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'RAM AA GAYE', SAYS PM MODI AFTER CEREMONY

Prime Minister Narendra Modi said on Monday that after years of struggle, "Ram Lalla (child Lord Ram) is here".

Ayodhya | Agencies

Addressing a gathering of thousands of people in Ayodhya, following the 'Pran Pratishtha' rituals at Ram temple, he said that he is still "shaking" from the spiritual experience of the inauguration of Ram temple, which happened four years after the landmark judgment by the Supreme Court.

The Prime Minister said that Ram is "not a dispute" but "a solution".

"I have firm belief and immense faith that today, the devotees of Ram are completely absorbed in this historic moment. The devotees of Ram, in every corner of the country and the world, are deeply feeling this. This moment is divine, this moment is the holiest of all," he stated.

PM Modi also praised the Indian judiciary, saying that they ensured justice, referring to the landmark judgment in the Ram Mandir-Babri Masjid dispute.

"The legal battle over the existence of Lord Ram went on for decades. I would like to express my gratitude to the judiciary of India for doing justice," he said at the event.

He added that Lord Ram is the "spirit of Indian Constitution".

Lauding the historic moment of the temple inauguration, the Prime Minister said that Indians have tackled a "complicated past" but the future looks bright from now on. He said that he is overjoyed



that Lord Ram will no longer reside in a tent. "Today our Ram has arrived after generations of waiting. On this auspicious occasion, congratulations to everyone. There is so much to tell, but there

is a lump in my throat," he said.

He further said, "January 22, 2024 is not merely a date but marks the advent of a new era. The legal battle over the existence of Lord Ram went on for decades. Ram is mentioned in the first verse in our Constitution, yet it took so many decades for this to happen. That Constitution finally holds true to its mention."

"Today, I also apologise to Lord Shri Ram. There must be something lacking in our effort, sacrifice and penance that we could not do this work for so many centuries. Today the work has been completed. I believe that Lord Shri Ram will definitely forgive us today," he said.

The Prime Minister said, "I got the opportunity to travel from Sagar to Saryu. From Sagar to Saryu, the same festive spirit of Ram's name is visible everywhere. Ram is not fire, Ram is energy. Ram is not a dispute, Ram is the solution. Ram is not just ours, Ram is everyone's. Ram is not current, Ram is eternal." He termed the Ram Mandir opening as a "humbling moment". He urged all to light a Ram Jyoti at home. He also took a dig at those who questioned India's social fabric.

The Prime Minister noted that he heard many verses from the epic Ramayana while reaching the temple for the 'Pran Pratishtha' ceremony.

After the Pran Pratishtha ceremony, Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath presented a model of the Ram temple, made in silver, to Prime Minister and RSS chief Mohan Bhagwat.

Amid dhols, chants, rallies, Hindus across the world say 'Jai Shri Ram'

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Amid the sounds of dhols and firecrackers, distribution of sweets, rallies and chants of 'Jai Shri Ram', Hindus in India and abroad came together to celebrate the 'Prana Pratishtha' ceremony of Ram Lalla in Ayodhya on Monday.

The US, where Indian-Americans make up approximately 1.35 per cent of the population, kicked off the celebrations almost a week before the temple's consecration with massive car rallies in Houston and California.

Carrying saffron banners with images of Ram Lalla and the temple, more than 1,100 Hindus took part in a Bay Area car rally, and a huge crowd gathered at the iconic Times Square in New York, singing hymns in praise of Lord Ram.

Laddos were also distributed as 'prasad' by the members of the 'Overseas Friends of Ram Mandir' at Times Square.

In addition, the US Chapter of the VHP erected over 40 billboards in 10 states, including Texas, Illinois, New York, New Jersey, and Georgia.

Over 100 Tesla-owning Hindus gathered at Sri Bhaktha Anjaneya Temple in Maryland and arranged their cars in such a way that it formed the word "Ram" when seen from a bird's eye view. "This is a huge accomplishment after 500 years of struggle.

Congratulations to my Hindu friends and my constituency and around the world. May you all be blessed," Congressman Rich McCormick said in a statement, greeting the Hindu community. It was broadcast live at approximately 300 locations across the US, including at Times Square which was lit up with vibrant colours and Lord Ram's images.

In Mauritius, where the population consists of around 48 per cent Hindus the community came together to light 'diyas' at the temples and recited the 'Ramayan Paath'. In addition, the government also announced a two-hour



off to Hindu officials on Monday.

Car rallies were also organised in London as well as Sydney, amidst chants and bhajans in praise of the deity.

In London, the rally commenced from The City Pavillion on Collier Road and travelled through East London before returning to the starting point.

January 22 was declared as 'Ayodhya Ram Mandir Day' in the towns of Oakville and Brampton in Canada's Ontario province.

Brampton Mayor Patrick Brown and his Oakville counterpart Rob Burton said the consecration "holds immense cultural, religious, and historical significance for Hindus worldwide, signifying the culmination of a centuries-old dream." In the Caribbean nation of Trinidad and Tobago, Hindus organised cultural events and sang hymns in praise of their deity on Sunday.

In France 'Ram Rath Yatra' will start from Place De La Chapelle at 12 pm and culminate at the Eiffel Tower's, Place De Trocadero, by 3 pm. A ceremony at the Ganesha temple in La Chapelle will include an elaborate puja, aarti, prasad distribution, and a cultural show. In neighbouring Nepal, Janakpur, which is considered to be the birthplace of Lord Ram's wife Sita, was lit up and 1,25,000 lamps will illuminate the Janaki temple today, along with 'aartis' in praise of Lord Ram and Sita.

PM to participate in Parakram Diwas programme at Red Fort

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Prime Minister Narendra Modi will participate in Parakram Diwas celebrations here at Red Fort on Tuesday.

The Prime Minister's Office (PMO) said on Monday that in line with the vision of the Prime Minister to take steps to duly honour the contribution of luminaries who played a significant role in the freedom struggle, the birth anniversary of Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose was started being celebrated as Parakram Diwas in 2021.

The programme being held this year at Red Fort will be a multifaceted celebration seamlessly weaving together historical reflections and vibrant cultural expressions. The activities will delve into the profound legacy of Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose and the Azad Hind Fauj, the PMO said. The



celebration will start in presence of the Prime Minister at 6:30 p.m. Visitors will get an opportunity to engage with an immersive experience through exhibitions of archives, showcasing rare photographs and documents that chronicle the remarkable journey of Netaji and the Azad Hind Fauj. These celebrations will continue till January 31, it added. Prime Minister Modi will also launch 'Bharat Parv', which

will be held from January 23 to 31. "It will showcase the country's rich diversity with Republic Day Tableaux and cultural exhibits, featuring efforts of 26 Ministries and Departments, highlighting citizen centric initiatives, vocal for local, diverse tourist attractions, among others".

The 'Bharat Parv' will take place at the Ram Leela Maidan and Madhav Das Park in front of Red Fort.

Will PM Modi now decide who will visit a temple, asks Rahul Gandhi

Guwahati | Agencies

Senior Congress leader Rahul Gandhi asked whether Prime Minister Narendra Modi would decide who will visit a temple in India after he was denied permission to visit the birthplace (sattr) of Vaishnav saint Srimanta Sankardeva in Assam's Nagaon District on Monday, citing possible disruption of law and order.

Gandhi said, "This is strange because Rahul Gandhi cannot go there while everyone else can visit the birthplace of Srimanta Sankardeva. Will PM Modi now decide who will visit a temple and when?"

He and other senior Congress leaders and supporters staged a dharna at Haibargaon on the way to Sankardev's birthplace in Batadrava, while Congress MP Gaurav Gogoi and Batadrava MLA Sibamoni Bora went to the birthplace to settle the dispute.

Gandhi told reporters that like Sankardeva, the Congress party work-



ers and leaders also believe in bringing people together and not spreading hatred.

"Sankardeva provides us with guidance and is similar to a guru. I therefore wanted to pay my respects to him when I arrived in Assam," he said.

"We were informed on Sunday that there is a law and order situation, but earlier on January 11, we had

received an invitation to visit the place," he said.

Rahul Gandhi said, "I will visit Batadrava as soon as I can. I think the whole nation should take the path that Sankardeva showed us."

Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma stated on Sunday that he had asked Rahul Gandhi not to visit Batadrava before the Ram Mandir inauguration in Ayodhya gets

over. Soon after that the managing committee of the Sri Sankardeva Sattr announced that they would not permit the Congress leader to visit the sattr before 3 pm on Monday.

