



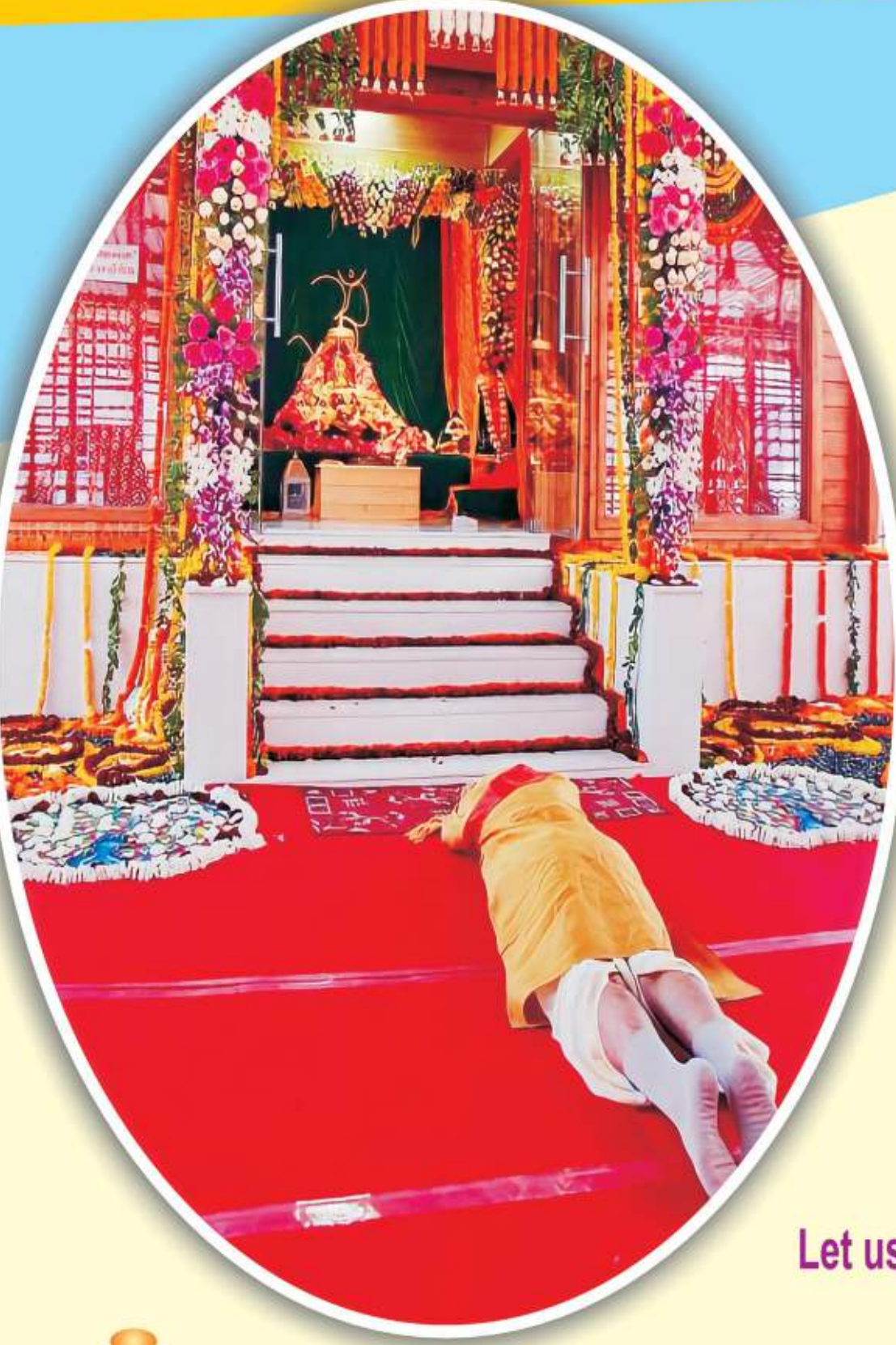
sunday pioneer

www.dailypioneer.com

Shri Ram Janmabhoomi Temple, Ayodhya

Ramlalla Pran-Pratishtha Ceremony

Paush Shukla Dwadashi, Vikrami Samvat 2080
Monday, 22 January 2024, Time 12:20 pm



Honourable Presence

Mahant Nritya Gopaldas Ji Maharaj

President, Shri Ram Janmabhoomi Teerth Kshetra

Honourable Narendra Bhai Modi Ji

Prime Minister, Government of India

Dr. Mohanrao Bhagwat Ji

Sarsanghchak, Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh

Anandiben Patel Ji

Governor, Uttar Pradesh

Yogi Adityanath Ji Maharaj

Chief Minister, Uttar Pradesh

Saints & Seers of about 125 Bhartiya
Traditions and 2500 Dignitaries
from various fields will
grace the occasion

Let us also make our Village / Locality / Colony Ram Mayi.

Rejoice and Welcome Ram Lalla

By Singing Auspicious Songs

By Colouring Bharat Ram Mayi

By Lighting Diyas At Our Doorstep In These Historic Moments

- Run a cleanliness campaign at your nearest temple from Makar Sankranti to 22nd January.
- On 22nd January, collectively perform Ram Naam Sankirtan in a temple near you.
- Watch the Pran Pratishtha program collectively by installing a TV/LED/Screen at your nearest temple.
- After Pran Pratishtha, distribute Prasad in your village/colony/locality.
- On the day of Pran Pratistha in the evening, light at least five diyas at the doorstep of your house and workplace/shop.
- After Pran Pratistha Day, visit Ayodhya at your convenient time for Darshan.

