



# 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**

Sarsanghchalak, 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.





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MEMBERS IN NOVEMBER

**SPORTS 8**  
INDIA OUTCLASS  
BANGLADESH BY 84 RUNS

**AGENDA 9**  
EPIC JOURNEY OF  
RAM LALLA

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NEW DELHI, SUNDAY JANUARY 21, 2024; PAGES 12 ₹4

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## CAPSULE

### ED questions Soren in money laundering case

RANCHI: Sleuths of the Enforcement Directorate on Saturday questioned Jharkhand Chief Minister Hemant Soren at his official residence here in connection with a money laundering case linked to an alleged land scam.

### Will protect border with Myanmar: Shah

GUWAHATI: Home Minister Amit Shah on Saturday said the government will stop the free movement of people at the Myanmar border and will protect it like that of Bangladesh. Addressing the passing out parade of the first batch of five Assam Police Commando battalions, he said the Centre is rethinking the free-movement facility with Myanmar.

### ₹10,000 crore needed for EVMs for polls in one go: EC

NEW DELHI: The Election Commission would require an estimated ₹10,000 crore every 15 years to procure new EVMs if simultaneous polls are held for Lok Sabha and Assemblies. In a communication sent to the Centre, the EC noted that the shelf life of EVMs was 15 years.

# UNVEILED EYES OF RAM DRAW IRE

BISWAJEET BANERJEE ■  
AYODHYA

The chief priest of the Ram Lalla temple, Satyendra Das, has raised concerns about the appearance of pictures depicting the idol of Ram Lalla with uncovered eyes. Das said this is a violation of Hindu rituals, emphasising the need for an enquiry to identify and penalise the individual responsible for unveiling the eyes.

In explaining his stance, the chief priest outlined the customary procedure of installing the idol, which includes covering its eyes to maintain a veil until the consecration ceremony, known as Praan Pratisthaa. "The sanctum sanctorum is the designated space for this sacred installation. This is the only place where the eyes should be uncovered by removing the cloth," Das said. While admitting uncertainty about the authenticity of the images circulating in newspapers and on TV channels, Das asserted that any depiction of the idol with open eyes before the Praan Pratisthaa ceremony is inaccurate, as the idol assumes that form only during the consecration ritual. Expressing concern over the situation, the chief priest remarked, "If someone has removed the cloth from the eyes, then it should be investigated."

He referenced Hindu



scriptures, which strictly prohibit the removal of the cloth covering the eyes before the consecration ceremony. The eyes must remain covered throughout other preparatory rituals, including bathing, adornment, and offerings. A member of the Shri Ram Janmabhoomi Teertha Kshetra Trust had earlier informed that the eyes would be uncovered on January 22 during the "Netronmelan" ritual, involving the application of honey to a gold bar.

Continued on Page 4

## Stringent Bandobast in Ayodhya

PNS ■ AYODHYA

As the city of Ayodhya eagerly anticipates the historic Praan Pratisthaa ceremony at the new Ram Lalla temple on January 22, the administration has implemented stringent security measures by sealing the city's boundaries and restricting entry for outsiders and vehicles from January 20. Special Director General (Law and Order) Prashant Kumar underscored the importance of these measures, said, "No outsider will be allowed to enter the city from January 20." This decision is a critical component of the security plan to ensure the smooth

and secure conduct of the consecration ceremony, which is expected to draw a large congregation of devotees and spectators. Subsequently, the security cover for Prime Minister Narendra Modi during the coronation will be of the highest order, with a five-tier arrangement involving 550 commandos from the Anti-Terrorism Squad (ATS) and 35 SPG personnel already stationed in Ayodhya. An extensive security blueprint has been devised for the event, deploying over 30,000 personnel from various agencies, including civil police, with special attention given to the Prime Minister's security. The five-tier security cordon

is designed to create an impenetrable shield around the Prime Minister. The first tier will consist of SPG bodyguards armed with assault rifles, automatic guns, 17M revolvers, and other modern weaponry. The second layer will comprise SPG commandos, followed by the elite Black Cat commandos of the NSG taking charge in the third layer. ATS and other commandos will be strategically positioned. The fourth layer will include personnel from paramilitary forces, while the fifth and final layer will consist of civil police personnel responsible for securing the surroundings.

Continued on Page 4

## Centre issues warning against false propaganda

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Centre issued an advisory on Saturday to media outlets and social media platforms, cautioning them against publishing any false or manipulated content related to the January 22 Ram temple event in Ayodhya. The advisory, issued by the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, said it has observed unverified, provocative, and fake messages being spread, especially on social media, which could disturb communal harmony and public order. Ahead of the consecration of the idol of Ram Lalla in Ayodhya, many people have received fake messages related to VIP invitations, donation drives, and prasaad of the mega event. The advisory urged newspapers, private satellite TV channels, and publishers of news and current affairs on digital media to refrain from publishing and telecasting any content that may be false or manipulated or has the potential to disturb communal harmony.

Continued on Page 4

## PM Modi to reach Promised Land on Monday

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ LUCKNOW

Prime Minister Narendra Modi's highly anticipated visit to Ayodhya has experienced a minor schedule change. Originally planned for January 21, the visit is now rescheduled for January 22, during which the Prime Minister will spend approximately four hours in the sacred city. The Prime Minister is expected to arrive at Maharishi Valmiki International Airport at 10:30 am on January 22.



