

Vande Bharat Express From Delhi to Ayodhya Ram Mandir



Vande Bharat Express From Delhi to Ayodhya Ram Mandir: Inaugurated by Prime Minister Narendra Modi on December 30, 2023, the new Anand Vihar-Ayodhya Vande Bharat Express started operations from January 4, 2024. This new train seeks to enhance the connectivity between the national capital and Ayodhya, particularly after Ram Mandir Pran Pratistha. According to the Railways, the Anand Vihar-Ayodhya Vande Bharat Express will operate six days a week. As per the new timing, the train would depart from Anand Vihar Terminal at 6:10 AM and would reach Ayodhya Dham Junction at 2:30 PM. Anand Vihar (Delhi)-Ayodhya Vande Bharat Express: Check Route, Timing According to the Indian Railways, the train would cover Kanpur Central and Lucknow's Charbagh railway station, before terminating the journey at Ayodhya. The train will have stoppage at both Kanpur Central and Charbagh railway stations. The train will then reach Kanpur Central at 11 AM and Charbagh at 12:25 PM. While returning, the train will depart from Ayodhya Dham junction at 3:20 pm and would reach Anand Vihar Terminal at 11:40 pm. 22426/22425 Anand Vihar Terminal - Ayodhya Vande Bharat: Check Full Schedule Train numbers 22426 (Anand Vihar Terminal-Ayodhya Cantt Vande Bharat Express) and 22425 (Ayodhya Cantt-Anand Vihar Terminal) will operate six days a week, excluding Wednesdays. Train number 22426 Ayodhya-Anand Vihar Vande Bharat Express will reach Ayodhya Cantt station at 2:30 pm, with stops at Kanpur Central and Lucknow, completing the journey in 8 hours and 20 minutes. Train number 22425 Ayodhya-Anand Vihar Vande Bharat Express will depart from Ayodhya Cantt station at 3:20 pm, arriving at Anand Vihar Terminal at 11:40 pm, covering the distance in 8 hours and 20 minutes. Anand Vihar-Ayodhya Vande Bharat Express: Check Ticket Prices From Ayodhya to Delhi, the general ticket prices for 22425 Vande Bharat Express are Rs. 1570.00 for AC Chair car (CC) and Rs. 2915.00 for Executive Chair Car (EC). However, the Tatkal Tickets from Ayodhya to Delhi are Rs. 1805.00 for AC Chair car (CC) and Rs. 3440.00 for Executive Chair Car (EC). From Delhi to Ayodhya, the general ticket prices for the 22426 Vande Bharat Express are Rs. 1625.00 for AC Chair car (CC) and Rs. 2965.00 for Executive Chair Car (EC). Tatkal Tickets from Delhi to Ayodhya can be purchased at Rs. 1860.00 for AC Chair car (CC) and Rs. 3490.00 for Executive Chair Car (EC).

Ocean cleaning awareness campaign held in Chennai

Chennai (Tamil Nadu) : An ocean cleaning awareness campaign was held in Chennai on the theme 'Swim for the Ocean, Save the Ocean', where three children, Thaaragai (9), Nishvik (7) and Kavi Ashvathan (14) swam from Chennai Neelankarai to Marina Beach. Meanwhile, the Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR)-Central Marine Fisheries Research Institute (CMFRI) is set to offer lessons on marine biodiversity and the environment to postgraduate students, researchers and academicians, recognising its crucial role in ensuring the health of oceans for the well-being of future generations. A five-day training course on Know

Your biodiversity-and-environment "Marine Biodiversity and Environment (MARBIE) will be held from February 5 to 9 at the institute." It will offer a deeper understanding on marine biodiversity, taxonomy, ecosystem functions, and environmental challenges, and develop skills and tools for assessing, managing and conserving marine resources. A range of topics, including coral reef diversity, marine mammal conservation, marine fish identification, mapping spatial distribution of marine resources, marine environmental quality assessment, sea turtle conservation, and tackling marine debris," the Media Cell of CMFRI

said. Hands-on practical sessions and field visits will be offered during the programme. In the face of mounting threats, including climate change and pollution, understanding and protecting marine biodiversity is crucial in ensuring global food security and mitigating climate change, said Dr A Gopala Krishnan, Director of the CMFRI. Interested participants can register online using a Google form given at the CMFRI website (www.cmfri.org.in) on or before January 29. A maximum of 30 participants will be accommodated. Dr Miriam Paul Sreeram is the Course Convener. Phone- 8301048849, Media Cell of CMFRI added.