Regd.No.76/1683

PAN - AAZTS6197B

Shri Ram Janmabhoomi Teerth Kshetra

Camp Office: Mandir Nirman Karyashala, Ramghat Chauraha, Ayodhya-224123



Importers urged to utilise VPA to expand businesses

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Durgesh Kumar Dubey, Deputy Chairperson of the Visakhapatnam Port Authority (VPA), has urged the importers and exporters affiliated with the AP Chambers to seize the available opportunity.



During the event, B Ratna Sekhar, Traffic Manager at VPA, delivered an exclusive and comprehensive presentation highlighting the various developmental and infrastructural features of Vizag Port.

Vizag Port's improved operational efficiencies and its diverse facilities for handling various commodities, including liquids, and fresh and frozen food.

The event saw the presence of AP Chambers Executive Vice President L Raghuram Reddy, General Secretary B Raja Sekhar, Past President G Sambasiva Rao, APEDA Regional Manager RP Naidu, AP Textile Mills Association Chairman P Koti Rao, President AP Food Processing Industries Federation K Ramalinga Reddy, India Tobacco Association President M Venkateswara Rao, Chillies Exporters Association India president V Sambasiva Rao, Cotton Association President P Raghava Rao and Secretary K Rama Rao, Visakha Container Terminal Ltd. Head Sudeep Chakraborty, and other distinguished personalities.

No e-office services for 6 days in AP

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Chief Secretary KS Jawahar Reddy has said that the e-office services in all government departments in the State will not work from January 25 to 31 due to upgrade work.

Jawahar Reddy has ordered that the top officials of the respective departments should take necessary measures to ensure the smooth functioning of the offices in these six days.

Jagan banking on castes to come back to power

Bets big on voters, not party leaders

SNCN ACHARYULU ■ HYDERABAD

The forthcoming Andhra Pradesh Assembly elections are creating more interest due to the policies of major political parties. The Chief Minister who is the president of the YSR Congress Party (YSRCP) is making drastic changes among sitting MLAs and MPs for the coming Assembly and Lok Sabha elections.



Meanwhile, the TDP-Jana Sena alliance is banking on the weakening of the YSR Congress. The alliance thinks with many sitting MLAs and MPs leaving the YSR Congress it is becoming weak.

In addition to this while selecting candidates Jagan is giving importance to majority castes in all Assembly constituencies. This shows that Jagan is banking on voters and castes to ensure his party's victory.

Bangla team lauds natural farming practices in AP

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

A delegation from Bangladesh, currently on a visit to the Eluru district, commended the proactive measures taken by the State government in adopting Nature Farming through the Rythu Sadhikaraa Samstha.



During their four-day tour of the State, on the second day (Saturday), the team explored Janardhanavaram, engaging with Agricultural Officers and practitioners of Nature Farming.

SVBC to provide live telecast of Ayodhya temple consecration

PNS ■ TIRUMALA

The consecration ceremony of Ram Mandir in Ayodhya is scheduled for January 22, between 11:30 am and 12:30 pm. Sri Venkateswara Bhakti Channel, under the auspices of TTD, will broadcast the Vedic and spiritual rituals in the Ayodhya temple on its Tamil, Kannada, and Hindi channels, as well as on the SVBC Telugu YouTube channel.

The live telecast of the consecration ceremony events in Ayodhya will be available on SVBC Telugu channel until noon. Following that, the Tirumala Srivari Kalyanam will be broadcast live as usual from noon onwards.

YSRCP govt committed to welfare of artistes: Roja

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Minister for Tourism and Culture RK Roja distributed identity cards for artistes which was for the first time after the bifurcation of the united Andhra Pradesh state.



She underscored the government's dedication to the welfare of artists, particularly those involved in cultural celebrations.

Minister Roja, the chief guest of the programme, expressed her satisfaction in being part of the programme, and emphasised the historical significance of providing identity cards to artists across the State.

Minister Roja, herself an artist, spoke about her commitment to addressing the concerns of fellow artists since assuming office. Highlighting the government's implementation of Navaratna schemes for artists, Minister Roja urged artists to support their government and encouraged artists to actively apply for identity cards through village/ward secretariats and volunteers, emphasizing the ongoing nature of the process.

Culture Commission, expressed gratitude on behalf of all artists, recognizing the historic nature of providing identity cards. City Mayor, Rayana Bhagyalakshmi, State Creativity and Culture Commission Chairperson Vangapandu Usha, Visual Arts Academy Chairperson K Satya Shailaja, Sahitya Academy Chairperson Srilakshmi, Sangeetha Nritya Academy Chairperson P Sirisha, Science & Technology Academy Chairperson T Prabhavati, and Language Authority Members Mastanamma and State Culture Department CEO Mallikharjuna Rao.

Treat women with utmost respect: Judge

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

In a resounding call for creating a safe and empowered environment for women, District Justice Alapati Giridhar on Saturday urged district officials to support and promote their rights.



