 16 for India, who also must hope a host of results go their way in other groups. Syria come with the same set of physical attributes that have troubled the Indians at this tournament. However, it's the lack of goals scored that needs to change. Striker Sunil Chhetri, playing in his third AFC Asian Cup, spoke about how India being goalless and pointless at this stage of the tournament has simply been a matter of misfired attempts in front of the target.

"The problem is that India and I haven't scored. We don't go into the game thinking we don't want to score. We had chances against Uzbekistan and Australia," said Chhetri in the pre-match conference on Monday.

"I can assure you that we haven't scored not because of lack of want but we missed chances. The chances they (opponents) got went in. That's the margin in this tournament. Come tomorrow, we hope to change that."

In his previous two appearances in the Asian Cup, Chhetri was responsible for the lion's share of India's goals. They scored three in the 2011 edition and four in 2019. The veteran finding the net on Tuesday will at least be a step in the direction of India qualifying for the Round of 16, which remains a remote possibility.

Head coach Stimac spoke about how India managed to create chances against Uzbekistan and Australia and needed to do the same to qualify for the next stage of the competition.



India coach Igor Stimac. Reuters

"That would be an amazing achievement for India. Prior to coming here, we knew how unlucky we were because of injuries to our main players. We did the best to strengthen our game and use this experience to further our plans which are obviously very important. We created many chances against much stronger opponents and hopefully we will do the same tomorrow," the Croat said.

Fixing defensive shape

Stimac also spoke about how India's defensive shape and awareness were an issue — not just at this Asian Cup, but in the World Cup qualifiers previously as well. India have played two WCs — one ending in a 1-0 away win against Kuwait and the other a 3-0 loss to Qatar at home.

The same issues that cropped up against Qatar reared their head against Uzbekistan. A weakness in dealing with crosses and second balls into the box as well as issues of concentration have been plaguing the Indian backline, something that Stimac wants to see his defenders get better at.

"The point which I am not happy about is the defensive shape and reaction and marking inside the box. Not just in the last two games but also in the World Cup qualifiers. It obviously needs to change and we have to be more aware when crosses are coming.

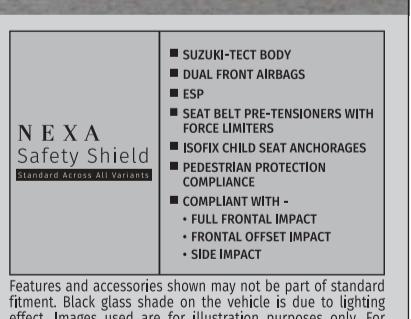
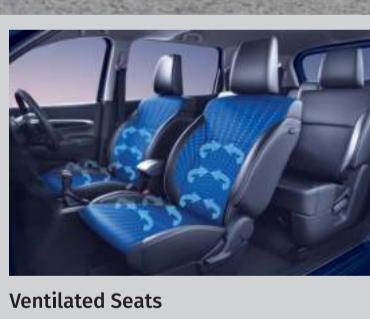
"We are reacting late and hopefully that will be better," he said.

MARUTI SUZUKI

NEXA

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YUNNAN PROVINCE

'CHINA LANDSLIDE KILLS 8; 47 MISSING'

A landslide in China's Yunnan province killed eight people on Monday and dozens were missing as rescue operations continued in snowy, freezing temperatures. At least 47 people from 18 households were missing, state-owned China Central Television (CCTV) reported.

TOP OF THE WORLD



Polish PM Donald Tusk and Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky in Kyiv. AP

UKRAINE

Poland PM in Kyiv to resolve trucking issue

Kyiv: Polish Prime Minister Donald Tusk arrived in Ukraine's capital on Monday for talks with President Volodymyr Zelensky on how Poland can keep supporting the country's almost two-year war with Russia and resolve a dispute between the neighbouring nations over grain shipments and trucking. Tusk, returned to power in Poland last month. "There are some conflicts of interest, and we will talk about them, but not only in the spirit of friendship with the attitude to solve these problems," Tusk said. AP

SINGAPORE

Indian-origin man jailed for cheating people

Singapore: An Indian-origin Singaporean was on Monday sentenced to seven years and four months in jail for cheating 20 people of SGD 2.5 million (USD 1.8 million). Murali Krishnan Naidu was earlier convicted of 17 counts of cheating linked to nine people and involving a sum of SGD 2.5 million over 2008-13. Another 43 charges, including those involving the remaining victims, were considered during the sentencing during which Naidu made no restitution. The Straits Times reported. PTI

CAMERON

First malaria vaccination for children begins

Yaounde: Cameroon will be the first country to routinely give children a new malaria vaccine as the shots are rolled out in Africa. The campaign due to start on Monday was described by officials as a milestone in the decades-long effort to curb the mosquito-spread disease on the continent, which accounts for 95 per cent of the world's malaria deaths. "The vaccination will save lives. It will provide major relief to families and the country's health system," said Aurelia Nguyen, chief programme officer at the Gavi vaccines alliance, which is helping Cameroon secure the shots. AP