Gandhi and his group had left for the sattr early on Monday morning, but they were halted near Haibargaon by Additional District Commissioner, Lakhyajyoti Das and Nagaon SP Navaneet Mahanta and heavy security was deployed all around the sattr by the district administration. Gandhi asked the police why they were preventing him from going to the sattr and said, "We just want to pray at the sattr. We don't want to cause any problems."

Meanwhile, Gaurav Gogoi, who went to the sattr with local MLA Bora, said that it was absolutely empty. "There was a falsehood and rumour circulated that Gandhi's visit could have resulted in a law and order problem. Himanta Biswa Sarma had put a black spot on the history of Batadrava and the legacy of Sri Sankardeva," he said.

Vote for any party, but not in the name of religion: Abhishek Banerjee

Kolkata | Agencies

Trinamool Congress national General Secretary and the party's Lok Sabha member, Abhishek Banerjee, on Monday issued an appeal to the people of West Bengal to vote for any political party in the forthcoming Lok Sabha elections, but not in the name of religion.

"You can vote for the Trinamool Congress or CPI(M), or for Congress or for the BJP. But do not vote in the name of religion. Rather vote in the name of the services provided to you. Neither the Prime Minister nor the President, neither the Chief Minister nor the Governor is ultimate in democracy. Only people say the final word in democracy," Banerjee said while speaking at the end of the 'Harmony Rally' organised by the party that started from Hazra Crossing and concluded at the Park Circus



Seven-Point Crossing.

The Trinamool leader also said that the people of West Bengal should remember before voting the kind of deprivation they faced from the Union government following the refusal of the latter in releasing central funds under different centrally-sponsored schemes. "No leader, however big he might be, will not be able to hold back your legitimate views if you vote keeping in mind the issues like 100-day jobs scheme under MGNREGA or housing scheme for the poor," Banerjee said.

Ram Mandir in Ayodhya to attract 5 crore tourists every year: report

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Ram Mandir in Ayodhya is expected to have a big economic impact in the region as tourism is projected to surge to 5 crore visitors every year to the holy town, according to global brokerage firm Jefferies.

"The grand opening of the Ram Temple at Ayodhya by Prime Minister Narendra Modi is a big religious event. It also comes with a large economic impact as India gets a new tourist spot which could attract 50 million plus tourists a year.

"A \$10 billion makeover (around Rs 82,500 crore) which includes a new airport, revamped railway station, township, improved road connectivity, etc. will likely drive a multiplier effect with new hotels and other economic activities. It can also set a template for infra-driven growth for tourism," the Jefferies report states.

Amid increased economic and religious migration to Ayodhya, "multiple sectors stand to benefit including hotels, airlines, hospitality, FMCG, travel ancillaries, cement etc", the report added.



The Ram temple at Ayodhya can "create a meaningfully large economic impact", said Jefferies. Main pilgrimage site, spread over nearly 70 acres, will be equipped to host about a million devotees together. Number of pilgrims is expected to jump to 1-1.5 lakh per day, the report further stated. "Religious tourism is still the biggest segment of tourism in India. Several popular religious centres attract annual tourist traffic of 10-30 million despite the existing infrastructural bottlenecks. And hence, the creation of a

new religious tourist centre (Ayodhya) with improved connectivity and infrastructure can create a meaningfully large economic impact," it said.

"The makeover is now set to transform the ancient city from a sleepy town to a global religious and spiritual tourist hotspot. Tourism is projected to surge and increased economic and religious migration to Ayodhya, multiple sectors stand to benefit including hotels, airlines, hospitality, FMCG, travel ancillaries, cement etc," the Jefferies report added.

First Ram temple opens in Mexico, American priest performs 'Pran Pratishtha'

New York | Agencies

Corresponding with the grand temple opening ceremony in Ayodhya today, the city of Queretaro in Mexico got its first temple dedicated to Lord Ram with its 'pran pratishtha' ceremony being performed by an American priest.

The idols were procured from India and the 'pran pratishtha' ceremony was attended by people from the Indian as well as the Mexican community, the Indian embassy said in a post shared on X. "On the eve of 'Pran Pratishtha' ceremony at Ayodhya, city of Queretaro in Mexico gets the first Lord Ram temple," the embassy said, adding that the city also hosts the first Lord Hanuman temple.

"The atmosphere was filled with divine energy as the hymns & songs sung by the Indian diaspora reverberated throughout the hall". According to Indian



embassy data, the Indian community in Mexico is small, numbering about 8000 with about one third of them in Mexico City, and the rest spread in Guadalajara, Monterrey, Cuernavaca, Queretaro, Cancun etc.

While the bulk is formed by IT professionals, others comprise executives of Indian and international companies, academicians, and businesspersons mostly in pharmaceuticals, textile and garment business.

In 2016, an 'Indian Association of Mexico (IAM)' was registered locally, which commands good membership and support of the community, according to the Indian Embassy.

PM MODI LAUNCHES SURYODAYA YOJNA FOR ROOFTOP SOLAR PANELS ON 1 CR HOUSES

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Monday chaired a meeting to launch the Pradhanmantri Suryodaya Yojana with the target of installing rooftop solar power panels on 1 crore houses in the country.

The meeting at his residence at Lok Kalyan Marg was held immediately after his visit to Ayodhya on the auspicious occasion of the Pran Pratishtha of the Ram Temple, according to a PMO statement.

During the meeting, the Prime Minister said that the power of the sun can be harnessed by every household with a roof to reduce their electricity bills and to make them truly Aatmanirbhar for their electricity needs. The Pradhanmantri Suryodaya Yojana aims to provide electricity to low and middle-income individuals through solar rooftop installations, along with offering additional income for surplus electricity generation.



The Prime Minister also directed that a massive national campaign should be started to mobilise residential segment consumers to adopt rooftop solar in large numbers.

Raj Govt announces 6 'Shri Ram-Janaki Industrial Areas' and direct bus service to Ayodhya

Jaipur | Agencies

On the eve of the consecration ceremony of the Ram temple in Ayodhya, the Bhajan Lal Sharma-led Rajasthan Government on Sunday made several announcements for the benefit of the people.

Now, a Rajasthan state roadways bus service will be launched from seven divisions of the state for the devotees going to Ayodhya.

Also, under the Senior Citizens Pilgrimage Scheme, 3,000 pilgrims will travel to Ayodhya to visit the Ram Temple by March 31 this year.

At the same time, rail service will also start from the state to Ayodhya.

These announcements were made by the Rajasthan



Government before the 'Prana Pratishtha' ceremony in Ayodhya late on Sunday night. The state government also announced six 'Shri Ram-Janaki Industrial Areas' which will be developed in five industrial areas of the state.

Vadodara boat tragedy: Gujarat HC seeks answers from authorities

Gandhinagar | Agencies

The Gujarat High Court on Monday ordered an inquiry into the January 18 boat capsizing incident at Harni Lake in Vadodara which claimed the lives of 14 students and two teachers.

The court has demanded a detailed report from the state government on enforcing safety regulations and the accountability of those responsible for the tragedy.

A bench led by Chief Justice Sunita Agarwal and Justice Aniruddha P Mayee, expressed grave concerns about the blatant violation of safety norms, noting the overloading on boat, and the absence of life jackets for passengers. The inquiry was ordered following reports that the boat, designed for 16, tragically capsize under the weight of 27 occupants.



The court has directed the Secretary of the Gujarat Home Department to furnish a detailed action-taken report. This report, to be affirmed by a Gazetted Officer of the Home

Department, is expected to clarify the measures implemented post-incident. This incident has thrown focus on the safety practices at popular recreational sites like Harni Lake, prompting a re-evaluation of protocols to prevent similar occurrences.

The court has set a deadline for the submission of the action-taken report, emphasising the urgency of rectifying the failures that led to the accident.

Rahul's Bharat Jodo Nyay Yatra enters Meghalaya from Assam



Shillong | Agencies

The Bharat Jodo Nyay Yatra (BJNY) being led by Congress leader Rahul Gandhi on Monday entered Meghalaya from Assam with a "padyatra" (foot march).

The BJNY crossed into Meghalaya from Morigaon district of Assam on late Monday afternoon.

Soon after entering Meghalaya, Rahul Gandhi

and those accompanying him took part in a padyatra close to Nongpoh, the headquarters of Ri Bhoi district of Meghalaya.