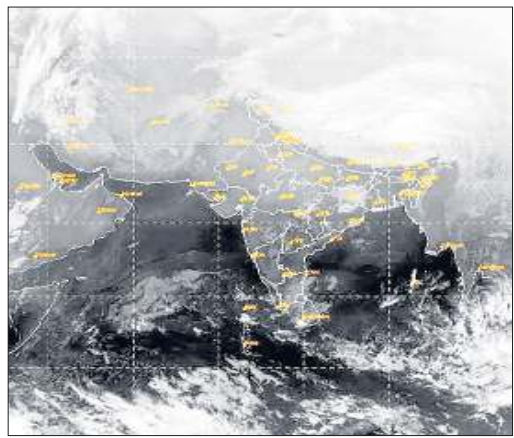
The conference, organized by the District Legal Service Association, brought together legal experts, government officials, private sector representatives, and other stakeholders to shed light on the provisions of the Act and its crucial role in safeguarding women's dignity and professional rights.

within offices, aiming to equip every employee with the knowledge to prevent and address instances of harassment. Highlighting the need for a collective effort, the Judge emphasised the responsibility of every individual to create a supportive and empowering environment for women.

Moderate rain likely in north coastal AP

PNS ■ GUNTUR

Light to moderate rainfall is likely at isolated locations in North Coastal Andhra Pradesh from Sunday to next Wednesday, as indicated by the Meteorological Centre's latest report on Saturday.



The forecast suggests dry weather prevailing in South Coastal Andhra Pradesh and Rayalaseema over the next seven days, with North Coastal Andhra Pradesh experiencing dry conditions for the next 24 hours.

The minimum temperature dropped to 17 degrees Celsius in Aroyavaram, Rayalaseema, during the night between Friday and today, according to the report.

Ambedkar statue helps Jagan...

Continued from Page 3

Chief Minister Jagan Mohan Reddy articulated his vision to transform Andhra Pradesh into an egalitarian society, following in the footsteps of Dr BR Ambedkar.

Chief Minister Jagan Mohan Reddy, drawing ire from Dalit and downtrodden leaders. Some Dalits continue to criticise Chandrababu for his comments against a section of people during his tenure.

the unveiling of Dr. Ambedkar's statue demonstrated the Chief Minister's solidarity with Dalits and the downtrodden. Dr Praveen commended Jagan for his commitment to social justice, citing the appointment of Deputy CMs from all communities.

Today Almanac section providing weather forecasts, religious events, and utility information for Vijayawada.

'Refrain from....' article discussing the ministry's flagging of the relevant portions of the Norms of Journalistic Conduct.

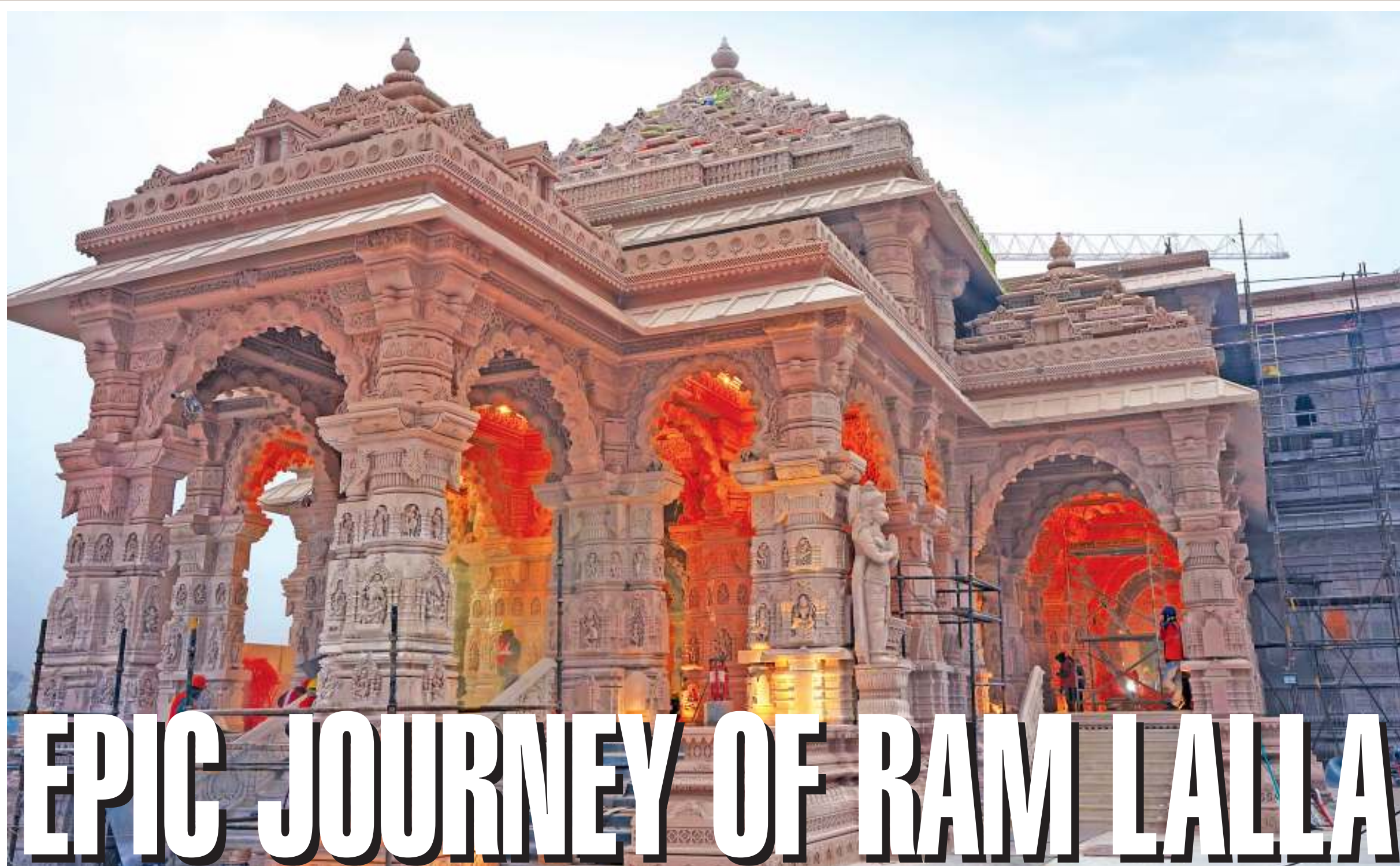
Modi takes holy dip... article reporting on the PM's visit to the 22 Theerthas in the temple complex.

