

Mathura may soon become a part of National Capital Region (NCR)

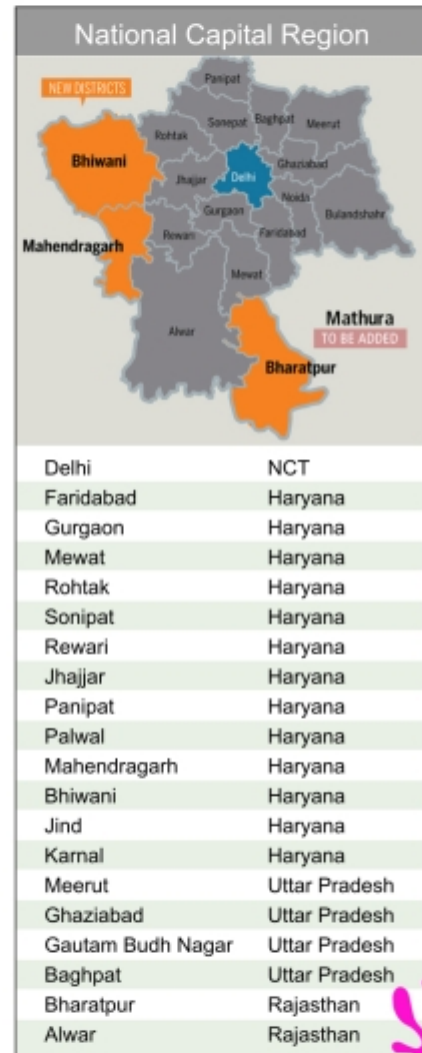
Mathura, one of the famous twin cities of Braj region in Uttar Pradesh, may soon become a part of the National Capital Region (NCR). Located about 150 km away from Delhi, Mathura along with Vrindavan is known for its Krishna connection, with millions of devotees visiting the city every year.

Mathura's inclusion, which may happen by next year ahead of the UP assembly election, can give a big boost to the Braj region. According to the Mathura-Vrindavan Development Authority, this inclusion is expected to provide maximum benefit to the temple town's tourism infrastructure. Mathura has also been included in the list of heritage cities by the government that has also highlighted the need for an all infrastructural push.



According to BJP national secretary Sri Kant Sharma, post Mathura's incorporation in the NCR, Metro Rail services may now be extended beyond Palwal. A number of plans have also been drawn to give a major facelift to the region. It includes infrastructural development under its heritage plan, setting up of a Mathura Haat to promote sales of local goods and a World Bank plan to integrate grass root productive activities by local craftsmen/artisans with marketing outlets.

The state government may also shortly announce a combined municipal corporation merging the civic bodies of Mathura, Vrindavan and 50 odd villages of Govardhan. The proposal for this, will soon be forwarded to the divisional commissioner and further to the urban development ministry for action.



Holi Aayi Hai !!!

*Udat abeer gulal
Lali chayi hae*

*Lal shyam, lal bhayi radhe
Lal nawal brij bal*

*Ambar lal, Lal bhayi Jamuna
Lal Gopal Lal*

*Mor chandrika lal bhayo hae
Murl lal bishaal
Lali chayi hae*

Owner speak:

Anil Kumar Agarwal
Chartered Accountant
Sanju Agarwal
Housewife
Agra, Uttar Pradesh

"Through Krishna Bhumi we will get a chance to explain the myths and magic, surrounding Krishna to our next generation in a fun way".

Mathura municipality announces Rs 86.85 crores for road repairs

The Mathura city municipality has announced a sum of Rs 86.85 crores for infrastructural development of the holy city in the next financial year with priority given to repairing of roads.

Drawing up plans for policies regarding self-assessment of house tax, penalty on the use of polythene as well as fine on using public land for marriages, besides proposals for budgetary outlays for entire

development proposal were discussed and cleared in the municipal meeting and are slated to be implemented soon.

It is also worth noting that the Mathura-Vrindavan Development Authority (MVDA) has been sanctioned Rs 40 crore by the central government under the 'Heritage city development and augmentation yojana' (HRIDAY) scheme as well.



