

News & Views

THANJAVUR, INDIA, November 26, 2012 (The Hindu): The Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) is planning to prepare site management plans for world heritage monuments in Tamil Nadu on the lines of the one adopted in Hampi, Karnataka, according to G. Maheshwari, ASI Superintending Archaeologist. She told The Hindu on Sunday that a site management plan was essential for the conservation of world heritage monuments, lest they become endangered with growing urbanisation. Initially, ASI would prepare the site management plan for Mamallapuram monuments and Big Temple at Thanjavur, both of which are world heritage monuments.

Stakeholders would be involved in the preparation as well as implementation of the plan. As a prelude to the preparation, a stakeholders' meeting would be held. Local people, HR and CE Department officials, district authorities and local body officials, youth and media representatives would be invited to discuss the dos and don'ts prescribed by the UNESCO to protect monuments. Zones such as core zone, buffer zone and peripheral zones had been formed around monuments to prevent certain activities that could damage the monument

"But, ASI is certainly not against development or human welfare activities. These should be regulated in such a way that they don't endanger the monuments," Ms. Maheshwari said. She cited the example of Hampi in Karnataka where a proposal by the local authorities to build a bridge across the sprawling monument area was stalled. In its place, a road was laid along the monument without disturbing the heritage site. The

Hampi Development Authority had been formed to implement the site management plan.

"There is a misconception that ASI will isolate the monument from people in the name of conservation. This is not true. The Big temple at Thanjavur is one example where people are allowed to conduct pujas. At the same time, we maintain the temple," Ms. Maheshwari said.

There are 29 heritage sites in Tamil Nadu, out of which 23 are cultural sites and the rest natural sites, she said.

Hundreds of Thousands Witness Karthigai Deepam

Source

TIRUVANNAMALAI, INDIA, November 28, 2012 (The Hindu): Hundreds of thousands of devotees witnessed the lighting of the Karthigai Maha Deepam on the Tiruvannamalai hill on Tuesday. The ten-day Karthigai Deepam festival, which began with hoisting of the flag at the Sri Arunachaleswarar temple on November 18, culminated with this ritual. Crowds had begun pour into the town from daybreak for performing girivalam or circumambulation of the holy hill. Setting the stage for the final event in the evening, the Barani Deepam was lit inside the sanctum of the temple in the early hours as thousands of devotees watched. At 6 p.m. the Deepa Nattars, who hail from the fishermen community, lit the Maha Deepam atop the hill. The Maha Deepam is a huge cauldron filled with three tons of ghee, with the wick made of several hundred meters of cotton cloth. As the huge

flame became visible from the hill top, lamps were lit in the temple and across the temple town and surrounding villages

Hindu Help Line Announces Medical %26 Legal Aid Schemes For The Poor

PUNE, INDIA, November 25, 2012 (Press Release): Conveners, Coordinators & Representatives of Hindu Help Line from over 25 states & many districts of Bharat including the HHL Call Center gathered in Pune for a one day meeting. The meeting was presided over by VHP International Working President Dr. Pravin Togadia & organized by HHL National President Ranjeet Natu.

While reviewing the Hindu Help Line (HHL) work since the launch in 2010 & announcing effective schemes for helping patients & their relatives in Govt. hospitals all over Bharat, Dr. Togadia said, "Health sector remains ignored when it comes to actual help to patients as well as their relatives. If a patient is admitted in a hospital in a town or a city away from the village/home, then at least one or two of his/her relatives have to accompany the patient. It becomes difficult for them to manage their own stay & food while the patient is being taken care of by the hospital. Hindu Help Line in its meeting in Indore recently had announced the Annapoorna Tiffin Service for the relatives of the patients. As a follow up of it, now the total Dhanvantari Hospital Scheme has been introduced."

The prominent features of Dhanvantari Hospital Scheme

1. Under the DHS, in Govt. Dist. hospitals Hindu Help Line will arrange for the Tiffin for the relatives of the patients as

well as fruits for the patients. This will be done with the help of kind Hindus in Bharat.

2. Every 6 Months Hindu Help Line in all districts of Bharat will hold Dhanvantari Medical Camps followed by proper treatment plans.
3. Dadhichi Blood Donation Camps scheme which started last year has got excellent response & since then over 33,000 needy patients were given blood all over Bharat.