From there, he will proceed to the Ram temple complex, entering at 11 am. The visit is slated to last about three hours. During this time, the Prime Minister will inaugurate the statue of Jatayu, a significant character from the Ramayana, and perform a worship ceremony. After the inaugural rituals, the Prime Minister is scheduled to participate in the Praan Pratisthaa puja, a crucial consecration ceremony.

Continued on Page 4

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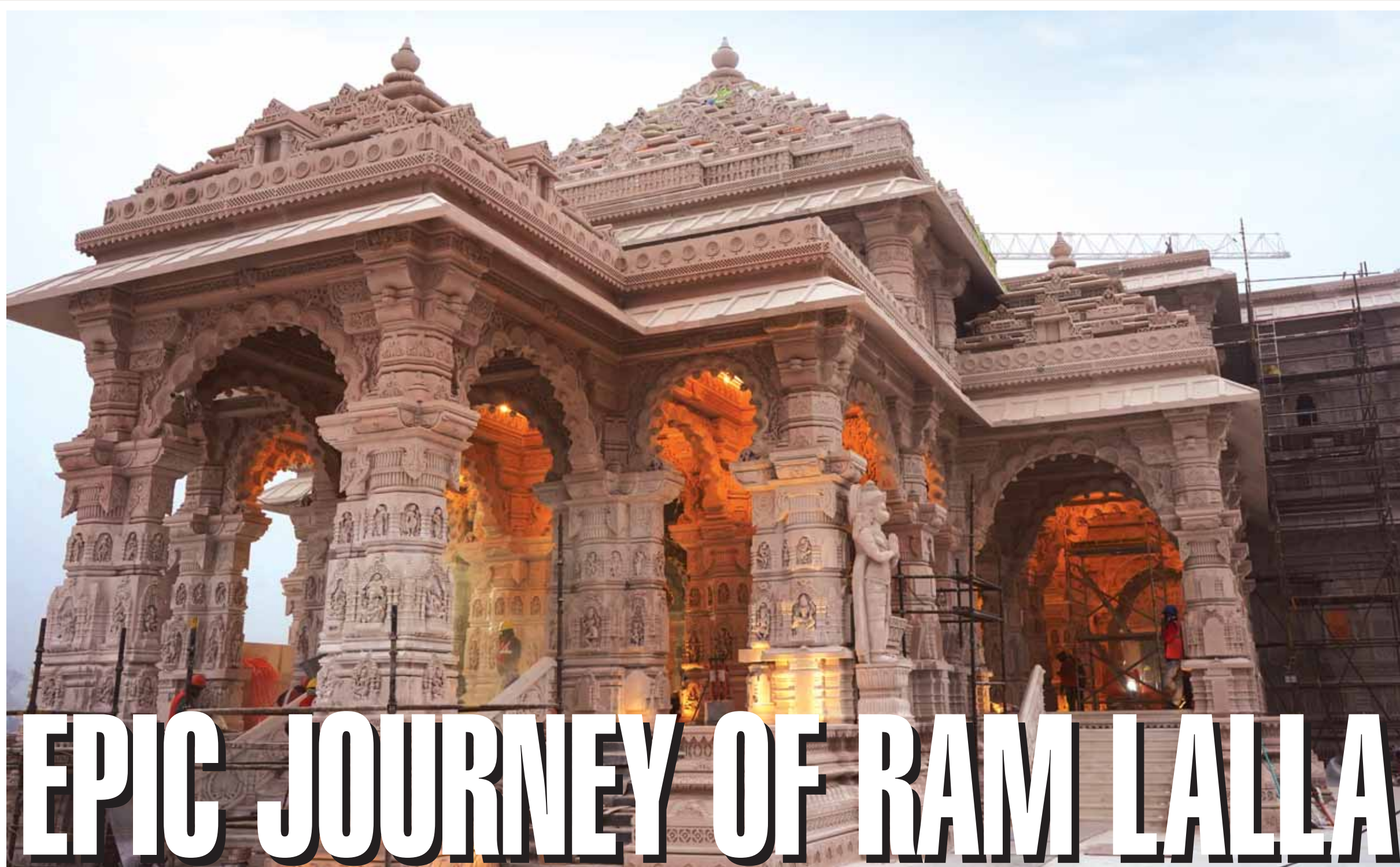








"As different streams having different sources all mingle their waters in the sea, so different tendencies, various though they appear, crooked or straight, all lead to God"  
— Swami Vivekananda



