

No VIP Puja At Badrinath, Kedarnath

Source: www.punjabkesari.com

DEHRADUN, INDIA, July 21, 2010: Badrinath Kedarnath Temple Committee (BKTC), which overlooks the maintenance of the two temples, has scrapped the provisions of special VIP puja inside the centuries-old shrines, officials said Saturday. "Now VIPs would also have to stand in queues for having darshans of both Badrinath and Kedarnath temples," Anusuiya Prasad Bhatt, chairman of the BKTC, said. The two temples, among the most revered pilgrimage centers, in Uttarakhand's Garhwal region receive thousands of pilgrims every year.

Sabarimala Temple Averse To Suggestion On Widening Steps

Source: sify.com

INDIA, July 17, 2010: A controversy has broken out in Kerala's famed Sabarimala temple over a court suggestion to consider widening of the temple's 18 holy steps as well as the door to the sanctum sanctorum to allow pilgrims easier access. The head priest of the temple and a vastu expert, among others, have opposed any attempt to tinker with the temple's original structure. The Kerala High Court's observations were made while considering a report submitted by the Special Commissioner of Sabarimala stating that many devotees were injured during the last festival season. The court also suggested erecting a conveyor belt to make darshan easy for the devotees.

Pilgrims have to wait for several hours before they get a chance to climb the hallowed 18 steps which lead to the sanctum sanctorum and get darshan of Lord Ayyappa. Veteran temple vastu expert Cheruvalli Narayanan Nampoothiri said that under no circumstances would it be possible to make any changes in the basic structure of any temple according to the norms of temple vastu. "Changes just cannot take place in the basic structure. And since the Lord is installed inside no part of the sanctum sanctorum can be altered or reshaped," said Nampoothiri. General secretary of Akhila Bharatha Ayyappa Seva Sangham, N. Sreenivasan, criticised the court's suggestions saying they would hurt the sentiments of millions of believers. "Each of the 18 holy steps represent the hill Gods of Lord Ayyappa and it is impossible to widen the doors of the sanctum of the temple for convenience of the pilgrims," said Sreenivasan

Western Attire Banned At Nallur Festival

Source: www.sundaytimes.lk

SRI LANKA, July 2010: Western attire has been outlawed for this year's Nallur Festival in the Jaffna Peninsula and pilgrims have been told that only the traditional sari or long skirt and full blouse for women and the verti for men will be allowed. Even the popular churidar (Salvars) worn by women have been banned. Jaffna Mayor and festival's Organizing Committee chairperson Yogeswari Patkunarahaj told the Sunday Times the decision was taken since a large number of expatriate Tamils were visiting the peninsula in Western attire that was not

in keeping with the Tamil culture of the area. The festival which is likely to attract hundreds of thousands of people from all parts of the country and overseas begins on August 15 and will go on for 25 days.

Indian Court Says Hindu Gods Can't Trade in Shares

Source: www.google.com

MUMBAI, INDIA, July 30, 2010: An Indian court ruled that Hindu Gods cannot deal in stocks and shares, after an application for trading accounts to be set up in their names. Two judges at the Bombay High Court on Friday rejected a petition from a private religious trust to open accounts in the names of five Deities, including the revered elephant-headed God, Ganesha. "Trading in shares on the stock market requires certain skills and expertise and to expect this from deities would not be proper," judges P.B. Majumdar and Rajendra Sawant said, according to Indian newspapers. The trust, owned by the former royal family of Sangli, in western Maharashtra state, brought the case after successfully securing income tax cards and savings accounts for the Deities. But National Securities Depository Limited (NDSL) rejected the trust's application for

permission to open trading accounts, arguing that it would be difficult to take action against the Gods in the event of irregularities. "Gods and Goddesses are meant to be worshipped in temples, not dragged into commercial activities like share trading," the judges said.

Supreme Court Ruling On Shivaji Book Sparks Protests

Source: www.hindustantimes.com

MUMBAI, INDIA, July 11, 2010: A day after the Supreme Court decision to lift the ban on the sale of American author James Laine's controversial book on King Shivaji, protests took place in several parts of the state, especially in western Maharashtra — former stronghold of Shivaji's Maratha empire. Amid protests at his hometown in Nanded, Chief Minister Ashok Chavan said his government was exploring legal options to ban the book. After activists of Maratha Seva Sangh, he told the media, "We will study the apex court judgement and take advice from legal experts on what can be done to ensure the ban on the sale of the book. We will also see if there can be any amendments to the existing law to ensure this."

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Ph. 28132790, 28131232