

### **Padmanabha Temple's Other Treasure: Palm Leaves**

Source: Hindu Press International

INDIA, December 25, 2011 (The Hindu): The State Archives Department is digitizing the Mathilakom records (old palm leaf manuscripts of Padmanabhaswamy temple in Thiruvananthapuram) as part of the second phase of digitization of old records. The records throw light on the history of the temple, and digitization might help in researching the records and finding missing links. There is renewed interest in the records because of the finding of large quantum of wealth in the temple vaults.

Assistant Archivist Ashok Kumar told The Hindu that the State Archives had the largest collection of palm leaf records in the whole of Asia. The Department had plans to digitize all of them so that the information could be preserved. (The cadjan manuscripts were susceptible to climatic conditions). The process involved cleaning and scanning of the records and conversion into portable document format. "A few of the preserved records date back to the 14th century A.D. but most are around 200 years old", Mr. Ashok Kumar said.

The Department had entrusted the digitization process to the Centre for Development of Imaging Technology (C-DIT) and work had started on the first phase four years ago. The records digitized so far included those on palm leaves, bamboo splints, copper plates and paper. Altogether 110,000 records were digitized including about 1000 churnas, paper records and rare

documents. About 12,500 microfilmed records were converted to digital form. The Department is now focusing particularly on the Mathilakom records. They contain information pertaining to the temple administration of the past.

Many of the age old rituals still being followed in the Padmanabhaswamy temple had their origins during the administration of the temple under the kings of Travancore. The Department proposes to complete the second phase by March next year subject to availability of funds. 250,000 rupees had been allocated for the project this year.

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### **Record Number of Pilgrims Visits Vaishno Devi**

Source

JAMMU, INDIA, December 26, 2011 (Zeenews): A record number of 9.9 million pilgrims from India and abroad visited the Hindu shrine of Mata Vaishno Devi in Jammu region this year, an official said on Sunday.

The Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Shrine Board (SMVDSB) said the number of pilgrims has been increasing by about a million every year in the last four years. "We are any time about to touch the figure of 10 million pilgrims," Board additional chief executive officer MK Bhandari said.

The number of pilgrims in 2010 was 8.75 million. The board was formed in 1986 to manage the shrine. "That time the number of pilgrims visiting the shrine was 1.3 million," Bhandari said.

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## **World Sanskrit Conference at New Delhi, Jan 5-10, 2012**

Source

NEW DELHI, INDIA, December, 2011: The 15th World Sanskrit Conference, organized by Rashtriya Sanskrit Sansthan, New Delhi in association with the International Association of Sanskrit Studies, will be inaugurated by Honorable Prime Minister of India Dr. Manmohan Singh at Vigyan Bhavan, New Delhi on January 5, 2012 at 10 a.m.

Rashtriya Sanskrit Sansthan will release the catalogue of approximately 57,000 manuscripts belonging to its Ganganatha Jha Campus. The catalogue in ten volumes in hard copies will be released in the inaugural session of the Conference and it will also be uploaded on the website of the Sansthan.

A Sanskrit Book Fair is being arranged in the premises of the Indira Gandhi National Centre for Arts. The exhibitions and around 105 book-stalls in the Book Fair will remain open during conference days for scholars, students, delegates and Sanskrit lovers. The fair will feature revitalization of knowledge systems through manuscript wealth with focus on scientific traditions of India, Sanskrit and Sanskritic inscriptions in South East Asia, Historical traditions of India through manuscripts, Exhibition on Information Technology and computer tools related to Sanskrit.

The Conference will operate in twenty sections. About eight sessions will be running concurrently in four cakras (slots) on most of the days. Sections include: Veda; Linguistics; Epics and Puranas; Tantra and Agamas; Poetry, Drama and Aesthetics; Sanskrit and Asian Languages and Literatures; Sanskrit and Science; Buddhist Studies; Jain Studies; Philosophies; Religious

Studies; Ritual Studies; Epigraphy; Sanskrit in Technological World; Modern Sanskrit Literature; Pandit-parishad; Law and Society; and Manuscriptology.

The 15th World Sanskrit Conference is going to be an important meet of Sanskrit scholars of various Universities and Institutions of the world who are working in different disciplines of Sanskrit Studies. Likely two hundred foreign delegates and one thousand Indian delegates will participate in the conference. They will interact and deliberate upon important issues of Sanskrit learning and research in the global scenario and present the essence of wisdom as well as the treasures from the Sanskrit-based knowledge systems. Visit [sanskrit.nic.in](http://sanskrit.nic.in) for more details

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## **First Veda Sammelanam Of North America**

Source

UNITED STATES, February 2012: Sringeri Vidya Bharati Foundation Inc., USA, is organizing the first Veda Sammelanam of North America at the Sharada Temple in Stroudsburg, Pennsylvania, on Saturday, April 14. Vedic Scholars, Priests, Agama/Sastra Pundits, Shivacharyas and Bhattacharyas from USA and Canada are invited to participate.

This coincides with the 100th year of ascension to the spiritual throne of the 34th Pontiff of the Sringeri Sharada Peetham, Jagadguru Sri Sri Chandrasekara Bharati Mahaswamiji. The program will include a ceremonious procession of the Vedic scriptures, recitation of all the four Vedas, an elaborate Vedic offering to Goddess Sharadamba, a lecture-cum-demonstration of various recitation practices, talks and honoring of the Pundits. Additional details can be found at source above