# EPIC JOURNEY OF RAM LALLA

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

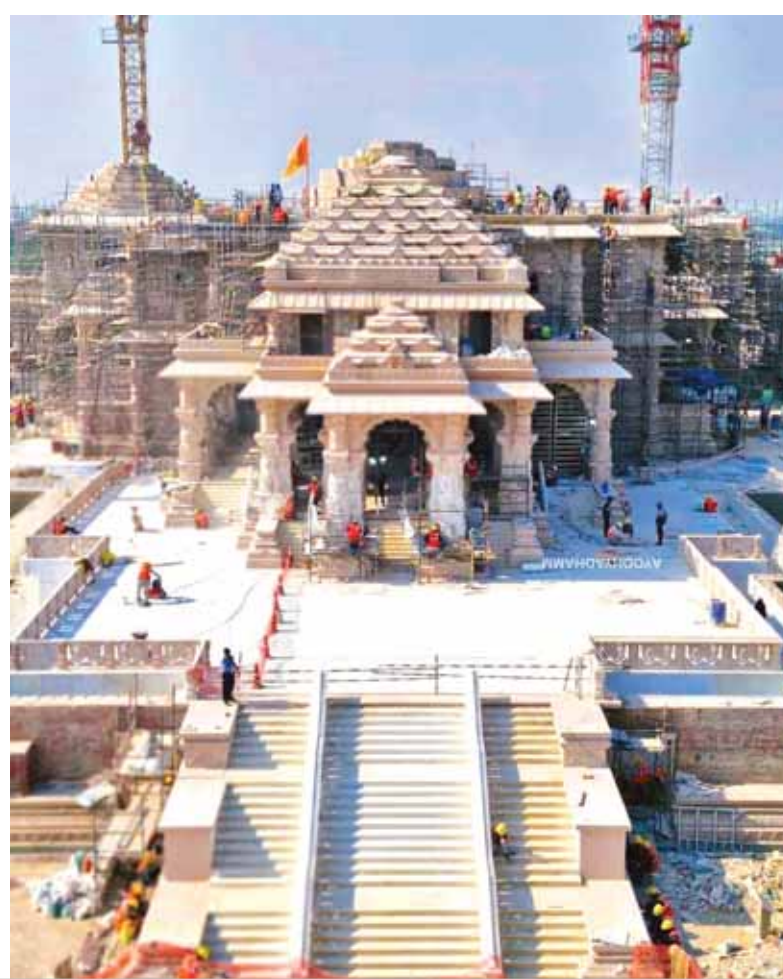
After Advani, Murl Manohar Joshi emerged as a significant leader actively involved in the Ram temple movement. Present during the demolition of the disputed structure in Ayodhya, Joshi played a crucial role in shaping the movement's strategies. His involvement extended to studying every aspect related 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

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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 movement, including 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 KOTHRI 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.



## EXCERPTS FROM THE BOOK

In *Romance of the Three Kingdoms*, a Chinese classic, there is a story of Zhuge Liang, a general of the Shu kingdom. As the story goes, the general finds his fortress city of Xicheng besieged by a much superior army of the Wei kingdom. Finding it difficult to hold on to the fort, Zhuge does the unthinkable: he gets all the city gates opened and asks his soldiers to disguise themselves as ordinary householders and go about their daily lives in full view of the advancing Wei army. Zhuge himself sits atop a city gate, playing 'qin', a Chinese string instrument. Confused, the Wei forces dare not enter the gates, suspecting some sort of ambush awaiting them. They, instead, make a hurried withdrawal. While one should desist from robotically applying historical patterns, much less an old tale, to understand present-day China, the story does provide an overarching view about how the Chinese mind works: that China may not always mean what it says, and it can do what it vehemently denies in public. This makes China a difficult country to comprehend, more so if one is alien to its history and culture. The communist cocktail, present in China for over a century now and in power since 1949, has further given a heady turn to the already intricate Chinese mind. Today, as the militaries of India and China are stuck in a standoff-like situation for more than three years at the Line of Actual Control [LAC] in eastern Ladakh, India needs to crack the Chinese code faster than others. It needs to understand why China would never say never to a neighbour's territory that it strongly believes it can annex, intrude into, or at least lay claims at. And, why the proverbial elephant invariably finds itself on the wrong side of the dragon. Explaining the innate imperialist streak in China, eminent historian R.C. Majumdar wrote in *The Organiser*, Diwali issue, 1965: "Thanks to the systematic recording of historical facts by the Chinese themselves, an almost unique achievement in oriental countries [...] we are in a position to follow the imperial and aggressive policy of China from the third century BC to the present day, a period of more than 2,200 years... It is characteristic of China that if a region once acknowledged her nominal suzerainty even for a short period, she would regard it as a part of her empire forever and would automatically revive her claim over it even after a thousand years whenever there was a chance of enforcing it." Sadly, for most part of its post-Independence history, scholars like R.C. Majumdar were viciously targeted and hounded out by the Leftist gang of intellectuals who found instant political patronage in the Nehruvian ecosystem. This new intellectual class, despite its proclaimed emphasis on scientific temper and rational academic rigour, was attuned to give preference to ideology over truth. India, thus, failed to produce real experts on China. There is no doubt a few brilliant Indian minds explaining China, but they exist not because of Chinese Studies in India but despite them. To add to it, becoming an independent-minded China expert isn't an easy exercise. As Michael Pillsbury writes in *The Hundred-Year Marathon: China's Secret Strategy to Replace America as the Global Superpower*, "It has long been known among China scholars that the people most trusted to report on China are those academics, journalists and writers who have been denied visas into the country. The rest routinely make compromises, consciously or subconsciously, to maintain their access." No wonder, India still doesn't have a thorough, comprehensive understanding of the 'idea of China'. Most scholars who masquerade as China experts, especially in the field of academia, are Sinophiles, who blindly admire Chinese system and culture, are often in awe of them, and many a times compromised by Chinese favours!