Rs 10k cr needed every... article discussing the need for additional polling and security personnel for EVMs.

YS Sharmila... article discussing the political situation and Sharmila's role in the Congress party.

Although every possible care and caution has been taken to avoid errors or omissions, this publication is being sold on the condition and understanding that information given in this publication is merely for reference and must not be taken as having authority of or binding in any way on the writers, editors, publishers, and printers and sellers who do not owe any responsibility for any damage or loss to any person, a purchaser of this publication or not for the result of any action taken on the basis of this work.

"As different streams having different sources all mingle their waters in the sea, so different tendencies, various though they appear, crooked or straight, all lead to God"
— Swami Vivekananda



Chronicling the journey from Rath Yatra to consecration, **BISWAJEET BANERJEE** captures the perseverance, struggle, and unyielding commitment of leaders who shaped the Ram Mandir movement

The journey towards the consecration of Lord Ram in Ayodhya on January 22 is a testament to a five-century-long arduous struggle. This historic moment, marked by the completion of the grand Ram temple, is the culmination of a tumultuous saga characterised by disputes, violence, and prolonged legal battles. The path to this monumental achievement was paved by the unwavering perseverance of devotees and a landmark court ruling that resolved long standing conflicts. The Ram Janmabhoomi struggle had its roots deeply embedded in history, with the dispute over the site being a focal point for centuries. It revolved around the belief that the Babri Masjid was constructed on the birthplace of Lord Ram, becoming a flashpoint for communal tensions and triggering a series of events that defined the course of the struggle. The perseverance of the devotees emerged as a driving force that sustained the movement across generations. The unwavering faith in Ayodhya as the sacred birthplace of Lord Ram fueled the determination of those involved in the movement. Over decades, they encountered challenges ranging from political opposition to societal discord, yet their commitment remained steadfast. The movement also witnessed the instrumental role played by key figures who became central to its narrative. These individuals not only dedicated their lives to the cause but also navigated the intricacies and challenges of the struggle. Their leadership, often in the face of adversity, was crucial in steering the movement towards its ultimate goal. A landmark court ruling in 2019 provided a decisive resolution to the legal disputes surrounding the site. The judgment acknowledged the historical and religious significance of the land, paving the way for the construction of the Ram temple. This legal victory marked a turning point in the struggle, offering a path for reconciliation and unity. As Ayodhya prepares for the consecration of the Ram temple, it stands as a symbol of triumph over adversity and a testament to the indomitable spirit of those who dedicated their lives to the cause. The

completion of the majestic temple signifies not only a religious milestone but also reflects the resilience and determination that shaped the history of the Ram Janmabhoomi struggle. The saga witnessed significant contributors who played pivotal roles in shaping the movement and steering it towards success. Among them are key figures whose journeys reflect the intricacies and challenges faced during this transformative period.

**LAL KRISHNA ADVANI
RATH YATRA ARCHITECT**

The Rath Yatra led by former Deputy Prime Minister Lal Krishna Advani in 1984 is widely regarded as a watershed moment in the Ram temple movement. In the aftermath of Prime Minister Indira Gandhi's assassination, Advani's Rath Yatra became a significant catalyst, solidifying the roots of the movement. Despite the BJP winning only two seats in the 1984 Lok Sabha elections, Advani assumed leadership, emphasising Hindutva policies. Under his guidance, the BJP included the goal of building the Ram temple in its manifesto. In 1990, Advani announced the Rath Yatra from Somnath in Gujarat to Ayodhya in Uttar Pradesh. The journey, filled with fervent support, encountered obstacles when Lalu Prasad, then Chief Minister of Bihar, arrested Advani. Nevertheless, the Rath Yatra had already set the movement in motion, becoming a defining moment in the history of the Ram temple struggle.