US strikes Iran-backed targets in Iraq after forces wounded

NEW DELHI (ROYAL JOURNALISM): The United States carried out strikes in Iraq against three facilities linked to Iran-backed militia on Tuesday, the Pentagon said, after a weekend attack on an Iraqi air base that wounded US forces. US troops in Iraq and Syria have been attacked about 150 times by Iran-aligned militants since the Israel-Gaza war started in October, creating pressure on President Joe Biden to respond militarily, despite political sensitivities in Baghdad. On Saturday, four US personnel suffered traumatic brain injuries after Iraq's Ain al-Asad air base was hit by multiple ballistic missiles and rockets fired by Iranian-backed militants from inside Iraq. "US military forces conducted necessary and proportionate strikes on three facilities used by the Iranian-backed Kataib Hezbollah militia group and other Iran-affiliated groups in Iraq," US Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin said in a statement. "These precision strikes are in direct response to a series of escalatory attacks against US and Coalition personnel in Iraq and Syria by Iranian-sponsored militias," Austin added. US Central Command, which carries out operations in the Middle East, said the strikes targeted Kataib



Hezbollah "headquarters, storage, and training locations for rocket, missile" and drone capabilities. In Iraq, a medical source and a militant source said the US strikes killed at least two militants and that four other people were wounded. Kataib Hezbollah military spokesperson Jaafar al-Husseini said in a post on X that the group would continue to target "enemy bases" until the end of Israel's siege in Gaza and singled out US support for Israel's campaign. The attacks against the United States are seen as retaliation for its support of Israel in its war against Iran-backed Palestinian militant group Hamas. The war in Gaza has been spreading, with U.S. forces hitting Houthi targets who have launched attacks on ships in the Red Sea. The US has 900 troops in

Syria and 2,500 in Iraq, advising and assisting local forces to prevent a resurgence of Islamic State, which in 2014 seized large parts of both countries before being defeated. Iraqi Prime Minister Mohammed Shia al-Sudani's office announced moves to evict US forces following a US drone strike in Baghdad earlier this month that was condemned by the government. The Pentagon said that strike killed a militia leader responsible for recent attacks on US personnel. Sudani has limited control over some Iran-backed factions, whose support he needed to win power a year ago and who now form a powerful bloc in his governing coalition. The Pentagon has said it has not been formally notified of any plans to end the US troop presence in the country, and says its troops are deployed to Iraq at the invitation of the government in Baghdad. Following the US strike, Abo Alaa al-Walawi, a militia commander sanctioned by the US last year for involvement in attacks on US forces, said Iran-backed Iraqi militias operating under the banner of the Islamic Resistance in Iraq should expand operations by "enforcing a blockade on Zionist maritime navigation in the Mediterranean Sea."

Russia will take out Ukraine in weeks, Biden warns Republicans

NEW DELHI (ROYAL JOURNALISM): During a conference at the White House, Congressional leaders were given a dire image of what would happen to Ukraine's military if US assistance in the form of weapons, trucks, and other supplies stopped, as reported by NBC News. On January 17, meeting with key congressional leaders, top US officials presented a grim assessment of the war's trajectory. Without continued US support in the form of ammunition, vehicles, and other supplies, they warned of "massive Russian advances" and a potential Ukrainian collapse. There is a political uproar in Congress over President Biden's USD 60 billion request for further help. GOP lawmakers are using the matter as leverage against the administration and Democrats, having gained confidence from the House's lowered legislative barriers. The urgent risk was highlighted by National Security Advisor Jake Sullivan's severe warning: Ukraine's air defence is about to run out in a matter of weeks, which might allow Russia to launch deadly airstrikes throughout the nation. He also highlighted that Ukraine's capacity to properly defend