SWITZERLAND

UN migration agency seeks \$7.9 billion aid

Geneva: The UN's migration agency is launching its first "global appeal," seeking \$7.9 billion to help people on the move and ensure smoother pathways to migration, at a time when the fallout from climate change, conflict and both economic distress and opportunities has caused millions to leave their homes. The annual appeal from the International Organization for Migration puts the Geneva-based agency more in the hunt for aid funds. AP

FAMILIES, SUPPORTERS CAMP OUTSIDE PM'S HOME, KNESSET

Kin of hostages storm Israel Parliament, Bibi clarifies no solid offer from Hamas

You will not sit here while they die in Gaza: Relatives of hostages to panel

REUTERS
JERUSALEM, JANUARY 22

A GROUP of relatives of Israelis held hostage by Palestinian gunmen in Gaza stormed a parliamentary committee session in Jerusalem on Monday, demanding that the lawmakers do more to try to free their loved ones.

The action by about 20 people signalled growing domestic dissent in the fourth month of the Gaza war against Hamas.

One woman held up pictures of three family members who were among the 253 people seized in the cross-border Hamas rampage of Oct. 7 that triggered the war.

Some 130 remain in captivity after others were brought home in a November truce.

Netanyahu told hostage families that Hamas has made no solid offer that would see their loved ones freed, a day after he rejected conditions presented by Hamas to end the war and release hostages that would include Israel's complete withdrawal and leaving Hamas in power in Gaza.

"There is no real proposal by

Hamas. It's not true. I am saying this as clearly as I can because there are so many incorrect statements which are certainly agonising for you," Netanyahu's office quoted him as telling the group.

Outside Netanyahu's house in Jerusalem - on a street called Azza, Hebrew for Gaza - The Hostages and Missing Persons Families Forum have set up a vigil calling for a swap deal to be advanced. "If the prime minister decides to sacrifice the hostages, he should show leadership and honestly share his position with the Israeli public," it said in a statement. "Just one, I'd like to get back alive, one out of three!" the woman protester cried after pushing into the Knesset Finance Committee discussion. Other protesters held up signs reading: "You will not sit here while they die there." "Release them now, now, now!" they chanted.

Families and supporters have also started camping outside Netanyahu's coastal home as well as the Knesset building. "We will not leave him until the hostages are back," said Eli Stivi, whose son Idan is being held in Gaza.

ISRAELI FORCES, advancing deep into western Khan Younis in Gaza's bloodiest fighting of the new year so far, stormed one hospital and placed another under siege on Monday, cutting the



Relatives of Israelis who have been held hostage by Hamas since October 7 last year at a parliamentary committee session in Jerusalem on Monday. Reuters

Israeli forces enter Khan Younis hospital, put another under siege

REUTERS
GAZA, JANUARY 22

TROOPS advanced for the first time into the al-Mawasi district near the Mediterranean Coast, west of Khan Younis, the main city in southern Gaza. There, they stormed the Al-Khair hospital and were arresting medical staff, Gaza health ministry said.

wounded off from trauma care, Palestinian officials said.

There was no immediate word from Israel. The Palestinian Red Crescent said tanks had also surrounded another Khan Younis hospital, al-Amal. Qidra said at least 50 people were killed overnight in Khan Younis. Israel says Hamas fighters operate from in and around hospitals.



STORM DISRUPTS TRAVEL IN UK

Passengers wait at the Euston railway station in London on Monday. Britain's rail network was disrupted, flights were cancelled and thousands of homes were left without power after the country was battered by Storm Isha overnight. AP

His son faces probe, Malaysia ex-PM points finger at PM

ASSOCIATED PRESS
PUTRAJAYA, JANUARY 22

FORMER MALAYSIAN Prime Minister Mahathir Mohamad attacked a graft probe into his associates as politically motivated, a week after his eldest son was ordered to hand over information to investigators.

Mahathir, a two-time PM, said Prime Minister Anwar Ibrahim's government is using corruption charges to go after political rivals. Mahathir came out of retirement in the wake of the massive IMDB corruption

scandal, joining hands with the opposition in 2018 for a short second term as premier after ousting a long-ruling coalition he once led.

Businessman Mirzan Mahathir and tycoon Daim Zainuddin were revealed to hold millions offshore in the Pandora Papers, a 2021 document leak. The anti-graft agency ordered Mirzan to declare all his assets within 30 days on Jan 17.

Mahathir, 98, said he believed PM Ibrahim was fishing for evidence to implicate him, and Anwar of selective prosecution.

After security alert, Pak temporarily closes armed forces-run universities

SAJJAD HUSSAIN
ISLAMABAD, JANUARY 22

PAKISTANI AUTHORITIES on Monday temporarily shut down at least three leading institutions, including the National Defence University, Air University and Bahria University and a few other higher institutions were shut temporarily after intelligence was received about a possible attack on them," said a source.

The measure was taken as the identities of the Baloch militants killed in the airstrikes in Iran were revealed, showing

those killed were important rebels wanted for the attack in Balochistan province. The three premier universities are respectively run by the Army, the Air Force and the Navy.