**MURLI MANOHAR JOSHI
THE TORCHBEARER**

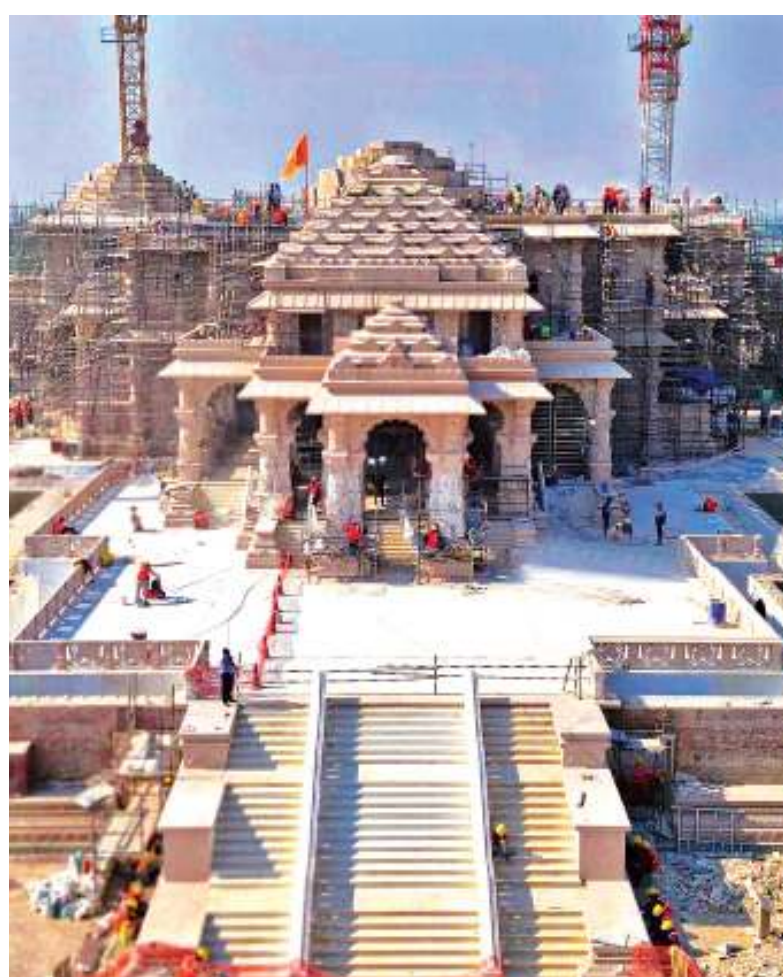
After Advani, Murl Manohar Joshi emerged as a significant leader actively involved in the Ram temple movement. Present during the demolition of the disputed structure in Ayodhya, Joshi played a crucial role in shaping the movement's strategies. His involvement extended to studying every aspect related to the Ram Mandir movement, contributing to meticulous planning and implementation. Joshi's influence reached a peak during a meeting held in Lucknow in December 1992, where he urged people to go to Ayodhya the next day. His resolute stance, expressed in statements like "there is no power that can stop the construction of the Ram temple," underscored his commitment to the

AS AYODHYA PREPARES FOR THE CONSECRATION OF THE RAM TEMPLE, IT STANDS AS A SYMBOL OF TRIUMPH OVER ADVERSITY AND A TESTAMENT TO THE INDOMITABLE SPIRIT OF THOSE WHO DEDICATED THEIR LIVES TO THE CAUSE. THE COMPLETION OF THE MAJESTIC TEMPLE IS NOT ONLY A RELIGIOUS MILESTONE BUT ALSO A REFLECTION OF THE RESILIENCE AND DETERMINATION THAT SHAPED THE HISTORY OF THE RAM JANMABHOOMI STRUGGLE

cause. Joshi's political career included serving as an MP from various constituencies, including Varanasi, Allahabad (now Prayagraj), and Kanpur.

**KALYAN SINGH
UNWAVERING COMMITMENT**

In 1991-92, at the peak of the Ram Mandir movement, then UP Chief Minister Kalyan Singh played a crucial role in galvanising Ram devotees. Initially expected to refrain from participating in the yatra to avoid potential arrest, Singh surprised everyone by joining the procession near Hanumangarhi. His impassioned address emphasised the relentless pursuit of building the Ram temple, further energising the movement. Despite the movement's success, Kalyan Singh faced political repercussions and lost his position due to his unwavering



commitment to the cause. Unfortunately, he passed away in August 2021, missing the consecration of the Ram temple.

**VINAY KATIYAR
BAJRANG DAL COMMANDER**

In 1984, Vinay Katiyar assumed the role of the first president of Bajrang Dal, formed for the Ram Mandir movement. Tasked with rallying people for the cause, Katiyar travelled from village to village, organising meetings, and garnering support. These efforts bore fruit as, under Vinay Katiyar's leadership, Bajrang Dal successfully connected people across the country for the Ram Mandir movement. His political stature grew post-movement, leading him to become the National General Secretary of the BJP. He served as an elected Member of

Parliament thrice from the Faizabad (Ayodhya) Lok Sabha seat.

**UMA BHARTI
THE FIREBRAND LEADER**

Known for her fiery speeches during times of crisis, Uma Bharti played a pivotal role in the Ram Janmabhoomi movement. Post the movement, Bharti remained active in politics, serving as a minister in the central government of Atal Bihari Vajpayee and Narendra Modi. She also held the position of CM of Madhya Pradesh from 2003 to 2004.

**SADHVI RITAMBHARA
VOICE OF PASSION**

As the second firebrand woman leader of the Ram Mandir movement, Sadhvi Ritambhara's impassioned speeches resonated across the country. Despite her withdrawal from active politics, she

continues her spiritual journey, running an ashram named Vatsalya Gram in Vrindavan.