The above article is an edited extract from Utpal Kumar's book, *Bharat Rising: Dharma, Democracy, Diplomacy*, published by Bluone Ink

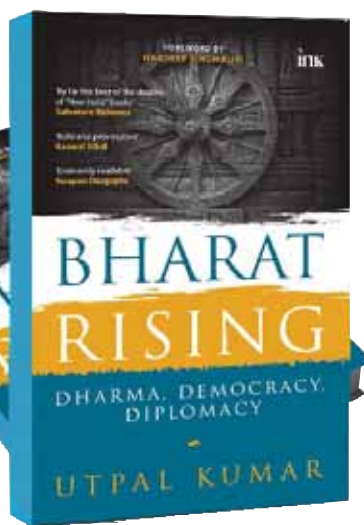
# AS RAM RISES, BHARAT TOO WILL

UTPAL KUMAR'S treatise on emerging India is a compelling read to put its past in perspective and understand its future trajectory

By Monica Verma

India is on the cusp of a transformation. Nothing speaks this more than the sense of exhilaration in the air ahead of Ram Mandir inauguration in Ayodhya. There may be a small section which is associating the event with a particular political party, but largely across India, people are mostly engulfed in a sense of warm comfort that finally their revered God will be in a home of his own. That's not it, there is a strong conviction even among the most elite and educated class that the Ram Mandir inauguration marks a moment of civilisational awakening in India. It is this India which is confident about its roots that Utpal Kumar is writing about in his latest book, *Bharat Rising: Dharma, Democracy, Diplomacy*. As someone who has lived through the 1990s and 2000s and grown up watching Doordarshan, studied from NCERT textbooks and watched TV debates with one-sided panels full of Lutyens' club members, the current India seems like a fundamentally changed country. When Kumar writes about this new India, he starts by outlining the characteristics of the Old India first. The old India refers to India under Congress rule where Jawaharlal Nehru may have been personally active only until his death in 1964 but the remnants of Nehruvian state continued to shine for nearly 50 years thereafter. Even Atal Bihari Vajpayee, a Prime Minister from the Sangh fold, hasn't been spared by Kumar for being a

Lutyens insider after all. The real change begins only with the current Prime Minister Narendra Modi who despite ruling for two consecutive terms hasn't once bothered to co-opt the Lutyens coterie and vice versa. Kumar points out the excesses of Nehruvian consensus in almost every single domain of Indian life including religion, domestic politics and international politics. He notes how an empowered section of historians continued to build their scholarship with no evidence in hand except their access to power corridors and their poor scholarship of cross-citing each other exclusively. The Indian state in its desperation to please the Left-'liberal' lobbies world over, chose secularism which turned out to be Hindumistic in all its glory. Whether it was the forced imposition of personal laws on only Hindus, or the unspoken truth of state-sponsored violence against Brahmins and Dalits, or even the insertion of the very word 'secular' undemocratically by the Indira Gandhi government during Emergency in the Constitution, the Indian state has done more to damage the civilisational fabric of this country than to actually make India more egalitarian in character for all the religions. Kumar's book has focused on three important pillars of new India which include - Dharma, Democracy and Diplomacy. Each of them have been



**BHARAT RISING: DHARMA, DEMOCRACY, DIPLOMACY**  
BY UTPAL KUMAR  
BLUONE INK, ₹599

addressed through twelve eclectic essays that are a must-read for every young Indian in today's date. Revisionist scholarship can sometimes pave the way for a more confident and self-secure polity. For instance, when Kumar talks about the "three musketeers" of India's freedom struggle - Subhas Chandra Bose, VD Savarkar and BR Ambedkar and how they were personally hounded by Gandhi-Nehru regime for presenting an alternative idea of free India, then it

justifies India's current quest to gather tangible power something Bose actually did and also stay aware of the danger of pan-Islamism, something which Ambedkar warned about. Similarly when Kumar calls Marxist scholarship on India as a project to declare it as a "Railway Station" where no one is native and everyone including the Indians themselves have migrated, then it leads to a reckoning as to why the positioning of India as a civilisational state which it rightfully is leads to so much discomfort among the Left-'liberals' today. Kumar's attention is not limited to domestic politics or dharna debates alone. He shifts his thoughts to the domain of international politics where early Indian leaders' failure to read the political undercurrents has caused significant strategic damage to India. As an Indian who grudgingly looks at China today in terms of its economic size and geopolitical reach, I can't but agree wholeheartedly with him. At a time when Beijing was courting Western powers to build its strength by showing them the chimera of an accommodative China, India was busy putting its foot on the diplomatic axe. We failed to read Mao's aggression, we were busy identifying the good Pakistani from the bad Pakistani, and we kept on ignoring the friendly Japan and sympathetic US in the process. Kumar highlights this while also cautioning that India's rise is

not something to which US should be expected to commit unconditionally. Among other gems that this book offers, this one stands out for its sheer truth value. If China slows down, the daggers will be out for India's rise and that's already started to happen if we look at the West's attitude towards India lately. We must always keep this in mind while focusing on our long-term future. Overall, Kumar's book is a sincere attempt in critiquing the old shibboleths and explaining why the new India must get rid of them to enable its rise globally. Every single country that has become a formidable power in the world had a set of people who were proud of their civilisational bedrocks and believed that they are destined for great things. In India, too much energy has been spent in pleasing the international lobbies - whether it includes nippers who cajole India to appease Islamists or the international press that vents out its hatred towards strong governments in India by shaming its democracy. Kumar has befittingly exposed them without any mercy at all. His book will be one for the keeps which must be read by every young Indian mind today. A great intellectual churn is going on and Utpal Kumar's contribution to this would be notable.

