

### **Odisha Government to Review Decision**

BHUBANESWAR, INDIA, June 15, 2014 (Odisha Today): The Govardhan Peeth, the seat of Puri Shankaracharya, today slammed the Odisha Government for not imposing a blanket ban on devotees climbing chariots during Lord Jagannath's Rath Yatra and demanded to reconsider its decision. "The state government should reconsider its decision and impose a complete ban during the entire festival. No decision should be taken in a haste," the official spokesman of Govardhan Peeth Manoj Kumar Rath said here. Hindu Mandir Priests' Conference Held in May

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### **Hindu Mandir Priests' Conference held in May:**

FAIRFAX, VIRGINIA, June 17, 2014 (World Hindu Council of America): Hindu Mandir Priests' Conference (HMPC) grew out of the Hindu Mandir Executives' Conference (HMEC). The mission of HMEC is to provide leadership to the Hindu-American community by promoting program activities to nourish, protect and sustain Hindu Dharma in North America through Hindu Temples. The 3rd HMPC was hosted by Durga Temple, Fairfax Station, VA, from May 29 - 30, 2014.

Over 30 Pundits and 50 adult and youth delegates, representing more than 25 Mandirs and Hindu organizations, attended this year's conference. The Theme of the conference was "Role of Temple Priests in 21st Century." The conference was organized into 7 sessions, and the topics were consistent with the HMPC's objective: Sustainability and Advancement of Sanatana Dharma by making the modes of worship meaningful and relevant for the younger generation of Hindus. The seven sessions were: Inaugural Session, Bal Samskaras, Open Forum, Priests-Management-Devotees, Roles of Priests not associated with Mandir and other Topics, Education & Training, and Concluding Session.

Deep Prajjwalan, Sri Ganesha Atharvashirsha by all priests formally opened the conference. The convener, Sant Gupta and the President of Executive Board of Durga Temple, Srilekha Palle delivered the welcome address and conference goals and objectives. Ekatomata Mantra led by Abhaya Asthana followed by Vandana by Durga BalGokulam Children led by Madhuri Prasad set the tone for the rest of conference. Emcee for the evening was Navin Kadakia of Pittsburgh thanked The World Hindu Council of America (VHP of America) for providing the leadership for such an important event

Stating that the government's decision leaves ample scope for priests and servitors to allow devotees to climb on the chariots and touch

the Deities, Rath appealed people to raise their voice to protest the move. In absence of Shankaracharya Swami Nischalananda Saraswati, Rath along with Govardhan Peeth Council chairman Amiya Kumar Mohapatra and Biswamber Das, Vice-President of Mukti Mandap Pandit Sabha of Sri Jagannth Temple, rejected the state government's decision of allowing the devotees to climb the chariots and touching the Deities.

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## **Rajan Zed Opens US House of Representatives Session with Hindu Prayer**

Source

WASHINGTON, DC, June 21, 2014 (indiablooms.com): Rajan Zed, first Hindu to offer the opening prayer in the US Senate, delivered the third opening Hindu prayer in the House of Representatives on June 19.

Starting and concluding with "Om," Zed read the Gayatri Mantra followed by excerpts from the Upanishads and the Bhagavad Gita—all in English. He sprinkled a few drops of Ganga water on the House podium. He presented a copy of Bhagavad-Gita to Congressman Michael Honda, who introduced and thanked Zed. He was presented with certificate of appreciation by House Speaker John Boehner, and spoke with Honda, Congresswoman Donna F. Edwards from Maryland, Congresswoman Janice Hahn from California and House Chaplain Fr. Patrick J. Conroy.

The first Hindu leader to give the opening prayer in Congress was Venkatachalapathi Samuldrala, priest of the Shiva Hindu Temple in Parma, Ohio, in 2000, on the day that the Prime Minister of India, Atal Bihari Vajpayee, addressed a joint session of Congress. The second for the House was Satguru Bodhinatha Veylanswami of Kauai Aadheenam in 2013 at the invitation of Representative Ed Royce of California and Rep. Tulsi Gabbard of Hawaii (the first Hindu representative in Congress).

Zed was famously heckled as he began his prayer in the Senate in 2007, an astonishing and shocking breach of protocol in that dignified chamber. The Christian protestors were arrested.

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## **Unique Shiva Temple Created in Mumbai**

MUMBAI, INDIA, November 1, 2010 (de zeen Magazine): Edmund Sumner has photographed a temple by Mumbai studio Sameep Padora and Associates. Called Shiv Temple, the project involved simplifying a traditional temple design by removing the usual decoration but maintaining symbolic elements. A wood-clad frame wraps around one corner making the entrance while the interior is illuminated by skylight. The temple was constructed by the villagers using local stone from a quarry near the site.