**ASHOK SINGHAL
CHIEF ARCHITECT**

Ashok Singhal, the international president of Vishwa Hindu Parishad for 20 years, is considered one of the chief architects of the Ram Janmabhoomi movement. His strategic planning and leadership were instrumental in shaping the organisation of the parliament held at Vigyan Bhawan in Delhi in 1984. Singhal's role extended to leading the Kar Sevaks who demolished the disputed structure in 1992. He passed away on November 17, 2015.

**RAM AND SHARAD KOTTHI
SAFFRON FLAG BEARERS**

Real brothers from Kolkata, Ram Kumar Kothri, and Sharad Kumar Kothri played significant roles in the movement. They were part of the initial group of Karsevaks in 1990, raising the saffron flag on the disputed structure. Tragically, both brothers were shot during the kar seva on November 2, 1990, becoming martyrs and inspiring a surge of support for the movement.

**CHAMPAT RAI
BEHIND-THE-SCENES ARCHITECT**

Champat Rai, the General Secretary of Ram Mandir Trust, worked diligently behind the scenes, gathering documentary evidence related to the Ram temple even before the demolition of the disputed structure. Rai's meticulous efforts included studying thousands of documents, reading scriptures, and providing crucial evidence to lawyers fighting the legal battle for Ram Janmabhoomi.

**PRAVEEN TOGADIA
FIREBRAND VHP LEADER**

Alongside Vinay Katiyar, Praveen Togadia actively contributed to the Ram Mandir movement as a leader associated with Vishwa Hindu Parishad. Recognised for his dynamic speeches, Togadia played a significant role in rallying public support and fostering enthusiasm during the movement. Although currently not affiliated with Vishwa Hindu Parishad, Togadia's legacy remains connected to the fervor of the Ram Janmabhoomi movement.

A forgotten war: Looking back, looking forward

The Russia-Ukraine war, which began in February 2022, is about to enter its third year. When Russia invaded Ukraine, not even those within President Vladimir Putin's inner circle believed that the war would last for such an extended period.

Why has the West provoked Russia? Can Putin reshape his image as a strongman after the bloody war? Is Volodymyr Zelenskyy a winner? It is certain that, under the leadership of the US, the West has been attempting to encircle post-Cold War Russia. Putin, being a former KGB man, is sensitive to the limits of security and the opportune time to intervene. Russia can't be further bullied by the West. The reason behind this is that the West, especially the US, has its own internal problems and external responsibilities.

For Putin, losing is not an option. He is desperate to win not only against Ukraine but also against the West. As temperatures drop to freezing points, forces on both sides are gearing up for hardened battles.

For Zelenskyy, the war, despite being a significant financial burden and humanitarian crisis, hardly makes any difference. The reason is that Ukraine, as a frontline state to Russia, has been reeling under the threat of war for years. Ukrainians know what they are destined for; they have to fight for their survival against the onslaught of a Russian invasion, whether today or tomorrow. The international community still recalls what Zelenskyy aired just before the onset of the war in 2022. He warned the West not to create panic about the buildup of Russian forces on the border of Ukraine. However, US President Joe Biden then clearly stated that he believed "Russia could attack its neighbour next month." Ultimately, Putin did attack Ukraine, signaling his intention to dislodge and denazify the country. A war-monger from the beginning, Putin employed numerous narratives to justify his invasion of Ukraine. Initially, he claimed that Ukraine's government is "openly neo-Nazi" and "pro-Nazi," controlled by the "Little Nazis."

A top Russian lawmaker then asserted that President Biden and American officials are responsible for the Nazification of Ukraine and



should be tried before a court. Another lawmaker called for the establishment of a "modern analogy to the Nuremberg Tribunal" as Moscow geared up to denazify Ukraine. In summary, the language used by various Russian top leaders, officials, pro-Kremlin journalists, writers, and especially Putin himself, was absolutely shocking. Clearly, the term Nazi was an unbelievable assertion about a country whose leader, Zelenskyy, is Jewish. Interestingly, just before the war's onset last fall, Zelenskyy had passed a law combating antisemitism in his country. Certainly, the war between Russia and Ukraine is a battle of wills and might. The current conflict, propelled by Putin's belligerence and arrogance, caught the attention of the media showman Zelenskyy, who had scarcely understood how to address and when to convince the major world powers to

stop the Muscular Man of Moscow. By the time Kiev took action, Moscow was already well ahead in launching the invasion, ostensibly in the name of protecting the ethnic Russian population in the Donbas region. Indeed, Putin had planned it long in advance. According to many experts, he remained quiet for nearly eight years after the annexation of Crimea from February to March 2014. As John Simpson rightly said, "The annexation of Crimea was the smoothest invasion of modern times. It was over before the outside world realised it had even started." The occupation of Crimea had occurred entirely by stealth. Putin is a world-class strategist, a true "Spy Guy". On many occasions, the West had miscalculated his moves, and he, too, had failed to understand how the US and its allies in Europe might react to what he had been doing overtly or covertly.