itself might disappear in a matter of weeks or months if the US does not step up its assistance. Beyond the battlefield, representatives of the Biden administration outlined a terrifying possibility: a Ukrainian defeat would bring down American credibility abroad. States may become isolated if other nations caught in the geopolitical crossfire decide to renounce their relationships due to uncertainty about US resolve. For the Biden administration, this sudden anxiety represents a sea change. Domestic political squabbles were mostly kept out of the Ukraine crisis for months. Due to internal Republican strife and the impending presidential election, it is now the main focus. Right-wing members of the House GOP, wielding outsized influence thanks to procedural changes, vehemently oppose further aid. Their leader, Speaker Mike Johnson, casts doubt on a potential House immigration deal emerging from Senate negotiations, suggesting the true solution lies in a Republican White House. Meanwhile, Donald Trump's vocal scepticism casts a long shadow. His boasts about ending the war within days of a hypothetical second term drew a sharp re-



buke from Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky: "That's really making me a bit stressed," Zelensky remarked, expressing concern about unilateral decision-making without considering "both sides, without us." With Biden's talks with Johnson yielding little progress and Republican factions deeply divided, the path forward for Ukraine aid in the House remains shrouded in uncertainty. The war in Ukraine, once a distant conflict, is now deeply embedded in the messy web of American politics, jeopardising its outcome and shaping the world's perception of US leadership.

Ram Temple inauguration: Here are 12 shares that may benefit from Ayodhya tourism boom

NEW DELHI (ROYAL JOURNALISM): The grand opening of the Ram Temple in Ayodhya is scheduled for January 22, 2024. Anticipation is high that the city will see a significant surge in investment, fuelled by expectations that the temple will draw pilgrims from around the world. Reports indicate that over 300,000 devotees could visit Ayodhya daily over the next three to four years. Therefore, investors may want to consider stocks in the hospitality and travel and tourism sectors with a focus on Ayodhya; however, only time will tell whether this surge in investment interest is a temporary trend, or an enduring transformation in the market dynamics. The city has already attracted a phenomenal investment commitment to the tune of Rs 49,000 crore at the 2023 Global Investor Summit in Uttar Pradesh held recently, heralding a new era of economic prosperity for the region. Here is the list of stocks one should keep on the watch list. Praveg: Established in 2005, the Ahmadabad-based company is a pioneer and leader in experiential tourism in India and offers exhibition, event management, and hospitality services in India. The company provides luxury tent cities and luxury resorts in multiple places including Ayodhya, Rann of Kutch, Varanasi, Daman & Diu and Sardar Sarova among others. Shares of the company have surged more than 50 per cent on a year-to-date basis till January 18, while the benchmark BSE Sensex declined 1 per cent during the same period. Indian Hotels and Taj GVK Hotels: According to Anarock research, Ayodhya will become a hotbed of hospitality activ-

ity across all budget bandwidths. The demand for hotel spaces from budget to 5-star categories is going to see a tremendous increase after the temple consecration since Ayodhya is shaping up to be one of the most prominent tourism and religious travel hotspots in the country. Indian Hotels Company (IHCL) - one of the country's largest hotel chain operators that owns prestigious brands like Taj Hotels and Vivanta - is already coming up with two properties in Ayodhya. According to Suma Venkatesh, Executive Vice President - Real Estate & Development at IHCL, considering the fact that Ayodhya, as the revered birthplace of Lord Ram, attracts a significant pilgrimage footfall year-round, the company has taken the leap early. "IHCL has underscored its commitment by signing management contracts for two new properties in Ayodhya - a 100-room Vivanta hotel and a 120-room Ginger hotel, both expected to be operational in 36 months. Strategically located near the upcoming Ayodhya International Airport, this five-acre complex will cater to both business and leisure travellers," she told Business Today. Taj GVK, a segment of the Tata Group, is also remained in focus as its co-parent company, Indian Hotels, has announced a significant project in Ayodhya. InterGlobe Aviation and SpiceJet: Shares of InterGlobe Aviation (Indigo) have rallied 3 per cent YTD and over 46 per cent in the past one year to Rs 3,052.65 on January 18. The airline recently operated the inaugural flight from the national capital to Ayodhya airport, officially named as Maharishi Valmiki International Airport, Ayodhya Dham, on December 30. SpiceJet