Before spending the night at Byrnihat in Ri Bhoi district, the former Congress president is scheduled to address a public meeting at Nongpoh. He is also expected to interact with youths on Tuesday morning along the Assam-Meghalaya border.

34 Manipur MLAs threaten to take 'appropriate action' if govt does not cancel Suspension of Operations with militants

Imphal | Agencies

In a significant development in Manipur, 34 MLAs, mostly of the ruling BJP, have urged the Central government to abrogate the Suspension of Operation (SoO) with the armed militant outfits, otherwise the legislators would take "appropriate action" in consultation with the people.

The 34 MLAs, in a meeting on Sunday, took a unanimous resolution requesting the Central government to abrogate the SoO, signed between the Central and state governments and 23 Kuki militant outfits in 2008 and 2,266 Kuki cadres have been staying in different designated camps in Manipur.

"If Government of India is unable to take any positive action as per the resolution, we the legislators will take appropriate action in consultation with the public," said the resolution, accessed by IANS.

The resolution said that the armed attacks (using sophisticated weaponry such as rocket-propelled grenade launchers) on Indian soil, Indian citizens, and security forces by Myanmar-based armed militants must be stopped at all costs.

It said that in many of the sensitive areas, a section of the Central forces are not



responsive and remain mute spectators when unarmed civilians (particularly farmers) are being indiscriminately fired upon frequently.

The resolution said that a section of central forces and their leadership need to give strict instructions and be held accountable and replaced with forces that have the ability to act by returning suppressive fire when they observe that unarmed civilians are being fired upon, to enable civilians to get to cover and safety.

According to the officials, the 34 signatories include ministers.

Chief Minister N. Biren Singh, however, did not sign the resolution.

Singh, who also holds the home portfolio, has, on a number of occasions, claimed that Myanmar-based militants and illegal immigrants from across the border are creating ethnic trouble in Manipur, involved in drugs smuggling and illicit poppy cultivation by encroaching the government forest lands.

Criticising the role of a section of the central forces, he said: "You (central forces) were not invited to observe what is going on. You were deployed to protect the integrity of the state... the life and properties of the innocent people."

Kerala CM expresses displeasure over 'Pran Pratishtha' ceremony in Ayodhya

Thiruvananthapuram | Agencies

Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan on Monday expressed displeasure over 'Pran Pratishtha' ceremony held in Ayodhya by Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

"We now have come to a point when the inauguration of a religious place of worship in the country is being celebrated as a state event," he said. He said that those who have pledged to preserve and protect the Constitution, they should reaffirm their commitment to its secular character.

"By declining to participate in the event, we have upheld our Constitutional responsibilities," the Chief Minister said.

He said that secularism has been the soul of the democratic republic of India. "Secularism is our identity as a nation right from the days of our national movement. Those belonging to different faiths and are not part of any religion had taken an active part in our freedom struggle.



This nation belongs to all people and all sections of Indian society, in equal measure," the Chief Minister said.

He said that religion is a private affair and the Indian Constitution has minced no words in stating that all persons are equally entitled to freedom of conscience and have the right to freely profess, practice and propagate religion.

"As those who have taken an oath to uphold the Constitution of India, we

should ensure that every person within our territories enjoys this right in equal measure. We cannot be promoting one religion above all others, or demean other religions," the Chief Minister said. He said that India's first Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru has said that 'Indian secularism means the separation of religion and state'.

"We even have a strong tradition of maintaining that separation. However, of late, the line that demarcates religion and state seems to be getting thinner and thinner. This is a major departure from the times when our constitutional office bearers have been cautioned from taking part in religious events, as it would cast aspersions on our credentials as a secular state," the Chief Minister said.

He said that let this serve as an opportunity to promote harmony and the spirit of common brotherhood amongst all the people of India transcending religious, linguistic and regional or sectional diversities.

Siddaramaiah is anti-Hindu, says Union Minister Pralhad Joshi

Bengaluru | Agencies

Union Minister for Mine, Coal, Law and Parliamentary Affairs Pralhad Joshi on Monday said Karnataka Chief Minister Siddaramaiah is 'anti-Hindu', adding that 'there should be no doubt about that'.

"Siddaramaiah did not declare a holiday. First, he said he would not go to Ayodhya. Now, he says he will visit Ayodhya. All of this is for securing votes," Joshi said.

"We will work towards creating 'Ram Rajya' in the coming five years," he added.

On the inauguration of Ram Mandir in Ayodhya, the Union Minister said: "Lord Ram, who had been away for a long time, has arrived home today. People are



working with devotion everywhere. There is a festive mood all over the country."

The Minister further said that Lord Ram was waiting for "a great personality to bring him home for 500 years". "Today, Prime Minister Narendra Modi has done the job. He has dedicated his life to creating a good society. PM Modi is following the principles of Ram," Joshi said. Meanwhile, Karnataka Deputy Chief Minister D.K. Shivakumar on Monday said the dream of "Ram Rajya" is

being realised through the guarantee schemes launched by the Congress-led government in the state.

Expressing happiness over Pran Pratishtha of Lord Ram in Ayodhya, Shivakumar said: "Creating Ram Rajya is our dream. In order to realize this dream, five guarantees in the state have been successfully implemented.

"A meaningful life is all about inculcating the principles of Lord Ram and the loyalty of Hanuman," he added.



Maha hails Lord Ram with poojas, temple bells, prasad and colourful celebrations

Team Absolute | Mumbai

At the stroke of 12.29 pm, lakhs of people in Mumbai and other parts of Maharashtra celebrated the 'Pran Prathisthan' of Lord Ram Temple in Ayodhya with processions, special poojas, chanting of prayers, hymns, ringing temple bells, cries of 'Jai Shree Ram', spraying 'gula', bursting of crackers and distributing sweet 'prasad' and 'maha-prasad' here on Monday afternoon.

The celebrations were taken up in a majority of the estimated 4,500 Hindu temples dotting the city, including big and small ones, several which are very old, some very big, others very popular, a few which are very magnificent, representing or dedicated to several gods-goddesses, attracting millions of devotees daily.

Since Sunday, almost all temples in the city have been decorated with flowers with marigolds the top favourite along with an assortment comprising 'tulsi', lotuses, hibiscus, etc, rendering the atmosphere divine and liting.

At night, many temples resemble a colourful vibrant spectacle with twinkling fairy lights, tiny glowing lamps of ghee-oil casting a golden warm glow, symbolising an unprecedented second Diwali to accord a grand reception to the Prince of Ayodhya, Lord Ram at his abode.



Many housing complexes in urban centres like Mumbai, Pune, Nagpur, Chhatrapati Sambhajnagar, Nashik were fully or partly decorated with flowers and lit up with multi-hued Diwali-style lanterns to mark the joyous occasion. Maharashtra government is one of the few states that had declared a full holiday, and it enabled lakhs of families including senior citizens and children to step out to the nearest temple and join the festivities,

with many from different communities also participating wholeheartedly. Hours before the Ayodhya Pran Pratishthan rituals attended by many VIPs and celeb, including scores from Mumbai's big biz and Bollywood, many temples had initiated a special cleanliness drive, led by the Chief Minister Eknath Shinde since the past few weeks. As per the CM's directive, each day, three major temples in each of the 24 Wards of

BrihanMumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC) were scrubbed and deep-cleaned to wear a sparkling look ahead of the big day (January 22). There are hundreds of Lord Ram Temples in Mumbai, but a few stand out for their unique history, traditions and the sentiments of devotees, including the Ram Mandirs in Borivali, Goregaon, Vile Parle, Dadar, Wadala, Bhuleshwar, or Walkeshwar, which witnessed massive crowds since early today. Many temples have made special arrangements on LED screens for a live telecast of the Ayodhya ceremonies, 'hom-havans', 'aartis', special idols of Lord Ram and Sita, post-pooja 'prasad' and 'maha-prasad' (meal) for the thousands of devotees, plus a special 'maha-prasad' organised for the poor in Dharavi slums.

Some of the major temples are having festivities for three consecutive days with a host of religious, social and cultural events.

Elsewhere, in Dombivli town, 111,111 oil lamps were lit to herald the Lord Ram Temple consecration in Ayodhya, renowned chef Vishnu Manohar cooked up a staggering six tonnes of 'special halwa' in the giant 'kadhai' for lakhs of devotees at the Shri Mahalakshmi Jagdamba Temple, a chariot procession in Pune, a gigantic idol of Lord Ram taken out in a lively march in Mira Road town (Thane), among many others.