The reviewer is a columnist and a visiting faculty of International Relations at NECU, Dimapur. She completed her PhD from South Asian University and writes regularly on strategic affairs and foreign policy.

# A Roller Coaster Of Thriller And Suspense

BAPPADITYA CHAKRAVARTY has skillfully curated a gripping narrative that promises to captivate thriller enthusiasts—exploring the intricate lives of terrorists, navigating the diverse schools of terrorism, and delving into the dark underbelly of drug and arms

BY KUMAR CHELLAPPAN

It is rare to find out from book readers those who have not read at least a dozen spy novels in their youth. Authors ranging from Sir Arthur Conan Doyle (the Scotland born writer credited with the creation of Sherlock Holmes and his associate John Watson), Agatha Christie, Ian Fleming, Ken Follet, Frederick Forsyth, Robert Ludlum etc were a craze for generations belonging to the pre-1980 era. The National Network of Doordarshan had telecast the series "The Adventures of Sherlock Holmes" during late 1980s and it had considerable viewership. Agatha Christie was rated as the best-selling novelist by none other than conservative literary critics. Once you start reading books by Christie to Ludlum, chances of leaving the books midway through are bleak because of the heights to which these works elevate readers and the style in which these authors tell the stories. Fleming's James Bond, (the British spy with a

license to kill!!!) had been an obsession among the youth as well as the middle aged for decades. The spy novels by authors from USA and UK had focused on two World Wars and the subsequent Cold War which kept the world tense and panicky. There was no literature in these works of fiction except the possibilities of science and technology which were utilized to its full extent by the authors. Thus, we had James Bond wearing a wrist watch with which he could communicate with his Boss sitting in London from anywhere in the world. These books had varieties in them. The plots did not limit to just Capitalism v Communism but the two World Wars too provided enough canvas for the authors. Ken Follet's "Key To Rebecca" and "Eye of the Needle" are based on Second World War and retain their freshness even today. The Day of the Jackal by Frederick Forsyth is based on a real life story featuring the then President of France General Charles de Gaulle. An assassin was hired to assassinate de Gaulle in 1963 and this forms the plot of the story.

The fact that a spy story need not be written in the format of a novel was first established by "God's Bankers, A History of Money and Vatican" authored by Gerald Posner, a lawyer-turned-journalist. It is a chilling account of the death of Pope John Paul I, the last Italian to be ordained as the Holy See and the boss of the Vatican Bank. The book is the result of nine years of painstaking research by Posner and it is as exciting and thrilling as any work of fiction. Posner's another book "Case Closed: Lee Harvey Oswald and the Assassination of JFK" has been described as a classic work of investigation and research. Spy novels are a rare commodity in India, despite the fact that the Moghul Rule and the freedom fight against the British colonial masters offer a wide canvas to prospective authors. Once the Cold War ended and the unipolar world emerged, the spy novels lost their charm. But the emergence of a new form of terrorism in West Asia with special focus on Iraq, Iran, Afghanistan, Pakistan and of course the Punjab's Khalistani



ultras has given enough ingredients and raw materials for our spy masters. Indian authors are yet to make use of the possibilities while one of the works by Forsyth had Islamic terrorism as theme (The Afghan). The book featured India in certain chapters and it was a runaway success in the subcontinent.

Though B Raman, a reputed counter terrorism expert working with RAW had forewarned the policymakers through his treatise "A Terrorist State As a Frontline Ally", our own Flemings and Follets failed to see the scope of the topic. It took many years for an Indian author to hit bookshelves decades and SWORDPLAY by Bappaditya Chakravarty is the book which we were waiting for. The book is published by Garuda Prakashan, which shot into fame by bringing out the pathbreaking work "Delhi Riots 2020-The Untold Story", authored by Monika Arora, Sonali Chitalkar and Prerna Malhotra. SwordPlay is a chilling account of extremism of the highest order involving Islamic and Khalistani terrorists capable of doing anything for realizing their objectives. What the world missed with the collapse of Communism as well as the Iron Curtain has come back to haunt us. SwordPlay has everything including the terrorists, various schools of terrorism, drug and arms running, under cover

agents, cold blooded murders and experts in double crossing. Set in America, Europe, Asia (particularly Pakistan, Afghanistan, Iraq, south east Asia, India and Hong Kong), the book takes the reader for a trouble-free flight from the opening page itself. Please do not ask whether this is a work of fiction or a flower that bloomed in a fertile mind. There is a proverb that states that no questions should be asked about the authenticity of a work of fiction. The undercover agent Paramjyot Singh and his deputies declare an inter-continental war against an axis of Islamist-Khalistani terrorists and tuhat forms the storyline.. The Khalistani terrorists have managed to mobilize a nuclear weapon from the country's western border to Haridwar under the guise of a bike-rally for unity of religions. The spy master Brigadier Paramjyot Singh is the person who briefs the country's top political authority about the operation which has been launched to save millions. The narration shifts from Canada to Marseilles to New Delhi and

central India as the plot unfolds. To bring in a feeling of western spy thrillers, the author has added steaming black coffee, bourbon whiskey and what not. The only items missing are the conventional Aston Martin and other sleek sports cars. SwordPlay may not be in the same league as that of Eye of the Needle, Day of the Jackal, Odessa File or Bourn Identity. But it is interesting and readers will enjoy it. Chakravarty has made it easy for a movie maker to make a suspense thriller and the film to be made out of this plot has the potential to fill the moonah. Hope he writes more as with IS, JeM, LeT and Khalistani Forces working overtime to create subversion across India. One more important observation to be noted is that forces are out to disintegrate India by hook or by crook. This has been brought to light by Rajeev Malhotra through his works "Breaking India" (co-author Aravindan Neelakandan) and "Snakes in the Ganga" (co-author Vijaya Viswanathan). Bappaditya Chakravarty has a bright future to be a desi Frederic Forsyth or Ken Follet.