The duration of closure was not shared but apparently, they will remain shut until an order, said the source. The Islamabad Police chief said that security had been increased but the situation was under control and there was no reason to panic. "The law and order and security situation in Islamabad is under control," IGP Dr Akbar Nasir Khan said.

REUTERS
ISLAMABAD, JANUARY 22

PAKISTAN SAID on Monday Iran's foreign minister will visit the country next week, signaling efforts to mend relations after the neighbours exchanged missile strikes last week at what they said were militant targets.

Ambassadors of both countries have also been asked to return to their posts by Jan. 26, the Pakistani foreign ministry said in a statement. Iran's foreign ministry confirmed that Foreign Minister Hossein Amir Abdollahian would visit on Monday, and said its ambassador would resume duties in Islamabad on Friday.

Pakistan had recalled its ambassador to Tehran and had not allowed his counterpart to return to Islamabad, as well as cancelling all high-level diplomatic and trade engagements.



"At the invitation of Foreign Minister Jalil Abbas Jilani, Foreign Minister of the Islamic Republic of Iran, Hossein Amir Abdollahian, will undertake a visit to Pakistan on 29 January 2024," a Pakistani foreign office statement said. The tit-for-tat strikes by the two countries were the highest-profile cross-border intrusions in recent years and have raised alarm about wider instability in the region since the war in Gaza.

TOWN OF SAN GIOVANNI LIPIONI HOPES A MARKETING PUSH WILL ATTRACT YOUNGER PEOPLE

An Italian town full of the elderly wants to feel young again

JASON HOROWITZ
SAN GIOVANNI LIPIONI, JAN 22

AS THE traveling brass band ended San Giovanni Lipioni's annual holiday concert with a rendition of Wham's "Last Christmas," the gray-haired villagers seated in the old church of the central Italian hill town gazed dotingly at the few young children clapping to the music.

"Today there is a little movement," Cesaria Falasco, 73, said from the back pew. "It's lovely. It's different."

Decades of emigration have shrunk the population to 137 full-



Pietro Grossi, 18 months old, was the only child born in 2022 in San Giovanni Lipioni, Italy. NYT

tention to gradually attract new visitors and resources" in 2024.

To lure new residents, the town is selling what it has in abundance: quiet, but also, the association says, a chance for immersion into an authentic small town with plenty of "unused housing stock with charming features." There is also, the presentation points out, the Pavone mini-market selling "groceries and essential services."

In the days after Christmas, as old men in the local bar played the card game Tressette under a television showing decades-old reruns, the town's leaders ignored new data from the Italian National Institute of Statistics showing their

population in selling summer houses to foreigners and other out-of-towners. "There's a 'For Sale' sign — there's another one," Carlo Monaco, an association official, said as he toured the town hours before the holiday concert. "This one is empty. Empty."

But so was the main square, where Marilena Grossi watched her 7-year-old daughter, Marica, run to the life-size Nativity scene. Her 18-month-old son, Pietro, scampered by old men on benches.

"At least you don't have to worry about them getting run over," she said. "That's the positive side."

NYT



Donald Trump at a rally ahead of the New Hampshire presidential primary in Rochester on Monday. Reuters

As Trump closes in on nomination, fight for V-P post heats up

ASSOCIATED PRESS
MANCHESTER, JANUARY 22

AS SHE addressed a crushing crowd of volunteers and media at Donald Trump's New Hampshire headquarters on Saturday, New York Rep. Elise Stefanik received a welcome chant. "VP! VP! VP!" one man shouted across the room.

While previous presidential candidates typically aren't picked until after a candidate has locked down the nomination, Trump's decisive win in last week's Iowa caucuses and the departure of Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis from the race have only heightened what had already been a widespread sense of inevitability that he will be the Republican nominee.

Many Republicans covet a spot on the presidential ticket with Trump. That interest comes despite the fate of Trump's first vice president, Mike Pence. For four years, Pence was Trump's most loyal defender. But in the final months of their administration, Trump turned on Pence, casting him as disloyal for refusing to go along with his unconstitutional effort to block President Joe Biden's win.

Pence's role in certifying the 2020 election not only threatened his life during the insurrection at the US Capitol but also

sidelined his political career. Former presidential candidate Vivek Ramaswamy appeared with Trump on stage in New Hampshire a day after dropping out of the race, also drawing "VP" chants from the crowd as he delivered a fiery speech.

And at the same rally where Stefanik spoke, Sen. Tim Scott of South Carolina, Trump's former rival in the presidential race, announced his enthusiastic endorsement in what sounded like his own audition.

Pakistan, Iran agree to reinstate envoys after missile strikes

REUTERS
ISLAMABAD, JANUARY 22

PAKISTAN SAID on Monday Iran's foreign minister will visit the country next week, signaling efforts to mend relations after the neighbours exchanged missile strikes last week at what they said were militant targets.

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"There's some pride in it," Nicola Rossi, the mayor, said of the oldest town. He cited the previous average age of 66.1 years in a country with an average age of 46.4 years. But to save the town, he said, "it doesn't make sense to do things only for the old people."