Apart from the medical help by Hindu Help Line, there has been a growing demand for Legal Help. Considering this, Hindu Help Line has set up the Hindu Advocates Forum. The HAF will look into legal aid to the poor. For more information contact "source" above

TIRUCHIRAPALLI, INDIA, November 28, 2012 (The Hindu): A large number of devotees witnessed the Karthigai Deepam lit atop a cauldron made of copper atop Rockfort Sri Thayumanaswamy Temple on Tuesday.

Religious fervor pervaded the area when the temple bell rang and crackers were burst. Exactly at 6 p.m., the temple priest lit the lamp with devotees raising slogans in glory of Lord Siva and Lord Subramanya.

A. Ilamparithi, Joint Commissioner of Hindu Religious and Charitable Endowments, said that the preparation for the deepam commenced about a week ago. A 6,560-yard-long cotton cloth was used for making the wick for the deepam, and about 264 gallons of iluppai oil and gingelly oil besides ghee were used for burning the holy lamp which is visible in a radius of about three miles throughout the night.

Later, the statues of Lord Siva, Lord Vinayaka, Lord Subramanya, and Sri Chandikeswarar were taken in a procession through the town. Reciting verses from Tirumarai, a large number of devotees performed girivalam around Rockfort.

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Tight Vigil During Thiruparankundram Deepam

Source

MADURAI, INDIA, November 28, 2012 (by Padmini Sivarajah, TNN): The karthigai deepam was lit on top of the Thiruparankundram hill amid tight security on Tuesday following the recent recovery of explosives from the area. Security was tightened on top of the hill after a bucket full of explosives, including ammonium nitrate, batteries and detonators was discovered near the shrine on November 1. Thiruparankundram is the first abode of Lord Murugan and the festival is one of the most important at the shrine. It began with the flag hoisting on November 19. The deepam was lit in the sanctum sanctorum in the evening after which the mahadeepam was lit on top of the hill. A copper vessel, measuring three-and-a-half feet high and two-and-a-half feet in diameter is carried to the place near the Uchipillaiyar temple on the hill about 150 feet above the shrine and filled with about 300 kg of ghee and a wick made of 150 metres of cloth it is lit using six kg of camphor.

However, the Hindu Munnani has been demanding that the lamp is lit on the ancient lamp post near the Kasiviswanathar temple. On Tuesday, 250 Hindu Munnani members including its state president Arasu Raja and state executive member H Adhisheshan were arrested for attempting to proceed to the

Kasiviswanathar temple to light the lamp. The original spot is now a disputed site as it is situated between the Kasiviswanathar temple and a mosque a few hundred feet away. Speaking to TOI, VHP district president 'Chinmaya' Somasundaram said they have evidence to show that the entire hill of Thiruparankundram, belonged to the Subramaniaswamy temple. "This has been mentioned in a book titled 'Madura Country a Manuel' by J H Nelson, who was the then collector of Madurai in 1868," he said. "Even during my childhood days, the lamp was lit on this stone pillar near the Kasiviswanathar temple, which has a 10 feet deep hole to hold the ghee for lightening the lamp. Somasundaram said that they wanted to revive the ancient traditions and planned to hold talks with the RDO and district authorities and get the nod to light the lamp in the designated site next year. Over 500 police personnel including 50 sub-inspectors, 20 inspectors, DSPs Ravichandran and Purushotham led by superintendent of police V Balakrishnan were pressed into service in view of the occasion.

Festivals Bring Kashmiris Together

Source

KASHMIR, December 1, 2012 (Khabar South Asia): A Kashmir Pandit family makes Rangoli (decorative designs) for Diwali. In doing so, they are following a centuries-old tradition. It has long been customary for Kashmiri Pandits to invite their Muslim brethren to feast with them during this and other major Hindu festivals. Likewise, Muslims entertain their Hindu neighbors during their festivals, especially on Eid.

Diwali was celebrated this year for five days starting on November 13th. Also known as Deepavali, it is the biggest holiday in India. In Kashmir, the festival also offers an opportunity for minority Pandits and majority Muslims to renew their fraternal ties.

”There are just a few families left in this area. Since my childhood, I have seen my Muslim friends visiting our home on every auspicious occasion. For Diwali, again we have invited our Muslim neighbors for dinner, and they will also do the same for us during their festivals,” said Assema Koul.