# 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 SAIKIA

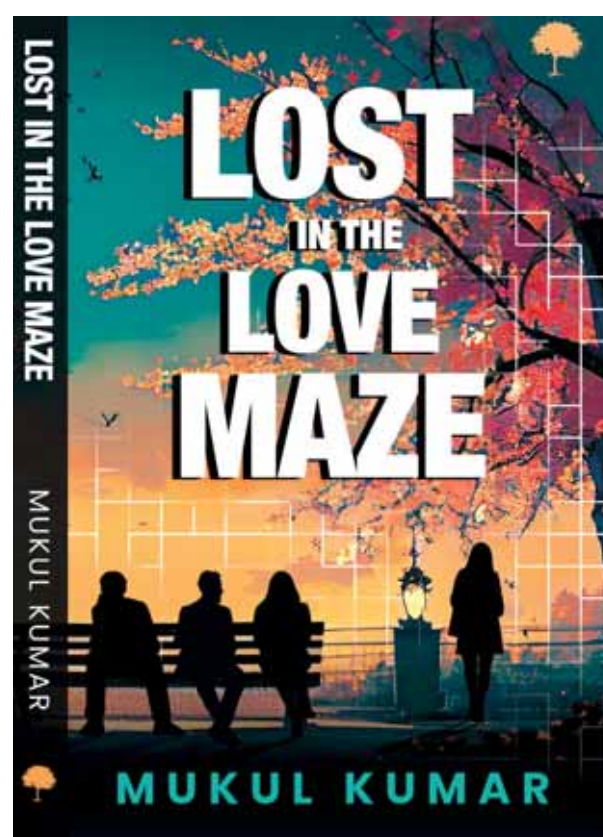
## REVIEW

# 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)

YOU HAVE TO GROW FROM THE INSIDE OUT. NONE CAN TEACH YOU, NONE CAN MAKE YOU SPIRITUAL. THERE IS NO OTHER TEACHER BUT YOUR OWN SOUL. — SWAMI VIVEKANANDA



## YOUR WEEK AHEAD

MADHU KOTIYA



### ARIES March 21-April 19

This week marks the beginning of a triumphant phase for you, where your achievements are not only recognized but celebrated. As the days unfold, you'll find yourself in an environment that not only understands but also respects your capabilities. Your ability to bring forth innovative ideas and implement cutting-edge methods will be well-received and celebrated by those around you. Midweek might offer a nostalgic twist, as you reconnect with someone from your past or revisit a place filled with childhood memories. As the week draws to a close, despite a sense of fatigue and some concerns, your resilience and determination stand strong. You're well-equipped to navigate through any challenges that come your way, maintaining your stride in the journey of life.

Lucky number 7 | Lucky colour Sky Blue  
Lucky day Monday



### LEO July 23-Aug 22

This week, you're set to experience a surge of creativity and deepening personal connections. Your intuition is remarkably sharp, enabling you to understand and solve personal and social issues with ease. You'll find yourself naturally guiding and comforting others, effortlessly finding solutions to their challenges. Midweek brings an emotional uplift, filled with optimism and new possibilities. It's a time when your deepest aspirations begin to find their voice, leading towards fulfillment. Financial stability is also in focus, with prospects for gains through your efforts or unexpected sources. However, as the week ends, there's a tendency to linger on past events. Embrace the present and the joys it brings, letting go of past reflections to fully enjoy the opportunities life is presenting now.

Lucky number 14 | Lucky colour Mustard  
Lucky day Thursday



### SAGITTARIUS Nov 22-Dec 21

This week may start with challenges, but it will end on a high note, bringing joy and inspiration. You'll encounter obstacles and misunderstandings that could initially dishearten you. However, a new phase, though demanding, beckons. Focus on sharpening your intellectual abilities and communication skills. Midweek, your focus will shift to the younger ones in your life, particularly their educational and career choices, requiring your immediate attention. If you're supporting someone in their academic pursuits, your encouragement will be crucial. As the week concludes, a sense of joy and unity will envelop your family. Your efforts will bear fruit, leading to personal fulfillment and a sense of well-being. The younger family members will be a source of happiness, enhancing the overall mood at home.

Lucky number 19 | Lucky colour Purple  
Lucky day Wednesday



### TAURUS April 20-May 20

This week brings promising prospects. In your career, look forward to potential advancements or a notable increase in earnings. For those in new marriages, joyful news might be on the horizon. Travel is likely, presenting opportunities for financial gain, but stay alert for any misadventures or dishonesty. As the week concludes, a comforting sense of security and familial support will surround you, evoking warm, nostalgic feelings. Expect to receive meaningful gifts and experience a positive financial flow, especially if you're in business. Any outstanding debts owed to you are likely to be settled, rounding off a week characterized by personal fulfillment and professional progress, all within a harmonious balance. Embrace this period of growth and positivity, as it paves the way for future successes.