While he is banking on a soccer field and road repair to draw young people and couples working in nearby factories, the association sees a more lucrative repopulation in selling summer houses to foreigners and other out-of-towners.

"There's a 'For Sale' sign — there's another one," Carlo Monaco, an association official, said as he toured the town hours before the holiday concert. "This one is empty. Empty."

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NYT

**OFFICE OF THE CHIEF CONSTRUCTION ENGINEER
RURAL WORKS CIRCLE, BALASORE**

By E-Mail/e-Despatch

E-Mail ID : serv_balasore@yahoo.in Ph.No.: 06782/260318 Balia, Balasore
"e" Procurement Notice for Road Work

Identification No.- Online Tender- Road N.C.B. No. 70 for 2023-24

Letter No. 277 / WE Date. 19.01.2024

- Name of the work :- Road under MMSY-TRIP
- Total No. of work :- 9 Nos. of Roads.
- Estimated Cost :- From Rs. 356.69 Lakhs to Rs. 1044.46 lakhs (Approximately)
- Eligible Class of Contractor :- "A" & "Special" Class (of Odisha P.W.D.) or relevant Class of other Licensing authorities (as per annexure).
- Period of Completion :- From 06 (Six) to 11 (Eleven) Calendar months for the work.
- Other details :-

Procurement Officer	Bid Identification No.	Availability of tender On-line for bidding	Last Date & Time of seeking Tender Clarification	Date & Time of Opening of Tender in O/S.E.R.W. Circle, Balasore
From	To	Technical Bid	Financial Bid	
1 Chief Construction Engineer, Rural Works Circle, Balasore, NCB No.- 70	24.01.2024 at 10.00 A.M.	06.02.2024 Up to 5.00 P.M.	07.02.2024 at 10.00 P.M.	Will be intimated later

● Further details can be seen from the website www.tendersodisha.gov.in

Sd/- N.V. Harihara Rao
 Chief Construction Engineer,
 R.W. Circle, Balasore.
 OIPR-25105/11/0090/2324


GOVERNMENT OF ODISHA, "e"-PROCUREMENT NOTICE
WORKS DEPARTMENT

E-mail - cewordbankprojects@gmail.com

Bid Identification No. CE-W.B.P. (O) - 49 / 2023-24

- The Chief Engineer (World Bank Project), Odisha on behalf of Governor of Odisha invites percentage rate bid in double cover system in ONLINE MODE from eligible contractors for construction of Road & Bridge work as detailed below :
- Nature of work : Bridge work
- No. of work : 01 no
- Tender cost : Rs. 10,00,000 (on-line)
- Class of Contractor : A/ Special Class Contractor
- Available of bid document in : From 10.00 AM of 24.01.2024 to 5.00 PM of 08.02.2024
- Date of opening of Bid : Dt. 09.02.2024 at 11.30 AM
- The Bidders have to participate in ONLINE bidding only. Further details can be seen from the website : <https://tenderodisha.gov.in>. Any addendum/ corrigendum/ cancellation of tender can also be seen in the said website.

Sd/-
 Chief Engineer (Bridges)
 World Bank Project, Odisha
 (OIPR-34003/11/0086/2324)

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Govt. of Bihar

**Public Health Engineering Department.
(Bihar State Water and Sanitation Mission)**

Vishweshwariya Bhawan Complex, Bailey Road, Patna-800015

Web: <https://state.bihar.gov.in/phed> and <http://bswmpatna.org>
CORRIGENDUM

Notice No.: PH/BSWMS/GST Consultant-105/2023

Name of work- Service of Tax consulting firm for taxation related advisory for Public Health Engineering Department for filing, monitoring & verification of GST payments & IT returns to Contractors/Vendors, etc. & Settlement of VAT & GST claims.

P.R. No.-014802(PHED)2023-24

The Schedule of bidding as published vide aforesaid PR No. 014802(PHED)2023-24, is revised as under;

Existing schedule of bidding

- Period of Sale of Bid documents : From 12/01/24 to 29/01/24
- Last date and time for submission of Bid : 30/01/24 up to 3:00 PM
- Time and date of opening Technical Bid : 30/01/24 at 4.00 PM
- Time and date of opening Financial Bid : to be decided by authority
- Date and place of pre bid meeting : 19.01.24 at 12.00 PM in the office of Engineer-in-chief cum Special Secretary

Revised Schedule of bidding

- Period of Sale of Bid documents : From 01/02/24 to 15/02/24
- Last date and time for submission of Bid : 16/02/24 up to 3:00 PM
- Time and date of opening Technical Bid : 16/02/24 at 4.00 PM
- Time and date of opening Financial Bid : to be decided by authority
- Date and place of pre bid meeting : 09/02/24 at 12.00 PM in the office of Engineer-in-chief cum Special Secretary

Engineer-in-Chief cum Special Secretary

Public Health Engineering Department, Bihar, Patna.