SC issues notice to CM Shinde and his camp on Thackeray faction's plea challenging ??Maha Speaker ruling



Team Absolute | New Delhi

The Supreme Court on Monday agreed to examine a plea filed by Shiv Sena-UBT leader Sunil Prabhu challenging the ruling of Maharashtra Assembly Speaker Rahul Narwekar which had held that Chief Minister Eknath Shinde-led faction is the "real" Shiv Sena.

A bench, headed by CJI D.Y. Chandrachud and comprising Justices J.B. Pardiwala and Manoj Misra, issued notice and called for the response of CM Shinde and 38 other MLAs of his camp in the matter.

Senior advocate Kapil Sibal, appearing for Uddhav Thackeray-led faction, urged the bench to entertain the special leave petition filed before the apex court saying that the order passed by Speaker Narwekar involves an interpretation of the May 2023 judgment of the Constitution Bench.

As he requested the top court to make the notice returnable within a period of two weeks, CJI Chandrachud said that a fixed date

will be given in the matter.

Former CM Uddhav Thackeray-led Shiv Sena faction petitioned the Supreme Court questioning the January 10 decision passed by Narwekar holding that the group led by CM Shinde was the real "Shiv Sena" as it commanded a majority in the legislature and also in the party's National Executive.

The petition also challenges the dismissal of the disqualification petitions filed against CM Shinde and other MLAs of his camp.

The Bombay High Court on Wednesday had issued notice to the 14 Shiv Sena-UBT MLAs and others in a petition filed by ruling Shiv Sena's Chief Whip Bharat Gogavale seeking disqualification of Thackeray's faction legislators.

A division bench of Justices G.S. Kulkarni and P.P. Pooniwalla posted the matter for further hearing on February 8.

Thackeray's legislative flock was saved from disqualification with the cross-petitions of both sides getting dismissed by Speaker Narwekar in the impugned January 10 verdict.

'KHICHDI SCAM'

Mumbai court extends Shiv Sena (UBT) leader's ED custody till Jan 25

Team Absolute | Mumbai

A Special PMLA Court in Mumbai on Monday extended the custody of Shiv Sena (UBT) leader Suraj Chavan, arrested in connection with the alleged 'Khichdi scam', till January 25.

Chavan, a close aide of Yuva Sena President and MLA Aditya Thackeray, was arrested on January 17 for a money-laundering case linked to the 'Khichdi scam' matter probed by the Mumbai Police's Economic Offences Wing.

He was granted the Enforcement Directorate (ED) custody till January 22 and produced before the Special PMLA Court to extend his remand by a week.

Seeking extended custody, the ED argued that Chavan had utilised the proceeds of the alleged money-laundering crime to invest in realty and a dairy business, and had played a "very critical role in the entire offence".

The alleged irregularities occurred when the BrihanMumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC) awarded huge contracts to private caterers including Force One Multi-Services, for providing 'Khichdi' to migrants stranded here during the Covid-19 pandemic lockdown.

The ED contended that the BMC had transferred an amount of Rs 8.64 crore to the company's bank accounts, from which there was a misappropriation of around Rs 3.64 crore.

Of this amount, Rs 1.25 crore was allegedly diverted to the bank account of Chavan and Rs 10 lakh to the bank account of his partnership firm,



Firefighters Enterprises, thus illegally cornering around Rs 1.35 crore as the 'proceeds of the crime'.

Chavan has reportedly invested this amount for clearing off personal taxes and liabilities, buying a flat and agricultural land and starting a dairy business, the ED contended. The ED sought an extension of custody to confront him

with documents and his associates in the companies to unravel more details of the scam and unearth the money trail and the possible involvement of other players. The Shiv Sena (UBT) leaders, including Aditya Thackeray, Sanjay Raut and Sushma Andhare, had slammed the ED action of "selectively targeting its leaders" in different alleged scandals.

Shilpa waves saffron flag with Lord Ram's image at Siddhivinayak temple



Team Absolute | Mumbai

Actress Shilpa Shetty, who was spotted at the Siddhivinayak Temple here on Monday, was seen waving a saffron flag with an image of Lord Ram and 'Jai Shri Ram' written on it, on the auspicious occasion of the Pran Pratishtha ceremony of the Ram Temple in Ayodhya. Earlier in the day,

Prime Minister Narendra Modi led the Pran Pratishtha ceremony of the Ram Temple in Ayodhya. In a video clicked by the paparazzi, Shilpa could be seen wearing an orange saree and a golden blouse. Her hair was tied in a low bun, and for accessories she opted for golden earrings. She completed her look with a golden 'potli' bag. The video shows Shilpa smiling for the cameras, and wav-

ing a saffron flag with 'Jai Shri Ram' written on it. She then walks inside the Siddhivinayak temple premises.

On the work front, Shilpa is now seen in the action-thriller 'Indian Police Force'. The series is created and directed by Rohit Shetty and Sushwanth Prakash. It also stars Sidharth Malhotra and Vivek Oberoi, and is streaming on Prime Video.

SHIV SENA (UBT) MARKS RAM MANDIR INAUGURATION IN AYODHYA WITH PROCESSION IN NASHIK

Team Absolute | Nashik (Maharashtra)

The Shiv Sena (UBT) took out a massive procession in Nashik to mark inauguration of Ram Temple in Ayodhya, and offered prayers at the famed Kalaram Mandir, here on Monday.

The procession, in which party leader Aditya Thackeray and others participated, went through some of the prominent roads in the town with activists sporting saffron flags, and raising slogans of 'Jai Shri Ram'.

"The dream of Balasaheb Thackeray has been fulfilled and the sacrifices of all the 'kar-sevaks' have borne fruits today... Raghubhupati Raghav Raja Ram, Patit Pavan Sita Ram... Jai Siyaram," said Aditya Thackeray. SS-UBT President and former Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray went and prayed at Kalaram Mandir here on Monday evening. He is scheduled to address a public



rally later on Monday.

Thackeray was extended an invite to the Pran Pratishtha ceremony in Ayodhya, but along with several other political parties and allies, he decided to skip the event. From Tuesday,

January 23, the SS-UBT will kickstart its poll campaign for the ensuing Lok Sabha elections, said a party leader. The day is auspicious on two counts -- it is the 98th birth anniversary of the original Shiv Sena

founder Balasaheb Thackeray who founded the party on June 19, 1966, and it is also the 127th birth anniversary of the legendary freedom fighter Subhash Chandra Bose. The SS-UBT has launched a

mega-campaign here involving a 'Maha-Shibir', a 'Khula Adhiveshan', a procession, and a rally in this pilgrim centre as an attempt to revive the party after its vertical split in June 2022, followed by legal, political and legislative reverses in the last 19 tumultuous months.

This year, the party - a constituent of the Opposition Maha Vikas Aghadi (MVA) in the state and the INDIA bloc at the national level - will face three major elections, civic, parliament and assembly in quick succession that would decide the future of its battle for its political survival amid huge pressures. Besides revamping and rejuvenating the party founded by his father, Thackeray's immediate challenges are the vexed seat-sharing talks with the other allies, Congress and Nationalist Congress Party (SP), and the 'targeting' of several of its leaders by various central investigation agencies in different cases.

Clashes spark panic in Maha town ahead of Ram Mandir inauguration; situation normal now

Team Absolute | Thane (Maharashtra)

A minor scuffle erupted between two communities in Mira Road town late on Sunday -- ahead of Ram Mandir inauguration in Ayodhya -- but the police stepped in swiftly and brought the situation under control by Monday morning, an official said.

A group of people had taken out a procession of nearly half-a-dozen vehicles with saffron flags depicting Lord Ram Temple.

When it was passing through a minority-dominated area, some persons belonging to another community raised objections leading to heated arguments and clashes.

In the clashes, one person sustained minor injury due to "usage of knife" while some of the miscreants smashed window panes of several vehicles with sticks and rods, and also pelted stones at the other group.

As things appeared to turn serious, a team from the Naya Nagar Police



immediately rushed to the spot, attempted to speak and broker peace with the agitated leaders from both sides and brought the situation under control. As a precautionary measure, at least five persons were booked and arrested for the disturbances, as the fracas was nipped in the bud.