When the current war had just begun, both Bill Powell and Naved Jamali strongly argued that "Putin has never lost a war." They further pointed out that "during past conflicts in Chechnya, Georgia, Syria, and Crimea, over his two decades in power, Putin succeeded by giving his armed forces clear, achievable military objectives that would allow him to declare victory credibly in the eyes of the Russian people and a wary watching world. His latest initiative in Ukraine is unlikely to be any different." So, these are the strong credentials of Putin, who has delivered significant victories to his fellow countrymen since his accession to power in August 1999, when the first President of the Russian Federation, Boris Yeltsin, entrusted him with the job of Prime Minister after the tumultuous breakdown of the erstwhile USSR. The political atmosphere in Russia at that time led to

Yeltsin's resignation, paving the way for Putin to take over as the Acting President of the country. Subsequently, he won the presidential election in March 2000, becoming the second President of the Russian Federation. Since then, he has been the President of the country, except for a full term from 2008-2012 when his friend Dmitry Medvedev occupied the post, simply because the Russian Constitution barred a person from remaining as President for a third consecutive term. However, this provision no longer exists (thanks to a referendum conducted in 2021), and Putin can continue to remain as President until 2036. Today, he is the longest-serving Russian leader since Joseph Stalin, who ruled the USSR from 1924 to 1953. This is how Putin has risen to the current rank and power. Washington needs to handle the former KGB man very

carefully. He is well-versed in all the routes and dangers that might emerge from the current war. An aging Biden and NATO members in Europe, not closely aligned (as many, like Germany, have definitive interests and dependence on Russia), may fail to check Putin's Kremlin this year in Ukraine. Yes, it is true that the offensive moves from both Ukraine and Russia have failed to attain a decisive victory for either party throughout the year 2023. However, this has led to a narrative suggesting that the war has reached a stalemate. Given the current global focus on the Israel-Hamas conflict since October 7 of last year, discussions and efforts for an immediate solution to the situation in the contested Gaza Strip have taken precedence, pushing the Russia-Ukraine war to a backseat in global politics. The perception of a stalemate, debated by many strategic

experts, is flawed. The material and military advantage of both parties will determine the course of action this year. The West, especially the US (facing a presidential election on November 5), will face a challenging time, and the rest of Europe, particularly NATO members, will need to decide whether to provide substantial aid to Kiev for a credible offensive in 2025 against Moscow or concede an irrecoverable advantage to Putin. Putin is expecting and planning his grand strategies accordingly. However, a new strategy can protect the sovereign frontiers of Ukraine and prevent Russia from winning the war. Peace continues to elude Ukraine, with Russia on a warpath and Putin showing no inclination to negotiate. Since his entry into the Kremlin, Putin has been consistently opposed to the West. The futile goal of the West so far has been to defeat Russia and humiliate Putin, but this approach is no longer effective. Engagement with Russia by the West must be realistic and flexible, offering a sustainable guarantee that Russia's leadership is acknowledged, and further NATO expansion in Europe is halted to avoid encircling the country. It is time to address mutual interests, and Washington should adopt a forward-looking approach if Putin is willing to abandon his aggressive stance. Importantly, the West needs to understand that Putin and the Kremlin, under his leadership, do not speak for all Russian people, even though it may seem so for now. America should have learned by now how to navigate dealings with leaders like Putin. If Biden returns to power in 2025, he must remember that in Putin's unpredictable world, expecting the unexpected is always prudent. America should be realistic and agile in handling Putin to prevent further suffering akin to that of Zelenskyy. The world has witnessed enough bloodshed in the last three decades, and a significant portion of it can be attributed to Washington's miscalculations or misguided policy perspectives. While Putin is not solely to blame, America bears its share of responsibility for the current chaos.

(The writer is currently president of the Global Research Foundation)

Amid the Russia-Ukraine conflict's complexity, it is crucial for the West to adopt a pragmatic approach. Recognising Putin's strategies and prioritising mutual interests can potentially reshape the geopolitical landscape, preventing further bloodshed and fostering a path towards lasting stability.