Muslims eagerly await these joyous occasions. Srinagar resident Shaban Mohammad told Khabar that local Muslims take part in every non-Muslim festival. “We have political uncertainty in Kashmir, but that doesn’t mean that we don’t take part in the non-Muslim festivals. Every year, I visit homes of Kashmiri Pandits and even Sikhs during their festivals,” he said. “Kashmir belongs to them also. They are not visitors here. We have shared pain and happiness together during the prolonged years of conflict,” Mohammad said.

• [Email to a friend](#) •

30,000 Weddings In Delhi, Huge Traffic Jams All Across NCR

Source

NEW DELHI, INDIA, November 30, 2012 (ndtv.com): With today reportedly being the most auspicious night of the year, according to the Hindu calendar, there are around 30,000 weddings happening in and around the National Capital Region. And that has resulted in massive traffic jams across Delhi and Gurgaon. It is reportedly taking at least

an hour to travel from South Extension to Terminal 1 of the Indira Gandhi Airport.

Getting to Gurgaon is a nightmare too. There are kilometre-long traffic jams on the Gurgaon Expressway; it is reportedly taking at least an hour to cross the toll plaza from Delhi towards Gurgaon. “Seems whole Gurgaon & Delhi are hosting wedding... Barat Traffic Jam all over,” a tweet said.

Trinidad Group Hopes To Launch First Hindu Network

Source

TRINIDAD/TOBAGO, December 16, 2012 (Trinidad Express): The Sanatan Dharma Maha Sabha (SDMS), under its company the Hindu Broadcasting Network, has been granted a television licence by the Telecommunications Authority of Trinidad and Tobago (TATT). However, it is not a free-to-air licence but rather one to operate only on cable TV networks. Sat Maharaj, secretary general of the SDMS, yesterday confirmed that the SDMS has been invited by TATT to sign the documents for the licence concession. Maharaj said he hoped to launch the country’s first Hindu network, Jaagriti TV, in the next three to four months.

He noted that while there were Indian channels, there was no Hindu channel on the network to cater for the large religious base of practicing Hindus. He said the station would adhere to the same protocol which its radio station Radio Jaagriti followed- there will no advertising of alcohol, no advertising of meat or meat products and no advertising of fetes or parties. “We want to propagate the Hindu way of life,” said Maharaj. “The vision of the Maha Sabha

and its communications arm is to provide a network that accommodates and facilitates the Hindu in the new world reality,” Maharaj said at the time.

Pundits’ Attitude, Funds Crunch Hit Sanskrit Encyclopaedia Work

Source

INDIA, December 2, 2012 (Deccan Herald): The Government of India-assisted monumental project, “Encyclopedia Dictionary of Sanskrit on Historic Principles,” is languishing not only for want of adequate funds, but also due to the over-modesty of the Sanskrit Pundits, laments the eminent 79-year-old Sanskrit scholar and authority on “Vaishnava Agamas,” Dr. Pandurang Prabhakar Apte, now Emeritus Professor, Deccan College, Pune, and of the Academy of Sanskrit Research, Melkote, Karnataka. He spoke to M. R. Venkatesh on a wide-range of issues during his recent visit to Chennai.

Dr. Pune gave the following reply when asked the status of the Sanskrit Encyclopaedia Project.

The “Encyclopaedia Dictionary of Sanskrit” is a massive on-going project under the aegis of the Deccan College in Pune, which comes under the Maharashtra Government, and with Central Government assistance. But the grant is not enough. Previously, the Union HRD Ministry was funding this project. But in recent years all assistance for Sanskrit study projects are channelized through the “Rashtriya Sanskrit Sansthan” in Delhi. Under this project, they have taken some 1,500 books and Sanskrit words extracted so far is 850,000, which have been arranged alphabetically and 7,000 pages printed. But even under the first “akshara A”, Sanskrit words taken up to three-member compounds, that is all such compound words beginning with A, have not been completed yet.

For example, just under one word, “Agni” there are 500 entries covering 111 meanings and sub-meanings! It is thus a colossal project underway. The project faces a hurdle, not only due to insufficient budget allocations and discouragement of the Government, but also due to the Sanskrit scholars who are too modest and narrow in outlook while asking for funds.

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