Deputy Commissioner of Police Jayant Bajbale of Mira-Bhayander Vasai-Virar Police Commissionerate has been probing the matter, the videos of which went viral on Monday, sparking strong reactions.

Meanwhile, a strong police presence has been deployed in the town on Monday to avert any law and order problems.

The situation is reported to be normal now.



CM DR. YADAV WISHES HAPPINESS AND PROSPERITY OF THE STATE AFTER DARSHAN AND WORSHIP OF SHRI RAMRAJA SARKAR

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Chief Minister Dr. Mohan Yadav today watched the live telecast of the Pran Pratishtha ceremony in the grand, supernatural, divine-new temple of Ayodhya, the birthplace of Shri Ramlalla, along with the formal worship of Lord Shri Ram at Shri Ramraja Sarkar Mandir in Orchha. Shri Ramlalla was consecrated in the temple in Ayodhya by Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi amid chanting of Vedic mantras.

Chief Minister Dr. Yadav performed puja at Shri Ramraja Sarkar Mandir, Orchha where Acharya Pandit Shri Virendra Bidua and his colleagues chanted shlokas and mantras. Dr. Yadav offered prayers to Adityadi Navagrah Mandalam Peeth, Sarvottobhadra Mandalam Peeth, Shri Ganesh Gauri Peeth and Shri Shodash Matrika Peeth. After offering flowers on the picture of Lord Shri Ram, the Chief Minister also performed aarti with the public representatives. After the puja, Sushri Madhuri Madhukar presented soulful bhajans on Lord Shri Ram. Acharya Shri Virendra Bidua, who conducted the puja, welcomed Chief Minister Dr. Yadav and other public representatives with flowers. After the live telecast of Ayodhya ceremony, Chief Minister Dr. Yadav along with public representatives visited Shri Ramraja Sarkar in the temple and offered prayers. Chief Minister Dr. Yadav prayed to Lord Shri Ram for the prosperity of Madhya Pradesh and the happiness of the people of the state. He observed the model of Shri Ramraja Lok in the temple premises itself, and sought information regarding its progress. Chief Minister Dr. Yadav served prasad to the women devotees in the bhandara organized at the court of Shri Ramraja Sarkar in Orchha. The women devotees expressed happiness after receiving the prasad from the hands of Chief Minister Dr. Yadav and gave him their blessings. Women devotee Smt. Savita and Smt. Sarojini, expressed happiness and said that they consider it their good fortune to receive prasad from the hands of their Chief Minister on the occasion of the consecration of Shri Ram Lalla in Ayodhya.

Chief Minister Dr. Yadav along with public representatives participated in the Bhandara being held at Shri Ramraja Darbar and accepted prasad.

A big LED screen was installed in the pandal built in the Shri Ramraja temple complex, on which the live telecast of the consecration ceremony of Shri Ramlalla was being performed. Among those present were Chief Minister Dr. Yadav, former Chief Minister Shri Shivraj Singh Chouhan, Minister of State



for Culture, Tourism and Endowments (Independent Charge) Shri Dharmendra Singh Lodhi, Chairman of Madhya Pradesh

Text Book Corporation Shri Shailendra Barua, Niwari MLA Shri Anil Jain, Jatara MLA Shri Harishankar Khatik, Shri

Akhilesh Ayachi, former MLA Prithvipur Dr. Shishupal Singh Yadav and other public representatives.

BJP has given political hue to Ram temple consecration ceremony: Kamal Nath

Team Absolute | Bhopal

The former Madhya Pradesh chief minister, in a post on his official X account, however, congratulated people on the occasion of 'pran pratishtha' (consecration) of the Ram Lalla idol at the magnificent temple in the Uttar Pradesh town on Monday.

Nath said the Lord Ram temple has been constructed in Ayodhya on the orders of the Supreme Court. Since there are BJP governments at the Centre and in Uttar Pradesh, it was their responsibility to follow the Supreme Court orders, maintained the former Union minister

"The way the BJP has given a political hue to this programme and tried to bring religion on political platform is unfortunate and sad. Lord Ram has always been, and will always be, at the centre of faith for all of us.

Politics on this is like playing with religious freedom and traditions," he stated. Nath also claimed Congress MP Rahul Gandhi was stopped from going to a temple in Assam during his ongoing Bharat Jodo Nyay Yatra in the north-eastern state.

"Has offering prayer and worship-



ping at a temple also been banned during BJP rule? Rahul ji had to stage a dharna for permission to go to the temple. This is an attack on our faith and freedom," he said.

Gandhi was barred from visiting the birthplace of iconic Vaishnav saint

Srimanta Sankardeva in Nagaon district earlier in the day on the ground a law and order problem may arise during his tour as many organisations were planning to hold events related to the consecration of the Ram temple in Ayodhya.

TODAY IS THE DAY OF NEW CULTURAL RITUALS - CM DR. YADAV

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Indians are zealous about the Pran Pratishtha ceremony of Lord Shri Ram held under PM Shri Modis leadership

Chief Minister Dr. Mohan Yadav started the auspicious day of the Pran Pratishtha ceremony of Lord Shri Ram with worship after cleaning and serving the Shri Siddha Raghunath Temple located at Tulsi Manas Pratishthan. Convenor of Manas Pratishthan Shri Raghunandan Sharma and other officials were present. Chief Minister Dr. Yadav, in a discussion with media colleagues at Manas Pratishthan, said that Indians are enthusiastic about the consecration of Lord Shri Ram held under the leadership of Prime Minister Shri Modi. The atmosphere of the country as well as the entire world is enveloped in the aura of Lord Ram.

Today is a very auspicious day for India Chief Minister Dr. Yadav said that today is a very fortunate day for India. Lord Shri Ram is entering the grand and divine Griha in Ayodhya. Through Prime Minister Shri Modi, the country is taking part in a new cultural ritual, a new festival. I will remain in Orchha to witness the divine moments of Pran Pratishtha. Lord Shri Ram is seated there like a Raja. On this occasion, we all are joyful. There



is a festive atmosphere in the entire country and state.

Today the whole country and the world is welcoming Lord Ram

Chief Minister Dr. Yadav said that we all wish that Lord Ram bestows wisdom on everyone, through this opportunity India should display its goodness in the world and the country should move for-

ward under the leadership of Prime Minister Shri Modi in the service of humanity. Chief Minister Dr. Yadav said that the atmosphere has become blissful in all the countries of the world where Indians are present. The scene of the Parliament of England is worth a watch. Chief Minister Dr. Yadav congratulated everyone.

RAJ BHAVAN WILL BE OPENED FOR THE GENERAL PUBLIC FOR THREE DAYS



Bhopal: On the instructions of Governor Shri Mangubhai Patel, Raj Bhavan will be opened for the general public for three days on the occasion of Republic Day. Raj Bhavan will remain open for the stipulated period from 25 January to 27 January 2024. Common citizens will be able to visit Raj Bhavan on 25th and 27th January from 2 pm to 7 pm. On Republic Day, January 26, Raj Bhavan will be open for the visit of the public from 11 am to 2 pm.

On this occasion, a photo exhibition will be organized by Central Bureau of Communication, Bhopal centred on Viksit Bharat Sankalp Yatra and Madhya Pradesh Freedom Fighters at Raj Bhavan. Cultural programmes and puppet shows will also be performed by the cultural troupe of the Bureau. 3-D selfie booths of the country's achievements will be installed at the exhibition site. During this period, quiz programmes will also be organised for the visitors.

188 projects on strategically important mineral commodities approved for 2024-25

Team Absolute | Bhopal

63rd Central Geological Programming Board (CGPB) meeting held

As many as 188 projects on strategically important mineral commodities like REE, RM, Graphite, Lithium, Vanadium and PGE etc. have been approved for the year 2024-25 at the 63rd Central Geological Programming Board (CGPB) meeting held at Kushabhau Thakre International Convention Centre today. This is a jump of 50% from previous year's target. The meeting was held under the Chairmanship of Shri V.L. Kantha Rao, Secretary to the Govt. of India, Ministry of Mines (MoM). Shri Sanjay Lohiya, Additional Secretary, Ministry of Mines and Shri Janardan Prasad, Director General, GSI were the other dignitaries gracing the occasion. Senior functionaries of different Ministries, State Directorates of Mining & Geology, PSUs, representatives from private mining industry, Mining associations and other stakeholders attended the meeting.