नशे से बनानी दूरी है, क्योंकि परिवार जल्दी है

PR- 15730 (P H E D) 2023-24



बिहार सरकार

विहार प्रुलिस भवन निर्माण निगम
 (बिहार सरकार का उपक्रम)
 कौटिल्य नगर, पटना-14, फोन नं.- 0612-2950702

राष्ट्रीय / स्पर्धा / ई० निविदा (एस०१०३०१०)

ई०-निविदा आमत्रण सूचना संख्या— 52 / SBD/2023-24

1 विज्ञापनदाता का पत्रनाम एवं पत्राः नामः अभियन्ता, विहार पुलिस भवन निर्माण निमान् मुख्यालय, पटना। 2. निविदा आमत्रित करने की तिथिः दितो— 18—01—2024—3. निविदा आमत्रित करने की तिथिः दितो— 20—02—2024 से 26—02—2024 तक 4. निविदा अपलोड करने की अवधि तिथि एवं समयः दितो— 28—02—2024 को 17.00 बजे तक । 5. प्री बीड मिट्टियों की तिथि, समय एवं रकमः दितो— 22—02—2024 को 10.00 बजे । 6. योग्य अभियन्ता, विहार पुलिस भवन निर्माण निमान् मुख्यालय, पटना का कार्यालय कक्ष में । 7. तकनीकी बीड खोलने की तिथि एवं समयः दितो— 29—02—2024 को 16.00 बजे । 8. वित्तीय बीड खोलने की तिथि एवं समयः तकनीकी बीड का निष्पादन रकमावाले ताकि एवं समय एवं रकमः दितो— 29—02—2024 को 10.00 बजे । 9. विविदा आमत्रित करने की तिथि एवं समयः दितो— 29—02—2024 को 10.00 बजे । 10. विविदा आमत्रित करने की तिथि एवं समयः दितो— 29—02—2024 को 10.00 बजे । 11. विविदा आमत्रित करने की तिथि एवं समयः दितो— 29—02—2024 को 10.00 बजे । 12. विविदा आमत्रित करने की तिथि एवं समयः दितो— 29—02—2024 को 10.00 बजे । 13. विविदा आमत्रित करने की तिथि एवं समयः दितो— 29—02—2024 को 10.00 बजे । 14. विविदा आमत्रित करने की तिथि एवं समयः दितो— 29—02—2024 को 10.00 बजे । 15. विविदा आमत्रित करने की तिथि एवं समयः दितो— 29—02—2024 को 10.00 बजे । 16. विविदा आमत्रित करने की तिथि एवं समयः दितो— 29—02—2024 को 10.00 बजे । 17. विविदा आमत्रित करने की तिथि एवं समयः दितो— 29—02—2024 को 10.00 बजे । 18. विविदा आमत्रित करने की तिथि एवं समयः दितो— 29—02—2024 को 10.00 बजे ।

पुलिस भवन निर्माण निमान् मुख्यालय, पटना : एवं समय एवं रकमः दितो— 29—02—2024 को 10.00 बजे ।

पुलिस भवन निर्माण निमान् मुख्यालय, पटना : एवं समय एवं रकमः दितो— 29—02—2024 को 10.00 बजे ।

पुलिस भवन निर्माण निमान् मुख्यालय, पटना : एवं समय एवं रकमः दितो— 29—02—2024 को 10.00 बजे ।

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पुलिस भवन निर्माण निमान् मुख्यालय, पटना : एवं समय एवं रकमः दितो— 29—02—2024 को 10.00 बजे ।

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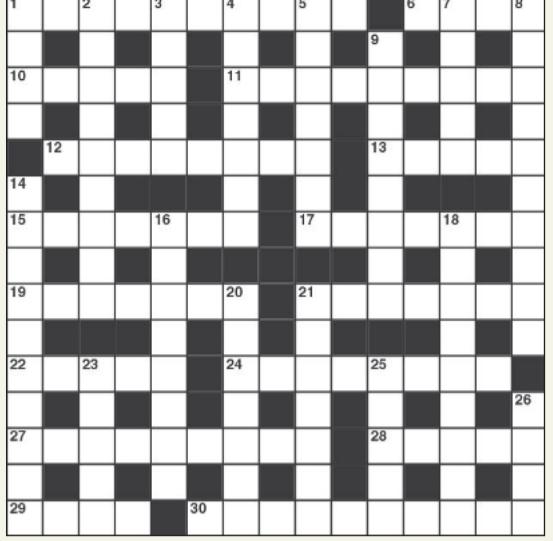
पुलिस भवन निर्माण निमान् मुख्यालय, पटना : एवं समय एवं रकमः दितो— 29—02—2024 को 10.00 बजे ।

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पुलिस भवन निर्माण निमान् मुख्यालय, पटना