MAKHAN SANKIA

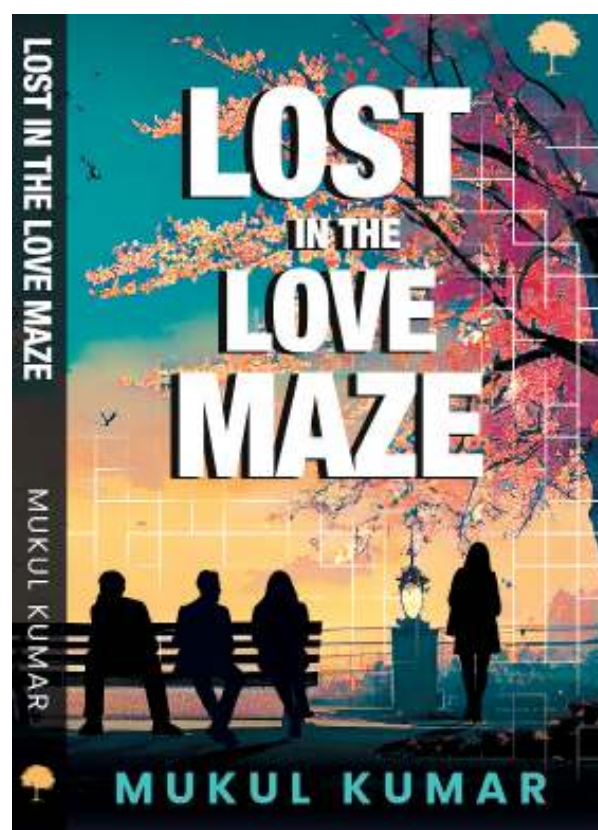
REVIEW

Navigating perpetual complexities of love

Crafting the narrative for the 2023 novel "Lost in the Love Maze," Mukul Kumar, a postmillennial writer, delves into the perpetual complexities of love. He emphasises commitment, seizing opportunities, and immersing in the space between conflicting interests and practices. The author skillfully dramatises contradictions within Mihir's character, addressing shyness and egoism, thereby adding dynamism and multidimensionality to his personality. Kumar's heightened awareness canonises the storyline, exploring internal conflicts, character development, and the potential for growth or transformation. This commitment to precision is evident in the author's exploration of themes such as identity, self-discovery, and the nuances of human behaviour. Kumar engages with cultural ramifications that contribute to the overwhelming separation of Jyoti and Mihir. Mukul skillfully dramatises the crises, vulnerabilities, and enduring efficacy of

commitment across aesthetic, ethical, political, filial, and religious dimensions. The author adopts a focus on poetic realism, exemplified through Mihir's dual dreams of becoming an IAS officer and a writer. This choice reflects the complexity of Mihir's aspirations and mirrors the multifaceted nature of human desires. Kumar's approach places emphasis on psychology and a broader exploration of the human fabric. The juxtaposition of bureaucratic ambition with the creative pursuit of writing highlights the tension between societal expectations and personal passion. Importantly, this poetic realism acknowledges the insights from modernism, learning from them rather than disregarding them. As a postmillennial writer, Kumar delves into the socio-cultural institutional structures of love, marriage, family, and caste. He navigates the difference between actual didactic institutions and the school of life through the "lived" realities in the creation and production of postmillennial

fiction. Jyoti's realisation of Mihir's melancholy suggests an underlying emotional struggle, possibly stemming from the conflict between conventional paths and unconventional aspirations. Mihir's analogy of life as a balloon with the potential to burst at any time conveys fragility and unpredictability, echoing existential themes. The reference to Albert Camus and absurdism adds a philosophical layer, deepening the thematic exploration of existential angst and the quest for purpose in the face of life's uncertainties. The writer shifts to relational aesthetics, turning away from utopianism and the aesthetics of confrontation towards an ethos of collaboration and dialogue. The struggles of characters to achieve meaningful empathetic connections challenge readers' assumptions. Characters like Jyoti and Mihir dislocate themselves outside narrow cultural models to imagine and maintain their empathies with others, challenging assumptions and embracing



collaborative approaches. They envision the experiences of the other while the writing seems to be in competition with reality.

Acknowledging Mihir's divided love and obligations to his parents and Jyoti initiates a nuanced exploration of conflicting

responsibilities. The clash between parental selflessness and Mihir's love creates a moral dilemma, urging readers to ponder the navigation of societal norms and personal fulfillment. Mihir's sacrifice for Jyoti, while recognising his parents' sacrifice, adds moral and philosophical dimensions, influencing characters' choices and the narrative trajectory. This prompts readers to consider implications and question expectations when pursuing happiness within the constraints of obligation and parental love. The character of Sheetal introduces another angle to the paradigm of narcissistic ego, deception, and manipulation to achieve one's goals, implying a strategic and opportunistic approach to interpersonal relationships. Sheetal, also the author's favorite, serves as a catalyst, highlighting the dual and contradictory aspects of human behaviour and tensions between genuine emotions and concerns, especially in the pursuit of love. This adds depth to the establishment of the moral

fabric for postmillennial readers. The line of argument in the novel unfolds as a character-driven chronicle, seamlessly blending the cultural backdrop into the lives of its protagonists. Mukul Kumar's emphasis on the complex fabric of human existence elevates aesthetic commitments and aspirations into a moral form, crafting a nuanced depiction of identity and otherness that resonates not only with 20th-century readers but also transcends its temporal boundaries to endure in the new millennium. The author has indeed intensified exploration and succeeded in infusing virtue into potentially repetitive and recycled anecdotes, transforming the work into a psychologically nuanced and socially detailed masterpiece. This transformation, deeply rooted in enduring beliefs about character, authenticity, and agency, broadens the range of perspectives offered to readers and leaves a compelling and enduring impression. "Lost in the Love Maze" manages to leave a lasting

imprint with its exploration of human complexities, poignant thematic depth, and Mukul Kumar's skilled portrayal of characters navigating the delicate balance between collective expectations from life and personal desires. Despite minor flaws, the novel succeeds in delivering a thought-provoking and emotionally resonant experience. (*Lost in the Love Maze*' author Mukul Kumar is a bureaucrat, novelist, and poet. He serves as an Indian Railway Traffic Service Officer and is currently posted in the Ministry of Railways. Mukul has received the National Award for outstanding service to the Indian Railways, the Bharat Nirman Award for literary excellence from the Bharat Nirman Foundation, and the Poorvanchal Gaurav Samman for his contributions to society as both a bureaucrat and a writer. His latest work is his fourth fiction title. The reviewer, Chetana Pokhriyal, is the Head of Department of English, Dean, School of Languages, Doon University, Dehradun)