The proposed Annual Programme for ensuing Field Season year 2024-25 was placed before the Board for discussion. During the ensuing year 2024-25 GSI has formulated about 1055 scientific programs for the year 2024-25, which includes 392 Mineral Development projects



having potential to generate auctionable mineral blocks in near future. As many as 133 projects with mineral bias or Mineral Discovery Projects having potential for generating promising areas for future exploration. Also 111 projects under Natural Hazard Studies/Public Good Geoscience have been taken having societal benefits. Among these, 25 programmes are being taken up on State request/Disaster Management Authorities which includes programme mostly covering the Natural Hazards and 43 programmes are in collaboration with universities / agencies / under sponsorship of different authorities like IITs, NGRI, DRDO, NRSC-ISRO, University of Hyderabad, ASI, CGWB Ministry

of Jal Shakti, SJVNL, NWDA, Indian Railways, BRO and State Irrigation Departments etc.

Besides, approval of the FSP items of GSI, the Report on Geological & Geotechnical investigation of Joshimath Township, Chamoli District was also unveiled by Shri V.L. Kantha Rao, Secretary, Ministry of Mines for handing it over to Uttarakhand Govt. The Mineral Map of the newly carved out UT of Ladakh was also released on this occasion along with other significant publication of GSI.

Shri V.L. Kantha Rao, Secretary, Mines and Chairman CGPB underlined the importance of scientific rigor in mining sector. He urged GSI and other exploration agencies to increase the pace of

exploration and emphasized on exploration of Critical Mineral. He also urged the State Governments to be more aggressive in implementation of exploration projects through NMET funding. He requested stakeholders to make use of geoscience data available in NGDR portal for smooth exploration process. The details of National Geoscience Data Repository (NGDR) portal were presented. Shri V.L. Kantha Rao, Secretary, Ministry of Mines in presence of senior officials inaugurated an Exhibition on the theme, "Mining and Beyond", in which GSI, PSUs, DMFs, major mining companies, private exploration agencies, startups, Madhya Pradesh Government showcased their achievements.

Governor Shri Mangubhai Patel observes live telecast of Ram Mandir Pran Pratishtha ceremony



Team Absolute | Bhopal

Governor Shri Mangubhai Patel participated in the live telecast of the Ram Mandir Pran Pratishtha ceremony from Ayodhya. The live telecast programme was organised in the temple courtyard located in the Raj Bhavan complex. On this occasion, Principal Secretary to the Governor Shri DP Ahuja, officers-employees of Raj Bhavan and residents of Raj Bhavan complex were pres-

ent. Before the commencement of the live telecast, Governor Shri Mangubhai Patel paid a visit to the Raj Bhavan temple, where he performed the worship rituals. Kanya puja was performed at the beginning of the programme.

He observed the live telecast of Ram Mandir consecration ceremony from Ayodhya. He distributed Prasad to the children after the Pran Pratishtha programme.

KOHLI WITHDRAWS FROM FIRST TWO TESTS AGAINST ENGLAND FOR PERSONAL REASONS

Hyderabad | Agencies

Three days ahead of the start of the five-match Test series against England at the Rajiv Gandhi International Stadium, India have been dealt with a huge blow as talismanic batter Virat Kohli has withdrawn from the first two matches, citing personal reasons.

In a statement, the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) said a replacement will be named soon by the selection committee after Kohli requested to withdraw from the Test matches in Hyderabad and Visakhapatnam, while requesting for his privacy to be respected.

“Virat has spoken to Captain Rohit Sharma, the team management and the selectors and has emphasized that while representing the country has always been his top priority, certain personal situations demand his presence and undivided attention.”

“The BCCI respects his decision and the Board and team management has extended its support to the star batter and is confident in the abilities of the remaining squad members to step up and deliver commendable performances in the Test series.”

“The BCCI requests the media and fans to respect Virat Kohli’s privacy during this time and refrain from speculating on the nature of his personal reasons. The focus should



remain on supporting the Indian cricket team as they embark on the upcoming challenges in the Test series,” said the BCCI.

Kohli played India’s last Test series against South Africa, which ended in a 1-1 draw. He then missed the T20I against Afghanistan at Mohali

earlier this month due to personal reasons before playing in the last two matches of the series at Indore and Bengaluru.

In the absence of Kohli for the first two matches, India will depend a lot on middle-order batters Shubman Gill and Shreyas Iyer. KL Rahul, named as a wicketkeeper-batter, can also play as a specialist batting option. KS Bharat and Dhruv Jurel are the other contenders for the wicket-keeper’s spot in India’s playing eleven.

On Sunday, England said middle-order batter Harry Brook had pulled out of the tour of India with immediate effect, citing personal reasons. Later in the day, it announced Dan Lawrence as Brook’s replacement in the touring party, with the middle-order batter expected to link up with the team in Hyderabad on Monday.

The upcoming series between India and England will begin at Hyderabad on January 25, followed by other matches at Visakhapatnam (February 2-6), Rajkot (February 15-19), Ranchi (February 23-27) and Dharamshala (March 7-11).

India are currently at second place on the 2023-2025 World Test Championship points table with 54.16 PCT, behind defending champions Australia. England, on the other hand, are at eighth place in the points table with 15 PCT.

KIYG 2023: Daughter of a welder, Chandigarh’s Sapna shines with a second gold

Chennai | Agencies

A childhood obsession for medals introduced Chandigarh’s Sapna to sports and she is now fulfilling that dream as a judoka in the ongoing Khelo India Youth Games 2023 in Chennai, Tamil Nadu.

Sapna’s journey started with yoga before she was influenced by some friends to take up judo five years ago. Sapna is now a proud owner of 12 medals, which includes a second Khelo India Youth Games gold which she won in the under-40 kg category here on Sunday. Sapna, whose father is a welder and mother a housewife, said her parents don’t have any clue about her sport but they have never stopped her from participating. “I was mad about medals, no matter what the sport was. The only thing I wanted was to win medals. At the nearby school, I saw some kids doing yogasana and I joined them. But some days later, I befriended some other kids there and found them training for judo. I instantly liked the sport and decided to pursue it... and that’s how the journey start-



ed,” she said. Now, a student of Class 12, Sapna’s initial days in the sport were affected by the Covid-19 pandemic but she never missed a day of training. “Our trainer used to take online classes, and we were assigned to make small videos of our training, and I did not miss a day’s training. I somehow felt that if I missed a day of training I would miss a medal on resumption of competitions. That feeling pushed me to work harder,” she recalled with a smile. Sapna tasted success for the first time at the National Cadet Women’s League when she won a gold medal. She hasn’t looked

back since. The judoka has so far won overall four National Cadet Women’s League gold medals, two Khelo India gold, and a host of silver and bronze medals at the national championships. However, it hasn’t been a cakewalk for Sapna as her modest background and lack of financial support forced her to miss the Commonwealth Cadet Championships in South Africa.

“There have been several examples (of challenges) but the one I clearly remember is an opportunity to take part in the Commonwealth Cadet championships. It required around Rs 2 lakh, which I couldn’t manage, and had to miss out on. I was a bit upset then, but took it in my stride,” she said. Despite the setback, there has been no shortage of motivation for the 17-year-old, who feels her second KIYG gold medal will help her shine in the junior category. For now, Sapna is happy to have inspired both her younger brothers to take up judo, and one of them has found instant success by winning a silver at the sub-junior nationals held at Chandigarh University in 2023.

Josh Brown goes past Chris Gayle’s record of most sixes in BBL innings



Carrara | Agencies

Brisbane Heat batter Josh Brown on Monday etched his name in the record books by smashing the most sixes in a Big Bash League (BBL) inning, during his 140-run knock against Adelaide Strikers at the Heritage Bank Stadium.

With 12 sixes to his name, Brown surpassed the previous record jointly held by Chris Gayle, Craig Simmons, and Chris Lynn, each with 11 sixes. Among them, Lynn had achieved this feat twice in an inning.

Brown’s extraordinary innings saw him amass a jaw-dropping 140 runs off just 57 balls, featuring an onslaught of 10 fours and an incredible 12 sixes. The right-

handed batsman’s maiden century was punctuated by his nine hits over the ropes, propelling Brisbane Heat to a formidable total of 214 for 7 in this crucial do-or-die clash.

Brown’s whirlwind century off 41 balls also entered the record books, matching the second-fastest hundred in BBL history. In 2023 Glenn Maxwell achieved a similar feat, reaching a century in 41 balls against the Hobart Hurricanes at the iconic MCG.