CROSSWORD 5268



ACROSS

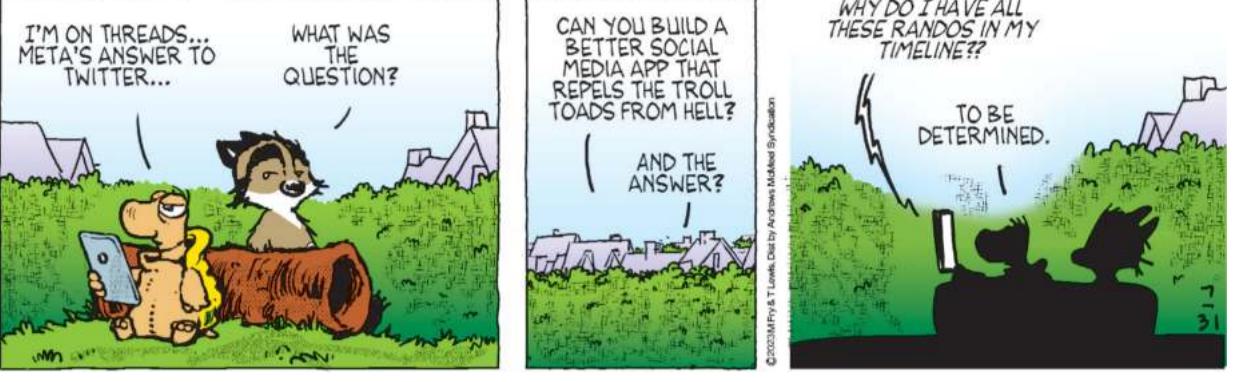
- Russian capitalists (10)
- Returned tender token of love (4)
- The land transformed by Ali (5)
- External pursuit of the happy ending (4,5)
- Location for Hamlet relies on fashion (8)
- Clergyman takes time out to see father (5)
- Mountain woman who was tempted to take things easy (7)
- Fresh fruit not exported (4,3)
- A number possibly listen to the pulse (7)
- Indisposition of one in mental breakdown (7)
- Hooded killer (5)
- Global degree of freedom (8)
- Unemployed crew with mischievous potentialities (4,5)
- Partly submerged by waves from a passing vessel (5)
- Awkward ones voting negatively (4)
- One who helps France to be given a face-lift (10)

DOWN

- Spot a traitor (4)
- Young officer is awkward but learns (9)
- A wild animal. But it's all right; a quiet one (5)
- A craft designed to beat the freeze (7)
- Teams of seven put out by the Spanish (7)
- Estimated trade turnover (5)
- A miserable and penitent condition (5,5)
- Prime minister? (8)
- Study the echo (10)
- Not the happiest inscriptions, yet they could be (8)
- With which one suffers a lack of balance (9)
- The peace subsequently includes the French (7)
- Its rate has to be adjusted for an entertainer (7)
- Rubbish found in the ship's bottom (5)
- Capital jewellery (5)
- Deity in authority (4)

Solutions Crossword 5267 Across: 1 Wearing, 5 Salon, 8 Derringer, 9 Opt, 10 Need, 12 Sea water, 14 Amend, 15 Pummel, 17 Content, 18 Grub, 21 El, 22 Emaciated, 24 Tryst, 25 Notated Down: 1 Widen, 2 Air, 3 Ibis, 4 Gagged, 5 Screws up, 6 Lion tamer, 7 Natural, 11 Eternally, 13 Adherent, 14 Ancient, 16 Strain, 19 Bides, 20 Lift, 23 Totem.

OVER THE HEDGE by Michael Fry & T Lewis



CALVIN & HOBBES by Bill Watterson



MARVIN by Tom Armstrong



JUMBLED WORDS

Given below are four jumbled words. Solve the jumbles to make proper words and move them to the respective squares below. Select the letters in the shaded squares and jumble them to get the answer for the given quiz.

Lettin' the _____ is a whole lot easier 'n puttin' it back in. - Will Rogers (3,5,3,3)



SUDOKU 5450

Difficulty Level 3
Instructions
To solve a Sudoku puzzle, every digit from 1 to 9 must appear in each of the nine vertical columns, in each of the nine horizontal rows and in each of the nine boxes.



Difficulty Level
1s = Very easy; 2s = Easy;
3s = Medium; 4s = Hard;
5s = Very Hard;
6s = Genius

SOLUTION SUDOKU 5449



आयुष्मान भारत हरियाणा

Ayushman Bharat Haryana

Ayushman Kendra, Distt. Faridabad (121001) HR

PUBLIC NOTICE

नागरिक अस्पताल, फरीदाबाद

विषय:- आयुष्मान भारत मित्र भर्ती सम्बन्धी सार्वजनिक सूचना।

आम जनता को सूचित किया जाता है कि नागरिक अस्पताल, फरीदाबाद में 1, बल्लगढ़ में 2 सी एच सी थंडी कलां 1 पी एच सी सीकरी-1, पी एच सी पट्टैदा खुर्द-1, सी एच सी पाली-1, पी एच सी मोहना-1, पी एच सी फेटेहपुर तगा-1, पी एच सी दालपुर-1, पी एच सी अनंगपुर-1, पी एच सी छायराता-1, सी एच सी तिगां-1, सी एच सी कोराली-1, पी एच सी चत्ता-1, पी एच सी फेटेहपुर खिल्लीच 1 वी पी एच सी थंडी-1 में आयुष्मान मित्र की (पार्ट ईम) की नियुक्ति की जानी है जिसके लिए प्रार्थी की शोधता निम्न प्रकार से है।