is another listed from the aviation sector which may benefit from the inauguration of the Ram Temple in Ayodhya. Of late, SpiceJet announced the launch of non-stop flights connecting Ayodhya with Chennai, Bengaluru, and Mumbai from February 1, 2024. IRCTC: During the initial 100 days of the inauguration of Ram Mandir, the Indian railways planned to run over 1,000 trains from different parts of the country to Ayodhya from January 19. The temple will open for general public from January 23. Shares of IRCTC have gained nearly 5 per cent YTD and around 45 per cent in the past one year till January 18. EaseMyTrip, Thomas Cook and Yatra Online: Investors should also zero in on online travel portals including such as EaseMyTrip, Thomas Cook and Yatra Online on the domestic stock exchanges. There are hopes that travel portals may see huge demand for rail, hotels, flights booking, etc for Ayodhya trips. Apollo Sindoori Hotels: Apollo Sindoori Hotels is engaged in the business of managing food outlets at hospitals and reputed organisations. The company has a multi-level parking facility in Ayodhya spanning 3,000 square meters, including a rooftop area for restaurants, capable of hosting over 1,000 devotees simultaneously. Shares of Apollo Sindoori Hotels have rallied 53 per cent YTD ahead of the inauguration of Ram Mandir. The scrip has gained 84 per cent in the last one year. ITC: Kolkata-based diversified conglomerate ITC Ltd., which is also a leading player in the luxury and mid-segment hotels business, is also considering its options in the area. According to Anil Chadha, Divisional Chief Executive, ITC



Hotels, it is in discussions with developers in this market to offer branding and management solutions for their assets under development. "Ayodhya is a great destination for cultural and spiritual tourism. It is encouraging to see rapid growth in overall infrastructure as a catalyst for the expected tourism surge. Any market with such large scale expected movement of travellers, would need quality accommodation across segments (luxury to economy). We have significant experience, pan India in the spiritual tourism space. Welcomhotel Bhubaneswar, Welcomhotel Amritsar, Fortune Park Haridwar, Fortune Madurai and Fortune Select Tirupati are some of our properties serving this segment of travellers," he said. Shares of ITC have gained nearly 1 per cent YTD and 39 per cent in the past one year. EIH: The company in its Annual General Meeting on August 2023 said that they are actively looking at Ayodhya and Varanasi. "There are many such destinations in India. The spiritual tourism is on the rise. We are looking at potentially the sites in these locations and potential tie-ups," EIH said. Shares of EIH have gained 15 per cent so far in 2024 and 68 per cent in the last one year.

Saving Great Indian Bustard must be balanced with energy needs: SC

NEW DELHI (ROYAL JOURNALISM): The Supreme Court on Friday said that it is conscious of government's commitment to generate solar power while implementing steps to preserve the Great Indian Bustard (GIB) and gave three weeks to the Centre to propose a way forward to balance the twin issues. Monitoring implementation of its earlier order of April 19, 2021 directing installation of bird diverters and moving overhead transmission lines underground in areas of Gujarat and Rajasthan, where the bird is predominantly found, the court said that any order passed by it should be "judicially manageable". The order was passed in a public interest litigation (PIL) filed by environment and wildlife activist MK Ranjitsinh and four others seeking measures to protect the GIB. A bench headed by Chief Justice of India (CJI) Dhananjaya Y Chandrachud on Friday was confronted with applications filed by solar and wind energy producing companies complaining that the top court's order was coming in the way of their business. The Union government also conveyed to the court the practical difficulties and the enormous cost involved in implementing the decision. "We are conscious that we are dealing with an issue involving development where India has to achieve alternate energy goals. Our order has to balance both interests," said the bench, also comprising justices JB Pardiwala and Manoj Misra. To be sure, any question of balance needs to factor in the possible extinction of the species in this case. By some estimates, there are around 100, and possibly fewer, GIBs in the wild. The court asked Attorney General R Venkataramani to propose a way forward by February 9, the next date of hearing in an order which said, "The AG states that a comprehensive status report will be filed indicating the various steps by the Union government for preservation of GIB and ensure solar power is made available, consider-