Lucky number 20 | Lucky colour Lemon Yellow  
Lucky day Sunday



### VIRGO Aug 23-Sep 22

This week appears to be a dynamic period filled with movement and enjoyment. You might find yourself embarking on new ventures or tasks that will require your dedicated attention for successful completion. As the week progresses, social gatherings and celebratory events are likely to be a significant part of your schedule, following the achievement of your goals. These could include various community events and personal celebrations. Despite ongoing life challenges, this period offers an opportunity to momentarily set aside daily stresses and cherish moments with friends and family. However, towards the week's end, be prepared for some professional challenges. You might encounter competitive scenarios or individuals who seem unsupportive of your progress. This could lead to disagreements or stress. It's important to approach these situations with caution and not make impulsive decisions.

Lucky number 12 | Lucky colour Fuschia  
Lucky day Thursday



### CAPRICORN Dec 22-Jan 19

This week, you exhibit a calm and patient demeanor, focusing on your ambitions with a gentle approach. You tend to lean more towards the belief in destiny rather than the power of actions. As the week progresses, you'll find yourself feeling joyful, especially due to a significant financial gain. Your business is set to thrive, with income flowing in from multiple sources. You'll find yourself engaged in planning various innovative projects. Additionally, you'll be drawn towards spiritual activities and practices. This period can be seen as a time of abundant fortune, as things seem to align in your favor. You're experiencing success in various aspects of your life. As the week concludes, you'll find yourself in a state of heightened creativity, immersed in a world where everything appears ideal and free of challenges.

Lucky number 8 | Lucky colour Magenta  
Lucky day Thursday



### GEMINI May 21-June 20

This week holds promising developments for you. Expect positive career news, such as a potential job opportunity or a welcome increase in earnings. For those who have recently embarked on marital life, there's a possibility of joyful family-related announcements. A journey may be on the horizon, so it's wise to be travel-ready. This trip could lead to beneficial financial outcomes. However, exercise caution during your travels, as there might be risks of loss or deceit. As the week progresses, a sense of security and contentment will envelop you. Family support and cooperation will be abundant, bringing a comforting sense of belonging. Memories of past times might surface, filling you with nostalgia. Expect to receive thoughtful gifts and experience a positive flow in financial matters, especially if you're involved in business.

Lucky number 18 | Lucky colour Wine  
Lucky day Wednesday



### LIBRA Sep 23-Oct 22

This week heralds a period of abundant rewards and deep contentment, both in your personal achievements and material gains. You might find these benefits stemming from a legacy or as fruits of your own diligent efforts. Your self-discipline and achievements are likely to be recognized and admired by those around you. It's an opportune moment for initiating new ventures or relationships. Your understanding of interpersonal dynamics will aid in smooth collaborations. However, as the week progresses, you might find yourself grappling with uncertainty, possibly hesitating to embrace new opportunities. It's important to release any apprehensions about the future and avoid impulsive reactions. Embracing a calm and clear mindset will illuminate your path, helping you navigate challenges with ease and clarity. This approach will enable you to find effective solutions to any obstacles you face.

Lucky number 9 | Lucky colour Jade Green  
Lucky day Monday



### AQUARIUS Jan 20-Feb 18

This week begins with unresolved challenges that are causing you stress. You might feel isolated and overshadowed by a sense of gloom. Amidst this confusion, you're searching for a way to resolve these issues, yet a clear solution seems elusive. It's important now to reflect on your past experiences and future direction. Gaining this perspective can help ease your journey from a negative state to a more positive one. Embrace your emotions rather than suppressing them; acknowledging their influence can be beneficial. Achieving harmony between your physical and mental well-being can lead to significant accomplishments. As the week progresses, anticipate notable shifts in your life, bringing some relief from your current worries. Positive events, such as a significant personal or professional milestone, are likely to bring you joy and satisfaction.

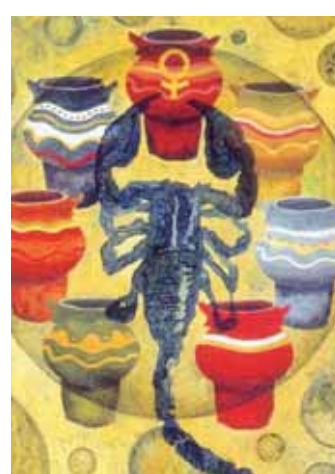
Lucky number 22 | Lucky colour Maroon  
Lucky day Sunday



### CANCER June 21-July 22

This week, you may encounter fluctuating thoughts and a lack of focus, with several challenges requiring decisive action. Mental unrest could hinder your ability to tackle these effectively, as trying to address multiple issues at once may lead to confusion. Prioritizing focus and avoiding indecision is key. Practices that promote inner peace, such as mindfulness or relaxation techniques, can help restore mental equilibrium. A joyful encounter with someone from your past could uplift your mood. Guidance from a mentor or respected figure might provide clarity and direction. By week's end, you're likely to feel a sense of stability and well-being in both personal and financial aspects. Embrace this period of growth and self-discovery, as it paves the way for future successes.