Sr. No.	Post Name	Post	Reservation Category
1	Aysuhman Mitra	17	Gen-7, Gen-(ESM)-2, BCB-2, SC-2, BCA-1, SC(ESM)-1, BCA(ESM)-1, EWS-1

1. Graduate from recognized university
2. Ayushman mitra's Training Course from (SkillIndia.gov.in)
3. Computer Knowledge with MS Office and Internet portals.
4. Knowledge of Hindi, English & Local Language.
5. Age limit and Reservation as per Haryana Govt. Rule & Guidelines

Pay: The monthly remuneration Rs.500/- of PMAMS including fixed component and case-based incentive of Rs.50/- per successful Claim Process of TMS.

इच्छुक उमीदवार अपने आवेदन पर दिनांक 25 जनवरी 2024 शाम 05:00 बजे तक सिविल सर्जन, कार्यालय में कमरा नं 1 से फार्म लेकर अपने दस्तावेजों सहित कराया न्युनिक्षित करे।

हस्ता. —
सिविल सर्जन
फरीदाबाद

24362



STATE BANK OF INDIA



E-AUCTION NOTICE

Stressed Assets Recovery Branch, 2nd Floor, 2-Tilak Marg..

Near National P.G. College, Lucknow-226001.

E-mail : sbi05178@sbi.co.in

Date & Time of E-Auction: 28.02.2024 & Time:300 minutes from 11:00 A.M to 04:00 P.M

with unlimited extension of 10 minutes each "APPENDIX-IV-A"

E-Auction Sale Notice for Sale of Immovable Assets under the Securitization and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 read with provision to Rule 8(6) of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002

Notice is hereby given to the public in general and in particular to the Borrower(s) and Guarantor(s) that the below described immovable property mortgaged/charged to the Secured Creditor, the constructive possession of which has been taken by the Authorised Officer SBI, SARL LUCKNOW Secured Creditor, will be sold on "As is where is", "As is what is", and "Whatever there is" on 28.02.2024. For recovery of amount due from borrower details mentioned below, the reserve price and earnest money deposit are as under. EMD amount to be deposited on or before commencement of E-Auction.

Name and Address of the Borrowers/ Mortgagors/Guarantors : 1. M/s Harsh Export India 2/132, Sadhwara Street Farukhabad-209625 2. Shri Ravindra Mani Sadh S/o Sh. Harsh Mani Sadh Proprietor/Guarantor/Mortgagor M/s Harsh Export India D-171, First Floor, Near Railway Station, Lajpat Nagar South Delhi-110024 3. Smt.Prem Nandini Sadh W/o Ravindra Mani Sadh Guarantor/Mortgagor M/s Harsh Export India, D-179, First Floor, Near Railway Station, Lajpat Nagar South Delhi-110024

Description of the properties Mortgaged : All that part & parcel of Multistoried Residential Property situated at D-179 First Floor near Railway Crossing Lajpat Nagar Delhi Area 100.00 Sq. Yards (83.64 Sq.Mtr) in the name of Prem Nandini Sadh

Sale Deed dated 20.04.2007 Book No.1 Volume No.7214 Page 192-200 Serial No.4564 registered at the office of Sub Registrar-V New Delhi

Bounded by : East- Other Property, West- Flat No.D-188, North- Main Road, South- Service Lane.

O/s Amount : Rs. 67,91,100.00 as on 07.06.2023 + Further Interest, (expenses and other charges, The amount deposit towards Banks Dues, if any, to be reduced from total dues, if applicable.)

Reserve Price & Earnest Money : Rs. 1,53,00,000.00 & Rs. 15,30,000.00

#Encumbrances- not known to Bank.

For detailed terms & conditions of the sale, please refer to the link provided in State Bank of India, SARL, Lucknow (Secured Creditor) website: website i.e www.sbi.co.in & <https://www.mstccommerce.com/auctionhome/>

To the best of knowledge and information of the Authorised Officer, there is no encumbrance on the property/ies. However, the intending bidders should make their own independent inquiries regarding the encumbrances, title of property/ies put on auction and claims/rights/dues/affecting the property, prior to submitting their bid. The e-Auction advertisement does not constitute and will not be deemed to constitute any commitment or any representation of the bank. The property is being sold will all the existing and future encumbrances whether known or unknown to the bank. The Authorised Officer/Secured Creditor shall not be responsible in any way for any third party claims/rights/dues. The sale shall be subject to rules/conditions prescribed under the Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of security Interest Act, 2002.

Note: Interested bidder may deposit Pre-Bid EMD with MSTC before the close of e-Auction. Credit of Pre-bid EMD shall be given to the bidder only after receipt of payment in MSTC's Bank account and update of such information in the e-auction website. This may take some time as per banking process and hence bidders, in their own interest, are advised to submit the pre-bid EMD amount well in advance to avoid any last minute problem."