## **Sanskrit Conference at McGill**

MONTREAL, CANADA, June 7, 2014 (Weekly Voice): Samskrita Bharati (Canada) participated in the 10th Annual Sanskrit Conference held at McGill University in Montreal on Friday, May 30th where they launched their unique product — Sanskrit Greeting Cards — with the support of Prof. (Dr.) Arvind Sharma.

Samskrita Bharati (Canada) wishes to make Sanskrit popular in daily lives through the use of many innovative approaches like greeting cards for special occasions and have many more exciting future projects in the pipeline.

Dr. Sharma is a member of the Faculty of Religious Studies at McGill University since 1987 and has been instrumental behind the Annual Sanskrit Conference. In its 10th year, the conference had seen participation from not only far off places of Canada but also guests and speakers from the United States.

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## **World Hindu Congress to be Held in Delhi in November**

Source

NEW ZEALAND, April 10, 2014 (Indian Weekender): The inaugural World Hindu Congress will be held in New Delhi, India, later in the year. The November 21-23 conference has been organized by the World Hindu Foundation. Leaders and representatives of various Hindu

organizations, temples and associations are invited to attend the congress. The number of delegates is limited to 1500, of which foreign delegates are limited to 750.

The theme envisioned is the Hindu principle of Sangachchhadhwam Samvadadhvam, which means “Step together, Express together.” The main purpose for the World Hindu Congress is to provide a global platform for Hindu society to deliberate and formulate solutions to the myriad challenges being faced by Hindus throughout the world and to devise workable and tangible solutions that can be implemented.

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## **Consecrating a Temple: Hindu Community Dedicates First Area House of Worship in Daytona Beach**

DAYTONA BEACH, FLORIDA, June 14, 2014 (Daytona Beach News-Journal): Wearing saris and carrying offerings of flowers and coconuts, women and girls processed from North Beach Street to the Hindu Cultural Association building on Madison Avenue east of Mulberry Street in Daytona Beach. The procession on June 7 marked the beginning of a weeklong series of observances and rituals that would consecrate the Hindu Cultural Association building into a religious temple or “mandir,” the first Hindu temple for Volusia County, members said.

The Hindu Cultural Association purchased the 1.2-acre site at 150 Madison Ave. in

2006, according to the Volusia County Property Appraiser. After a fundraising campaign, the 6,110-square-foot building was completed last year with a value of \$377,093. It opened in late 2013 for cultural events and meetings but the building would not gain its religious status until this week, members said.

On Monday, in a nine-hour ceremony from 7 a.m. to 4 p.m., statues were imbued with religious significance as believers “put the soul to the statues,” believing them to be living representations of Deities.

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## Colourful Indian Festival Held in Pegognaga, Italy

PEGOGNAGA, ITALY, June 1, 2014 (Gazzetta Di Mantova): A thousand people belonging to the Hindu community in Northern Italy participated in the second annual Pegognaga Shoba Yatra, organized by Shri Hari Om Mandir together with the Municipality of Pegognaga. In a festive folkloric atmosphere, with music, songs and prayers, the faithful gathered in the square of the Coop and then proceeded in a long procession along Avenue San Lorenzo to arrive in Piazza Matteotti, where the religious leaders of the Hindu community and the crowd were greeted by the mayor Dimitri Melli.

In the days preceding the festival, a reading of the the Ramayana scripture was held at the Mandir on via Martin Luther King,

where they venerate statues of Shiva, Kali and ten other Gods that were gifted by the Indian state. Svamini Hamsananda of Savona, vice president of the Italian Hindu Union, says that a meeting of representatives of all the temples in northern Italy, with the participation of the president of the Italian Hindu Union, took place during this time

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## Akshardham Temple Coming up in New Jersey

AHMEDABAD, INDIA, July 22, 2014 (by Bharat Yagnik, TNN): The Bochasanvasi Akshar Purushottam Sansthan (BAPS) has envisioned an Akshardham temple at Robbinsville in New Jersey, US that will be spread over a mammoth 162 acres. BAPS has earlier established two Akshardham temples at Gandhinagar and New Delhi as religious and cultural centers. The US project — aptly named Akshardham Mahamandir — started in 2013 with a stone-laying ceremony, realizing the 15-year-old dream of Pramukh Swami, the religious leader of the sect, to construct an Akshardham at New Jersey. The area has sizable Gujarati and Indian population. The leaders are hopeful that the temple will be ready in 2017. Pramukh Swami will visit the site next month when he will be in the US.

