

Legal Battle Over Meditation Far From Tranquil In Iowa

FAIRFIELD, IOWA, January 20, 2013 (Washington Times): The followers of a meditation practice that has roots in ancient India say it's simple: Close your eyes, silently repeat a mantra and relax. But a dispute among rivals for control over its teaching is anything but peaceful, featuring personal attacks, aggressive lawyering and accusations of improper business practices.

The feud pits the Iowa nonprofit that has taught transcendental meditation for decades against Thom Knoles, a former associate who left and built his own group of followers. The outcome could decide whether the Fairfield, Iowa-based Maharishi Foundation will continue to control the teaching of U.S. transcendental meditation — or whether rivals can market similar services and its benefits without obtaining a license from the group.

The sides are fighting for customers and to protect their reputations in a federal-court case over whether the foundation can enforce its trademark rights and claims of false advertising against Mr. Knoles and other teachers of his rival Vedic Meditation.

To the foundation, Mr. Knoles and his followers are using the credibility and positive image associated with its technique to promote themselves and mislead customers. To Mr. Knoles' backers, the foundation is unfairly seeking a monopoly on a technique that's existed thousands of years.

Supporters say the technique originated with the Vedas, sacred Hindu texts. Its modern incarnation was developed in India in the 1950s by Maharishi Mahesh Yogi, who later spread the technique worldwide. Maharishi founded a university that settled in Fairfield in the 1970s. His backers manage the foundation, which teaches classes to thousands of students annually and owns trademarks for Transcendental Meditation and its TM nickname.

Sojourns in tirthas, which are meritorious and which constitute one of the high mysteries of the rishis, are even superior to sacrifices.

— Mahabharata

National Highways Authority of India Spares 1,300-Year-Old Temple

Source

CHENNAI, INDIA, January 22, 2013 (The Hindu): The Siva temple at Panaiyapuram in Tamil Nadu was to be demolished to make way for widening the Vikkiravandi-Thanjavur highway. When the plans to widen the NH-45C, cutting through the temple, became public, residents of Panaiyapuram, Pappanapattu, Mundiampakkam, Kappiyampuliyur and Thuravi forgot their caste and class divisions and rose as one to protest against it. For the widened highway would have shot like an arrow through the ancient Siva temple and its sanctum sanctorum for Panankateesvarar, and the

shrines for his consort Satyambikai, Ganesa and Muruga would have been razed to their foundation. Inscriptions belonging to Rajendra Chola (regnal years 1012 CE to 1043 CE), his son, Rajendra Chola II, Adhi Rajendra, Kulotunga I, Jatavarman Sundara Pandiya I, Vikrama Pandiya and others would have disappeared.

This enraged the villagers, who were determined not to allow the temple demolition to go through. They petitioned Villupuram Collector V. Sampath, National Highways Authority of India officials and Union Ministers. The State government's land acquisition officer feared the issue would lead to a law and order problem. The NHAI officials informed their headquarters about the protests.

The NHAI has now decided "to restrict the proposed ROW [right of way] width to avoid acquisition of the ancient temple near Panaiyapuram village by restricting the extent of land acquisition up to the existing compound wall of the temple on the LHS [left hand side] of the temple portion only." The NHAI has stated this in a letter, dated October 6, 2012, to the Competent Authority and the Special District Revenue Officer (LA), National Highways-45C, Villupuram. In an earlier communication also, dated September 20, 2012, the NHAI said the "four-laning of NH-45C will be accommodated between the existing compound wall of the temple and the existing Veeranam pipeline on the other side." When contacted, an NHAI official said: "The temple will not be touched."

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The GAYATHRI MANTRA is now being broadcast daily for 15 minutes from 7 P.M. onwards over Radio Paramaribo, Surinam, South America for the past two years, and also in Amsterdam, Holland for the last six months

HINDUS SHOULD NOW WAKE UP AND KNOW THEIR WORTH RATHER THAN CREATING NEW SUB CASTE CREED AND RELIGIOUS GROUPS

Going To Vaishno Devi This Summer? Take A Train To Katra

Source

KATRA, INDIA, February 14, 2013 (The Hindu Businessline): By mid-2013, Katra, a destination in Jammu near Vaishno Devi temple, one of the main Hindu pilgrim destinations, is set to become accessible by rail.

At present, the nearest railhead to Katra is Jammu, from where people travel by road for about two hours along the hills to reach Katra.

The train journey will be more comfortable, cheaper and picturesque compared to the road option, though the time saved may not be significant, as the train will chug to Katra through Udhampur.

About 20,000-25,000 people visit Katra everyday, according to industry estimates. Along with a train connection to Katra, pilgrims will get accommodation as well as shopping and food outlets on the first floor of the railway station. Tickets for the shrine will also be available at the station.

”By May, a 25-km (15.5 mile) rail track between Katra and Udhampur should be ready for trial run. Udhampur is already connected to Jammu,” said B.D Garg, Chief Administrative Officer, Udhampur Srinagar Baramullah Railway Link (USBRL), Northern Railway.

Homage Paid to Goddess of Knowledge

Source

KATHMANDU, NEPAL, February 15, 2013 (Himalayan Times): Hindu devotees today observed the Saraswati Puja, also known as Basanta Panchami, by worshipping Saraswati, the Goddess of learning, across the county.

Students, teachers, musicians, artists and others worshipped the Goddess. The kids who are about to enroll at school were made to scribble letters today with a belief that the Goddess bless them as they seek knowledge.

Devotees and students were seen thronging various Saraswati temples in the Kathmandu Valley and across the country since early morning. According to the Hindu calendar, the day also marks the end of the winter and beginning of the spring season

Increased Security for Fifth Bathing Day At Kumbh Mela

Press Release

ALLAHABAD, INDIA, February 13, 2013 (Press Release): The Kumbh Mela administration said today that a foolproof comprehensive planning is in place for the fifth bathing festival of Maha Kumbh of Basant Panchmi.

Allahabad Divisional Commissioner Devesh Chaturvedi today held a marathon meeting with all stake holders including railways, UP State Road Transport Corporation, Allahabad

district administration, police and security forces to ensure safe and successful bathing. The Railways assured that it will continue to run the maximum number of special trains from different stations of Allahabad city to ferry the pilgrims for three days. These trains will be in addition to the trains passing through Allahabad junction and other city based stations and in each train a minimum of 20 bogies will be provided to accommodate maximum number of pilgrims. Similarly 1,500 additional buses will be pressed into service by UP roadways from seven different bus stands set up for the Mela. These buses will be put on diverted routes if jam like situation arises on normal routes.

Allahabad district administration will be setting up seven shelter places to hold the crowd of pilgrims adjoining to Allahabad and other important railway stations. All basic facilities will be provided to pilgrims at every shelter place free of cost. Arrangements are also being done setting up a network of

Public Address Systems in the city area to inform the pilgrims about movements of special trains.

Steps are also being taken to provide medical facilities immediately in case of any urgency and four ambulances are being placed at Allahabad railway station and shelter houses meant for pilgrims. Seven ambulances will be parked at sensitive places in the city as reserve. The administration has also made arrangements to remove the vehicles from the roads in the case of any break down.

Every department involved in the Kumbh Mela are leaving no stone unturned for the success of the third Shahi Snan of Akharas and the fifth bathing festival of the Kumbh Mela event in view of the stampede at Allahabad railway station on last Sunday claiming 36 lives. Senior officials from most of the different departments will monitor the arrangements being done for Basant Panchmi bathing festival

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