Shri Shri Ravi Shankar extends support to Yamuna Campaign

Shri Shri Ravi Shankar has hailed the Yamuna Muktiaran Mission and has assured full cooperation towards a cleaner Yamuna. He will participate in the padyatra to be organized in protest of the Yamuna Pollution scheduled to begin from 15th March from Kosi and will be headed to Delhi. He said that 'the Art of Living' had already organized several programme in support of the cause in previous years.

Radha Kant Shashtri, the National Convener of the Yamuna Muktiaran Abhyan told Shri Shri that the brajwasis are pained to see the condition of Yamuna.

The artists of the laughter show have also extended their support for the campaign along with Brajwasis and many others from different part of the country, who want to see Yamuna clean.



CLICK OF THE MONTH



Yoga Guru Baba Ramdev, visited **Prem Mandir** in Vrindavan. In admiration of the Prem Mandir he said that it was unmatched to any other building and a visit to the Prem Mandir gives him a lot of peace.

50 days of Holi in Braj

Holi may just be a one-day celebration for the rest of India, but in the Braj region of Uttar Pradesh it's a 50 day affair. Inspired by legendary Krishna-Radha stories as well as examples of enthusiastic participation in the festival by Mughal emperors like Akbar and Jahangir, Holi holds no bar in the five districts of Agra division that makes up the Braj region. In Vrindavan, the celebrations include a lot of cultural activities. It also marks the onset of spring time and welcomes summer as the sun dispels the dark long hours of winter.

In the Braj region, the festival is celebrated for 50 days commencing from two days before the actual day. The festivities begin with Holi celebrations at the Dwarkadheesh temple in Mathura, the birthplace of Lord Krishna.

Traditionally, it is believed that Lord Krishna along with his friends from Nandgaon town in Mathura, went to his beloved Radha's village in Barsana to play Holi. The various 'Hori' celebrations as it is popularly called here, include Laddoo Holi and the famous Lath Maar Holi.

In Lath Maar Holi, the men from Nandgaon come to Barsana and sing provocative songs throwing coloured powders and flowers on the women who fight back by pretending to beat them with bamboo sticks. After drinking the Thandai, an intoxicating cold drink mostly laced with *bhanga* paste made from cannabis, the participants laugh, cry and crave sweets, with the ecstatic experience heightened by the theatrical revelry of the festivities.



Holi Hai !!!

The recipe to make the best Thandai, this Holi.

Ingredients:

- 250 gms sweetened condensed milk
- 1 1/2 litre milk
- 10 almonds, soaked in water and peeled
- 6 pepper corns
- 4 cardamoms, crushed
- 2 tsp fennel seeds (saunf)
- 1 tsp khus essence (poppy seeds)
- Few ice cubes, crushed

Method:

1. Grind well the peeled almonds, cardamom and fennel seeds to a fine paste and mix with the rest of the ingredients. Strain the mixture well.
2. Take crushed ice cubes in a glass till half and fill the rest with the above mixture.
3. Serve garnished with rose petals.

Serves 12 glasses

Preparation time: 5-10 minutes



From the Bhagwad Gita



इन्द्रयिस्येन्द्रयिस्यारथे रागद्वेषौ व्यवस्थितौ।
तयोरन वशमागच्छेत्तौ ह्यस्य परपिन्थनी ॥ ३४ ॥

"Attachment and aversion as regards the object(s) of each of the senses are exactly determined and distinguished. One should not fall into power of those two because they are his adversaries or enemies".

Bhagavadgītā (Bhagavad Gita): Chapter III (Karmayoga) Stanza 34

Watch out!