Sadhu Brahmprakash of BAPS told TOI that the work is going on at Rajasthan where more than 2,000 artisans are laboring over various parts of the temple at Dungarpur, Pindwada and Sangwada. “The finished parts are shipped to US where they are assembled

by master craftsmen,” he said. Italian marble and marble from Rajasthan’s quarries is being used and the parts are shipped from Mundra, added officials. In US, a 5,000-strong team is looking after various aspects of the construction and design.

The main building will have four floors. The complex will have an exhibit dedicated to Indian history and culture, a youth activity center and much more. The artisans have taken elements of both south and north Indian temples. The embellished temple will have ornate pillars and panels depicting scenes from the Ramayana and Mahabharata and ancient scriptures. The halls will have full-size idols of important leaders of the sect.

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## **Michigan’s Sambodh Society Hosts 12th Annual Rudrabhishekam and Chandi Homam**

KALAMAZOO, MICHIGAN, July 23, 2014 (Press Release): The Sambodh Society, Inc., and the Sambodh Center for Human Excellence will celebrate the 12th Annual Rudrabhishekam and Chandi Homam on August 1-3, 2014 at the Sambodh Ashram in Kalamazoo, Michigan. The program will consist of a number of poojas and homas for benefit of people of all ages and from all walks of life. Click “source” above for complete information, and to download the full program brochure.

## **Sankat Mochan Kendra Opens Its Doors**

AUSTRALIA, July 20, 2014 (Indian Sun): Sankat Mochan Samiti (SMS) celebrated the opening of Sankat Mochan Kendra (SMK), on June 15. This is the first North Indian Hindu temple, social welfare kendra and Indian cultural education institution of its kind in Australia. The SMK will cater not only to the Hindu population but also other communities interested in Hinduism. More than 1,000 devotees attended the inaugural function of SMK located at 1289A North Road, Huntingdale, 3166

The ceremony began with a prayer to Lord Ganesh, after which the Vastu Puja and Navagraha Puja were performed. The most overwhelming ceremony, which took place for the first time in the history of Australia, was when 11,000 ahutis (offerings of sacred mixture of grains, ghee and aromatic perfumes) were offered to the Gods and the maha Gayatri mantra performed. Five stations were carefully placed with all the precautions of fire safety, as Havan Kunds, with eight devotees at every station. It was a powerful ceremony with divine vibrations keeping the full of spiritual energy. The volunteers made sure that every one who wanted to participate in the mantra ahutis could do so as several of them had traveled long distances to be part of it.

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## In a First, CBSE Asks Schools to Celebrate Sanskrit Week

NEW DELHI, INDIA, July 16, 2014 (Financial Express): In a circular dated June 30, the Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) has asked the Directorate of Education of various states, including New Delhi, Arunachal Pradesh and Andaman and Nicobar Islands, to celebrate Sanskrit Week in their schools from August 7-14 this year. It also asked principals to commence "Sanskrit-related activities" from July onwards and send in entries for selection at the national level by July 20, 2014.

"The celebration of Sanskrit Week would provide a medium for popularizing Sanskrit and stimulating the interest in the language by increasing the awareness about the close relationship between Sanskrit and other languages and the cultural heritage in India. The Sanskrit Week in schools may encourage linguistic creativity among students and provide them an opportunity to benefit from the systematic structure around Sanskrit..." the circular reads.

According to CBSE, the schools may hold short-speech competitions for students from classes IX to XII. Another proposed national-level competition for students is essay-writing in Sanskrit. CBSE also directed schools to organize Yuva Sansad or Youth Parliaments, seminars for teachers on "practical applications of Sanskrit," screen Sanskrit films and organise interactions for children with eminent Sanskrit scholars

*'Duty is that which must be done whether or not it is in agreement with my likes and dislikes. If the like and duty coincide, the action becomes spontaneous. If the like does not coincide with the duty, the action becomes deliberate – this is karma yoga with respect to action. If I do what I fancy, regardless of whether it is proper or not, it is an impulsive action. An impulsive person is in the hands of likes and dislikes and therefore full of conflicts. A deliberate person, who does what should be done, releases the mind from likes and dislikes in course of time. The sense of duty grows upon the person such that the duties are performed as naturally as breathing and eating. The mind of such a person is a fit instrument to appreciate the teaching of Vedanta.'*

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