Dated: 22.01.2024 Place: Lucknow Sd/- Authorized Officer, State Bank of India

DAY TODAY

BY PETER VIDAL

ARIES (Mar 21 - Apr 20)

You're bound to be working too hard at the moment. Even if you are not currently in employment, there is every chance that you will be putting extra energy into voluntary activities. Somehow you just have to keep going. But don't wear yourself out.

TAURUS (Apr 21 - May 21)

All the signs point to increased activity at work, and possibly a minor crisis prompted by a breakdown of communication. One of your jobs will be to clear up the mess left by inconsiderate colleagues. In fact, you're soon going to be given an amazing second chance.

GEMINI (May 22 - June 21)

An old romantic attachment may have a beneficial legacy in your work, perhaps because you're now more dependent on social contacts for professional advancement. You can only gain from learning to cope with adverse circumstances. You'll end up wiser and stronger.

CANCER (June 22 - July 23)

Fraught conditions in private and public life make this a time of tension, although you'd be making a mistake if you overlooked the positive aspects. Those periods of most productive change often prove to be difficult, but the end results will be worth it.

LEO (July 24 - Aug 23)

Are your stars positive? Well, yes, in general they are. So that should please you. It should also be enough to give you the extra confidence needed to promote your assets and advantages. There'll be a few difficulties, but they're in the background and easy to handle.

VIRGO (Aug 24 - Sep 23)

You may be tempted into expensive purchases, but make sure you only spend what you can afford. Check all the paperwork is in order as you might decide to demand your money back quite soon. You've got a lot on your plate this week, but you'll be putting most effort into your relationships.

PISCES (Feb 20 - Mar 20)

Your general approach should be solid, businesslike and thoroughly efficient. Do you think you can manage this? If not, you may be in trouble. But, if you deal with every single tiny detail you will doubtless come out well on top. It's all in the small print.

LIBRA (Sep 24 - Oct 23)

Partners may not agree with some of your plans, but there's no reason why you shouldn't go it alone. Keep friends happy by fulfilling social obligations and being totally reliable. Venus, your planetary ruler, is linking up with romantic positions.

SCORPIO (Oct 24 - Nov 23)

Be careful not to laugh at others because you could also be caught out, at least in one area of your life. Travel plans could be subject to irritating delays, but nothing too serious. A secret plan will also be thrown into reverse, so keep smiling.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov 24 - Dec 22)

A busy day is likely to be filled up with the work you allow yourself to be sucked into other people's problems. Children and close friends will expect you to perform favours and clear up tricky situations. That's quite a good development in many senses, for small jobs will take your mind off major issues.

CAPRICORN (Dec 23 - Jan 20)

A domestic tiff may flare up during the day, but a brief argument could be a necessary step towards a balanced discussion on your family's future. It's possible that someone close to you has received some disappointing news, and in that case your job is to spread a little light.

AQUARIUS (Jan 21 - Feb 19)

Are your stars positive? Well, yes, in general they are. So that should please you. It should also be enough to give you the extra confidence needed to promote your assets and advantages. There'll be a few difficulties, but they're in the background and easy to handle.

PISCES (Feb 20 - Mar 20)

Your general approach should be solid, businesslike and thoroughly efficient. Do you think you can manage this? If not, you may be in trouble. But, if you deal with every single tiny detail you will doubtless come out well on top. It's all in the small print.

PROGRAMME FOR PREPARATION OF DRAFT ELECTORAL ROLLS OF MUNICIPAL COMMITTEE FARUKHNAGAR

State Election Commission Haryana has prescribed the following programme for preparation of ward wise and booth wise photo based electoral rolls in respect of all wards of the Municipal Council/Committee Farukhnagar intensively on the basis of Assembly electoral rolls finally published on 22.01.2024 (With supplements) with reference to 1st January 2024 as the Qualifying date.

- I. Distribution of electors of the respective area of the Legislative Assembly constituency finally published by the Election Commission of India to be finally published on 22.01.2024 and all supplements up to the date of this notification, into the ward of the above said Municipal Councils/Committees in the format attached at annexure- "A" as draft electoral rolls. (Rule-4).
- II. Publication of ward-wise draft electoral roll of Municipal Councils/Committees for inviting claims and objections [Rule-4(3)].
- III. Last date by which claims and objections shall be presented to the Revising Authority. [Rule-4(4)(i)]
- IV. Last date by which the claims and objections shall be disposed of by the Revising Authority [Rule 4 (4) (ii) to (vii)]
- V. Last date for filing appeals with the Deputy Commissioner against the orders of Revising Authority [Rule-4 (4) (viii)]
- VI. Last date for disposal of appeals by the Deputy Commissioner. [Rule 4(4) (ix)]
- VII. Finally publication of electoral roll. (Rule-4(4)(ix)]

For Deputy Commissioner Gurugram

24366/HRY

NORTH WESTERN RAILWAY G20

NOTICE OF INVITING E-TENDER

No. EL/118/4