- 5th March : Holika Dahan / Doljatra
- 6th March : Rangwali Holi
- 6th March : Festival of Jagannatha Misra
- 20th March : Solar Eclipse
- 25th March : Yamuna Jayanti
- 28th March : Rama Navami Puja





Q & A with Shri Chanchalpati Dasa

President, Vrindavan Chandrodaya Mandir

Q. Why is Krishna relevant in today's life?

A. The Supreme Lord Krishna descended on this earth more than 5,000 years ago, in order to reach out to all people with His message of love, compassion and universal brotherhood. In today's world where there is strife everywhere, Krishna's teachings are all the more relevant. Lord Krishna teaches in the Bhagavad Gita that He is the Supreme Father of all living entities - not only human beings but also animals, plants, birds, aquatics etc. If we have to realize this and develop our love for the Supreme Lord Krishna, then we must learn to love all His other children, who are our brothers and sisters. Krishna teaches us to love all living entities including humans and animals alike, as our own brothers and sisters. This not only places the responsibility of peaceful coexistence among individuals, communities and nations, irrespective of caste, creed, color, religion or nationality, but also emphasizes the importance of conserving our environment by a responsible and compassionate approach to all living forms. With war, terrorism, global warming and alarming environmental changes becoming more and more common, Lord Krishna's teachings become more and more important for each and every one of us. Our Founder Acharya, Srila Prabhupada, has presented the teachings in a very simple manner and in the most effective way for implementation in modern day lives.

Q. What is the real message of the festival of Holi?

The festival of Holi is originally celebrated in remembrance of Lord Krishna's protecting His pure devotee, Prahlad Maharaj. Prahlad Maharaj's father, Hiranyakashipu, was a staunch atheist and considered Lord Vishnu as his enemy. However, Hiranyakashipu's son, Prahlad, was a pure devotee of Krishna. Incensed by Prahlad's unflinching devotion to Lord Krishna, Hiranyakashipu tried in many ways to kill Prahlad, who was just a five year old child. When many of Hiranyakashipu's attempts such as to poison Prahlad and to put him in a pit full of venomous snakes failed, he summoned a demoness, Holika. Holika entered a blazing fire with Prahlad on her lap since she had a boon which led her to believe that she would be unharmed by the fire. Prahlad being the small child, couldn't resist and he simply closed his



eyes and chanted Krishna's holy name fervently. The result was that Holika burned to death and Prahlad emerged unscathed. It is said, "raakhe Krishna maare ke, maare Krishna rakhe ke" - when Krishna wants to protect someone, who can kill him? And when Krishna wants to kill someone, who can protect him? This incident teaches us to surrender unto Lord Krishna fully and become His pure devotees so that we can be assured of His infallible protection. Srila Prabhupada has explained that surrendering to Krishna in today's world is easily done by chanting Hare Krishna Hare Krishna Krishna Krishna Hare Hare, Hare Rama Hare Rama Rama Rama Hare Hare.

Q. We have heard so much about Vrindavan Chandrodaya Mandir. Tell us from your view point, what will be unique about it?

Vrindavan Chandrodaya Mandir will be unique in many ways. Firstly the magnitude - it will be the largest Krishna temple in the world. Secondly the height - it will be the first skyscraper temple of the world and will again, be the tallest Krishna temple in the world. Thirdly, this temple will be surrounded by a 20 acre recreated forest, which will recreate the magic of Braj during Lord Krishna's times. As per the Srimad Bhagavat Puran, Braj during Lord Krishna's time had 12 primary forests. Each forest had a specific characteristic. For instance, Bhandiravan was full of banyan trees, Talavan was full of date palm trees etc. The forests have now more or less become extinct. These original forests will be recreated on 20 acres around the Vrindavan Chandrodaya Mandir. The temple will also become a seat of learning to understand the teachings of the Bhagavad Gita in a manner relevant to the modern age, which will be made available to all people regardless of caste, religion, nationality or any other form of discrimination. The vision for a skyscraper temple was given by Srila Prabhupada in a year as far back as 1972. Today it is coming to fruition.

In the news



Elder care centre at Krishna Bhumi



For the convenience of the elders in the family there will be doctors, nurses, diagnostic and medical centres on call. For easy access to all parts of the building on wheel chairs, provision for ramps will also be made.



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