Lucky number 10 | Lucky colour Grey  
Lucky day Sunday



### SCORPIO Oct 23-Nov 21

This week marks a period of rapid transition and new beginnings in your life. You may find yourself presented with an unexpected opportunity to join a new group or organization. Amidst this, you might encounter several alternatives, leading to a sense of uncertainty and difficulty in making a decisive choice. However, this week is characterized by dynamic action and creative thinking. You are at a pivotal moment where one phase of your life is concluding, paving the way for a fresh chapter on a more enlightened path. It's a time to release the old and embrace what's ahead with optimism. The need for a resolute decision is paramount. As the week progresses, you'll find a harmonious balance between your rational thoughts and emotional intuition, aiding in clear and beneficial decision-making for your professional growth.

Lucky number 2 | Lucky colour White  
Lucky day Saturday



### PISCES Feb 19-March 20

In the coming days, you're likely to embark on a significant journey, involving various important events or workshops. Professionally, be prepared for some competitive challenges, and handle personal relationships with care to avoid emotional strain. This period may test your resilience, but it's important to remember that any difficulties are temporary. Your health deserves attention, yet it's crucial to keep a balanced view of these transient challenges. As the week unfolds, a sense of order and harmony will gradually restore itself in your life, signaling a shift towards more positive circumstances. Support and comfort, reminiscent of maternal care, will be a source of strength for you. If you're seeking new beginnings in love, career, or creative ventures, patience and dedicated focus are key.

Lucky number 17 | Lucky colour Golden  
Lucky day Friday

Madhu Kotiya is a tarot card reader, spiritual healer, and Founder, MShezaim Institute of Tarot and Divination. Contact details: madhu@indiatarot.com, www.indiatarot.com, M: 9873283331



**ASTROTURF**  
BHARAT BHUSHAN PADMADEO

# Become your own master

Mind defines the functional mandate of a being and then steers through the journey of life. All happenings out in open originate in mind by way of arousal of desire and thereby related thoughts, ideation, articulation, and the will to act upon. Also, it directs the mind how to engage with the world around, and react or respond to external stimuli. It is again our mind, which carries forward the legacy carried over from the past. That makes a deep imprint in our mind and psyche, which sets the terms of the way we perceive issues in hand, and accordingly act upon. But mind is just an instrument. It has no drive of its own as it doesn't have a light of its own either. It draws light from the fundamental element of consciousness. Mind, in fact, is just like earth mass, which transforms a seed sown into a plant. Similarly, mind acts takes off on feed primarily drawn from two sources –

thought seeds in store reflecting indwelling desire trends and habit tendencies, coming as it may as Karmic carryover from the past, and external influences.

In so far as earth mass is concerned, the farmer is in control of what seed he plants, depending on what to grow based on environmental and soil conditions. Mind's control mechanisms is, however, complex. Invariably, every being is born with a preconditioned mind, bound by desire trends, habit tendencies, likes, dislikes, prejudices and passions. That tempts the Ahamkara element – the sense of 'I' that brings in doer element in a being, and which drives all actions on our part – identify itself with the inherent tendencies and passionately follows them as if that would be its end game. It doesn't allow looking beyond for a reality check. Consequently, one remains slave to inherent mind traits. But at the same time



every being carries an inherent sense of freedom. Also, human beings are armed with exclusive privilege to guide their actions by choice and discrimination. The two, read together, offers the opportunity to transcend imitations of mind through

conscious efforts, when it gets submerged in the omniscient fundamental element of consciousness. Whence, it knows no limits as full landscape of mind becomes accessible. Otherwise, a clouded mind has access to hardly 5 to 7 percent of mind space. You then become master of your mind, and use it as an instrument. The choice is yours. Mind, in fact, is a versatile equipment, which offers window to self-reflect, identify and acknowledge one's limiting tendencies, and then address them through fresh educative inputs. All that is needed is to get into dhyana mode, turn your attention inwards, when the limiting tendencies will come into sight. Following the process further, one needs to get into pratyahara mode – get disengaged from the indwelling thought seeds that otherwise prove limiting. You then become master of your own self.

Long back, someone having met suc-

cessive failures, and having lost all hope in life, came asking: "Sir, what is in store of my destiny. What wrong I did that I have been through such an unpleasant ordeal for so long?" Well, you have been a victim of your own self-undoing acts. "How?" He countered. You are born in fiery sign Aries, with its lord too in another fiery sign. That makes you haughty, impulsive, aggressive, and erratic. You wish to live in a demanding mode on your whims and fancy. You are self-willed and overconfident about your capability. Adverse aspect of Mars over Jupiter points to your inflated ego. That binds you to self-defined beliefs and perceptions. It doesn't allow the space necessary to look beyond for a reality check. You are not keen to entertain advisory and counsel, of elders and superiors. It is difficult for you to digest things don't happen on expected lines. Moon opposite Venus makes you emotionally too much

sensitive, which makes you get overexerted even on trivial issues. You keep unnecessarily mulling on them much beyond their due. Consequently priority preferences get compromised. You jump into action without applying proper forethought. Moon being in a dual sign, you lack the focus necessary to put in consistent efforts. The result is there to see. "Is it possible to overcome the above shortcomings that are certainly there in me?" He asked. You need to pursue dhyana regularly to fry the indwelling thought seeds that are limiting and then redefine the thought process afresh seeking regular counselling. He religiously followed the advisory and is a changed man now. Through his reasoned conduct, has tasted success.

The writer is an astrologer, vastu consultant and spiritual counsellor. Connect with him at Tel: 91-11-9818037273/9871037272 Email: bharatbhushanpadmadeo@gmail.com

Now you can write to us at [agendapioneer@gmail.com](mailto:agendapioneer@gmail.com)