ing India's commitment at the international level." India has not had much success in conserving the GIB, once a candidate for its national bird. There were around 1200 GIBs in the wild in the 1960s. The ministry of new and renewable energy (MNRE) had previously filed an application for modifying the April 19 judgment and stated that it is "working towards achieving the target set by Government of India to install 1,75,000 MW (excluding large hydro) of renewable energy capacity by 2022 and further increase it to 4,50,000 MW by 2030." Under the Paris Agreement, India is committed to achieve about 40% cumulative electric power installed capacity from non-fossil fuel-based energy resources by 2030. "The ball is now in your court," the bench told AG, adding, "Once the government states what the way forward can be, we will not be groping in the dark." The top law officer agreed to file a comprehensive affidavit before the next hearing. Solar energy producers represented by senior advocates Abhishek Manu Singhvi and Mukul Rohatgi noted practical difficulties in implementing the court's order. "The entire area where the court's order is to operate has solar power generating units. There are high tension wires running overhead. Undergrounding of wires will require them to be joined at places which can be hazardous," Singhvi claimed. The court said, "Anything we do must be judicially manageable. We don't want to blame anyone but we are

faced with a slew of applications while implementing our orders which is not feasible for us to manage. Do we have scientific study tracing deaths to transmission lines? Also, one has to be aware of practical realities as undergrounding will involve agricultural land." A 2018 report by the Wildlife Institute of India stated that surveys covering 80 km of power lines seven times over a year found that there were 289 deaths of birds from 30 species including some GIBs. At the time, there were estimated to be 128 GIBs in the wild. The associations of solar power generators and power developers in the region estimated that the undergrounding of cable lines would cost ₹55,000 crore. Rohatgi pointed out that since these birds have poor vision they tend to collide with the transmission lines. As directed by the court, bird diverters have been installed along the overhead wires. "These diverters can be seen easily by these birds. But undergrounding of these lines is not feasible," he said. The court wished to know if any credible study was conducted on how effective the bird diverters are to prevent further bird casualties. "We directed installation of bird diverters but we must be cognizant of what impact it is having on ground. Should we be spending public money on it without knowing its efficacy?" Senior advocate Shyam Divan who represented the petitioners informed the court that despite all efforts by Centre and states, there was recently another death of GIB due to collision. While awaiting the Centre's response, the bench said that the government could benefit by considering action taken by other countries such as UAE where these birds are found. GIBs are found only in India. The court's reference was possibly to the Houbara Bustard, native to North Africa. The UAE runs a very successful captive breeding programme of Houbara, releasing a few hundred thousand into the wild thus far (since the programme began in the late

1990s). Ironically, rich patrons from the UAE, including members of the royal family, frequent Pakistan to hunt the Houbara every winter. The court further directed the chief secretaries of Rajasthan and Gujarat to place an updated status report on the steps taken pursuant to its April 2021 order. A three-member expert committee constituted by the court to consider feasibility of laying power cables underground was also directed to provide an updated report of its work by the next date. This committee comprised Rahul Rawat of the ministry of new and renewable energy (MNRE), Sutirtha Dutta of Wildlife Institute of India (WII) and Devesh Gadhavi, deputy director of Corbett Foundation. The Union government claimed that at the time when the expert committee was constituted, there were 150 GIBs and 16 more were added by breeding them in captivity. Predators preying on the eggs laid by these birds was seen as a major factor requiring their protective breeding. The GIB is listed as Critically Endangered by the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) in its Red List of threatened species. They are also protected under the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972. According to Wildlife Institute of India, the potential GIB habitat in Rajasthan and Gujarat extends to 80,688 square kilometers, which includes approximately 13,550 sq km of priority habitat area. The WII report also recommended undergrounding of around 200 km of overhead power lines and installing bird diverters on all other power lines. The area falling in GIB habitat covers heritage districts of Jaisalmer and Jodhpur and parts of Bikaner and Barmer. As this region is also crucial for the development of renewable energy, the state government and the Centre believe that making underground cables mandatory may prove counter-productive for the development of renewable energy sector in India.