Craig Simmons still holds the record for the fastest BBL hundred, accomplishing the feat in just 39 balls back in January 2014 for the Perth Scorchers against the Strikers.

Brown’s extraordinary

innings also secured him the third-highest individual score in the history of the BBL. Glenn Maxwell currently holds the record with his incredible knock of 154 off 64 balls for the Stars against the Hurricanes at the MCG. Marcus Stoinis, another Stars player, holds the second spot with 147 not out against the Sydney Sixers in 2020 at the Sydney Cricket Ground.

Brown’s exceptional form has propelled him to the third spot in the list of leading run-scorers. With 313 runs from eight matches at an average of 39.12 and an impressive strike rate of 152.68, Brown has emerged as a force to be reckoned with in the T20 league.

Making his debut in the previous BBL season (2022-23), he has already accumulated 771 runs at an average of 35.04, showcasing his prowess with the bat on the big stage.

Riding on Brown’s century and McSweeney’s three wickets, Heat stormed into the final of BBL 13, beating Strikers by 54 runs. Bouncing back from two straight losses, the Heat -- who were the most outstanding team during the regular season with seven straight victories -- travel to Sydney on Tuesday to face the Sixers for the BBL title on Wednesday at the SCG.

CA INVESTIGATES AS MAXWELL HOSPITALISED AFTER ALCOHOL-RELATED INCIDENT; REPORTS



New Delhi:Cricket Australia is investigating an incident that led to the brief hospitalisation of Australian all-rounder Glenn Maxwell in Adelaide on January 19. According to the Daily Telegraph, the incident occurred while Maxwell was attending a band Six and Out, featuring Brett Lee. The nature of the incident remains unclear but, as per the report, an ambulance was called and Maxwell was taken to the hospital, although his stay was of short duration. Maxwell had been in Adelaide for a celebrity golf event following the conclusion of Melbourne Stars’ Big Bash League (BBL) campaign, according to ESPNcricinfo. Cricket Australia issued a statement acknowledging the occurrence and confirming their intention to investigate further. Maxwell was managed out of Australia’s ODI squad to face West Indies, although CA clarified that Maxwell’s exclusion is part of his individual management plan following the culmination of the BBL season and is not related to the events in Adelaide.

Olympic hockey competition: India in tough Pool B along with Belgium, Australia, Argentina

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Tokyo Olympic Games bronze medallist India have been placed in a tough Pool B along with defending champion Belgium, World No.5 Australia and No.7 seed Argentina in the hockey competition of the 33rd Olympic Games in Paris to be held from July 27 to August 8.

New Zealand and Ireland are the other teams in the six-team Pool B. World No.1 the Netherlands, World Champion Germany, the 1988 Seoul Olympics gold medallist Great Britain, three-time silver medallist Spain, hosts France and South Africa have been placed in Pool A in the 12-team competition.

Following the completion of the FIH Hockey Olympic Qualifiers yesterday, the International Hockey Federation (FIH) can reveal the Pools of the Paris 2024 Olympic hockey tournaments,” the FIH announced after the draw was conducted in Lausanne, Switzerland, on Monday.

Eight-time Olympic gold medallists India will have to finish among the top four to qualify for the quarterfinal stage, which will be played on August 4. The semifinals will be played on August 6 while the finals will be played on August 8.

The participating teams have been allocated to their respective pools based on the FIH World Rankings on January 21.

Teams ranked first, fourth, fifth,



eighth, ninth and 12th comprise Pool A while teams ranked second, third, fourth, sixth, seventh, 10th and 11th have been included in Pool B.

India are ranked third in the latest FIH World Rankings updated at the end of the FIH Hockey Olympic Qualifiers and therefore find themselves in the second group.

In the women’s competition, World and Olympic champions the

Netherlands, Belgium, Germany, Japan, China and France find themselves in Pool A. Women’s World No.2 Australia, third-ranked Argentina, Great Britain, Spain, United States and South Africa are in Pool B.

The 12 teams per gender have qualified for the Olympic Games either as hosts, winners of their Continental Qualifier or Top three finishers of their FIH Hockey Olympic Qualifier.

Suryakumar named captain of ICC T20I team of the year; Jaiswal, Bishnoi, Arshdeep included



Team Absolute | New Delhi

India’s middle-order batter Suryakumar Yadav was named the captain of ICC Men’s T20I team of the year, which also includes Yashasvi Jaiswal, Ravi Bishnoi, and Arshdeep Singh. In the ICC Women’s T20I team of the Year, all-rounder Deepti Sharma is the only Indian player to be included.

Suryakumar has been named in the Men’s T20I team of the year for a second straight year and is currently in the running for T20I Men’s Cricketer of the Year. His first innings of 2023 was just seven against Sri Lanka.

He bounced back with scores of 51 (36) and 112 not out (51) in the next two matches. Consistent scoring in 20s to 40s continued, before an innings of 83 (44) against the West Indies in Providence reminded everyone of his capabilities in the shortest format. He ended the series against the West Indies with a knock of 61 (45) in Florida.

Suryakumar also took the India T20I captaincy, with Rohit Sharma on break from the format and Hardik Pandya being injured. He made half-centuries against Australia (80 off 42 balls) and South

Africa (56 from 36 balls) in the 4-1 series win, before posting an even 100 against the Proteas off just 56 balls in their final T20I of the year in Johannesburg, as India won the series 2-1.

Joining him in the ICC Men’s T20I team of the year is Jaiswal, who made his T20I debut for India in 2023. The left-handed aggressive opener has made 430 runs in 14 knocks at a strike rate of 159.

After a blip on debut against the West Indies, Jaiswal hit back with a 51-ball 84 not out in Florida, before moving his attention to the Asian Games, making an even 100 off just 49 balls against Nepal in India’s gold-medal winning campaign.

The young left-hander then made a 25-ball 53 against Australia in their home T20I series late in the year, before finishing with a knock of 60 from 41 balls against South Africa in Johannesburg, proving that he can give those big, aggressive starts to the team in power-play.

Leg-spinner Bishnoi took 18 wickets in just 44 overs across the year, and was even ranked at the top of the ICC Men’s T20I bowler rankings. Bishnoi travelled on India’s tour of Ireland, taking four wickets across two matches, before being picked in

the Asian Games squad to compete in Hangzhou, taking five wickets, including 3/24 against Nepal.

He then claimed a wicket in every match against the Aussies, with back-to-back spells of 3/32 and 2/32 hammering his name into the team and also taking the Player of the Series award. Left-arm fast-bowler Arshdeep continued to excel in 2023 despite struggling for rhythm at times, taking 26 wickets in 21 T20I appearances for India. A spell of 3/20 against Sri Lanka in was followed by a pair of two-wicket hauls against New Zealand at the start of the year.

Arshdeep returned to the team in August for the tour of the USA and the Caribbean with a performance of 3/38 in Lauderdale against the West Indies, before taking four wickets in Hangzhou at the Asian Games in October.

Other players who made the cut in Men’s T20I team of the year include England opener Phil Salt, West Indies wicketkeeper-batter Nicholas Pooran, New Zealand batter Mark Chapman, Zimbabwe all-rounder Sikandar Raza, Uganda spinner Alpesh Ramjani, Ireland pacer Mark Adair and Zimbabwe fast-bowler Richard Ngarava.

Shiva, Jaismine to lead 9-member boxing squad in first World Qualification for Paris 2024

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Six-time Asian Championships medallist Shiva Thapa and 2022 Commonwealth Games bronze medallist Jaismine are set to spearhead Indian challenge as the Boxing Federation of India (BFI) named nine-member squad for the first World Qualification Tournament of Paris Olympic Games 2024.

The world qualification tournament is scheduled to take place in Busto Arsizio, Italy from February 29 to March 12.

Besides Thapa (63.5kg) and Jaismine (60kg), the youth world champion Ankushita Boro (66kg), reigning medallist champions Lakshya Chahar (80kg), Sanjeet Kumar (92kg), 2022 Asian Games bronze medallist Narender Berwal (+92kg) and 2023 World Championship bronze medallists Mohammed Hussamuddin (57kg), Deepak Bhorla (51kg) and Nishant Dev (71kg) have also been included as they will fight for Paris 2024 quotas in their respective categories.

The players have been selected after a comprehensive evaluation process, conducted by the high-performance unit based on various performance parameters, the BFI released read.

The first World Qualification Tournament will have 50 Olympics quotas up for grabs, including 22 in the women’s section, whereas between 45 and 51 boxers will qualify through the second World Qualification Tournament, to be held in Bangkok from May 23 to June 3, as the countries who have not qualified an athlete for a specific weight category through



their continental qualification tournament or the first World Qualification Tournament will be eligible to enter one athlete per weight category. “Our aim is to maximise India’s participation at the Paris Olympic Games 2024 and to achieve that, we have undertaken a thorough and careful selection process for the first World Qualification Tournament. The high-performance team conducted a detailed evaluation process, gave points to boxers and those securing highest points were selected. We are confident and believe that these boxers possess the mettle to not only compete but triumph and secure coveted spots at the Olympics,” said Hemanta Kumar Kalita, Secretary General, BFI.

India have already secured four quotas for Paris 2024 with Nikhat Zareen (50kg), Preeti (54kg), Parveen Hooda (57kg) and Lovlina Borgohain (75kg) confirming their berths with impressive performances at the Asian Games.



Kangana gleefully jumps during Pran Pratishtha of temple, chants 'Jai Shri Ram'

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Actress Kangana Ranaut expressed her joy and happiness over the completion of the Pran Pratishtha ceremony of Ram Temple in Ayodhya, and loudly chanted 'Jai Shri Ram'.

On Monday, Prime Minister Narendra Modi performed the 'Sankalp' within the 84 seconds 'abhi-jit muhurat' as part of the Pran Pratishtha ceremony of Lord Ram Lalla, in Ayodhya.

Kangana, who attended the auspicious ceremony, shared pictures of herself wearing a white heavily embroidered saree, with red border, and matching blouse. She completed the outfit with a red shawl.

The 'Queen' fame actress tied her hair in a ponytail, and opted for green coloured accessories. She looked beautiful in a bindi and neutral make-up.

The 'Pran Pratishtha' ceremony was completed amid blowing of conch shells and a helicopter showered flower petals on the temple.

In the video, Kangana is seen happily shouting and chanting 'Jai Shree Ram'. She captioned it as: "Ram aa gaye". Earlier in the day, she shared the photos from Ayodhya, and wrote: "Yehi janmbhumi hai param puja Shri Ram ki... Jai Shri Ram".

On the work front, Kangana played the lead in the action thriller 'Tejas'. She next has 'Emergency', which is a



biographical historical drama, directed and produced by Kangana. Based on the Indian Emergency, it stars Kangana as former Prime Minister of

India Indira Gandhi. The film also features Anupam Kher, Shreyas Talpade, Mahima Chaudhry and Milind Soman in pivotal roles.

Kajol's most attractive traits are 'mind, spine, guts'

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Bollywood actress Kajol has revealed about her most attractive traits, and it is her 'mind, spine and guts'. Kajol, who is an avid social media user, enjoys 15.7 million followers on Instagram.

Taking to Instagram, the actress, who is known for her work in 'Kuch Kuch Hota Hai', shared two monochrome pictures of herself, which seems to be from a photoshoot.

The actress is wearing a sleeveless top and pants, and is sitting on a chair, posing for the lenses.

The 'Baazigar' actress captioned the string of photos as: "My most attractive traits? My mind, my spine and my guts! #staystrong #staybeautiful".

Fans took to the comment section and wrote: "And your infectious laughter".

One user said: "always in best look".

Meanwhile, on the professional front, Kajol was last seen as Devyani in 'Lust Stories 2', and Noyonika Sengupta in the web series 'The Trial'.



Alia-Ranbir, Vicky-Katrina pose for star-studded selfie with Subhash Ghai in Ayodhya



Team Absolute | Mumbai

As the Pran Pratishtha ceremony of the Ram Temple was held in Ayodhya on Monday, several stars from the Hindi and southern film industries were seen attending the event.

To make occasion memorable, Bollywood stars Ranbir Kapoor, his wife Alia Bhatt, Vicky Kaushal, his wife Katrina Kaif, Ayushmann Khurrana, and directors Rohit Shetty and Subhash Ghai

posed for a selfie during the ceremony.

The selfie was clicked by Subhash Ghai, which also captures Akash Ambani and Sholka Ambani.

In another picture doing rounds in the internet, we can spot Vicky Kaushal, Alia Bhatt, Ranbir Kapoor, Rajkumar Hirani, Ayushmann Khurrana, Madhuri Dixit, and her husband Shriram Nene, who is seen capturing the momentous occasion along with the renowned producer Mahaveer Jain.

The pictures also give a glimpse of Katrina Kaif.

As for attire for the special occasion, Ranbir and Alia opted for their ethnic best. Vicky Kaushal chose an ivory kurta pyjama, while Katrina wore a gold-hued silk saree.

Several other prominent film personalities, including Vivek Oberoi, Sonu Nigam, Anuradha Paudwal, Madhur Bhandarkar and Kangana Ranaut, were present at the event.

Manoj Bajpayee: Never fond of studying history in college, realised its importance later

Team Absolute | Mumbai

National Award-winning actor Manoj Bajpayee, whose show 'Secrets of the Buddha Relics' released on OTT on Monday, has shared that he wasn't much interested in history as a subject during his college.

The actor serves as the host and narrator to the third part of the 'Secrets' franchise and maintained that he was very clear from the start about his pursuing his passion for acting and he couldn't understand the point of studying history or its significance in the field of acting.

However, with age Manoj understood that whatever an artiste does in his life comes in handy at some point and this was proven when he worked on the 'Secrets' franchise as well.

Manoj told IANS. "When I studied history in college, I always thought it to be a waste of time. I was always clear



with regards to what I wanted to do

and I felt that they were making me read a subject which has nothing to do with what I would eventually do as an actor. But as an artiste, whatever you do in life always comes in handy. Now when I'm doing 'Secrets' franchise that habit of reading books and analysing the past, helps me to a great extent."

He also spoke about the pitching of the narration in the third part of the franchise and shared that since this instalment focuses on Buddha, he thought to bring more calmness and tranquility to the narrative.

He added, "In this one we have tried a very different approach to voice. I personally thought that it should be aligned with Buddha and his state of mind, so there's more calmness with regards to how it's presented to the audience sonically. But with calmness, there's always a fear of making it boring. So, it's a great mix of calmness and building up the intrigue around the story."

SAIF ALI KHAN UNDERGOES MINOR SURGERY AT MUMBAI HOSPITAL

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Bollywood actor Saif Ali Khan, who is known for 'Sacred Games', 'Race', 'Dil Chahta Hai', and others, was hospitalised at a Mumbai hospital on Monday where he underwent a tricep surgery for an old injury.

The injury got triggered while performing an action sequence for his latest movie. He is now well on his way to making a speedy recovery.

Saif, who was busy with the shoot of 'Devara', underwent minor knee and trice surgery at Kokilaben Hospital in Mumbai. The minor surgery was pending for a while. After the surgery, the actor is currently recuperating.

Talking about his surgery, Saif said in a statement: "This injury and the surgery that followed is a part of the wear and tear of what we do. I am very happy to be in such amazing surgical hands and thank all well wishers for their love and concern."

This is not the first time the actor has been injured on a film set.

He had earlier injured himself while shooting for the Vishal Bhardwaj directorial 'Rangoon' which also starred Kangana Ranaut and Shahid Kapoor.

He had hurt his thumb and also injured his ankle while shooting the climax scene of the film.



Sushmita Sen: Aarya is an emotion, holds special place in my journey



Team Absolute | Mumbai

Actress Sushmita Sen, who is all set for 'Aarya Antim Vaar', shared how her role Aarya Sareen is now way beyond a character and has become an emotion that holds a special place in her journey. In the previous episodes, we saw the rise of the ferocious Aarya, going to extreme lengths to protect her family but it's time to take it a step further.

As an actor, when you become synonymous with a cherished character, it intertwines with your essence, becoming a part of your heart. Elaborating on the same, Sushmita said: "Aarya has my heart. She is now way beyond a character I played on a show, she is an emotion and holds a special place in my journey. I am elated to start my new year with Aarya."

"The warmth and love from the audience have been overwhelming, making this experience not just mine but ours together. As an actress, these moments are priceless, and I'm eager to embark on the next part of Aarya's adventure with all of you, the wonderful audience who has made it so meaningful," added Sushmita.

INSTAGRAM PIC OF THE DAY



Avneet Kaur