

### **Repainting of Kolams at Meenakshi Temple**

MADURAI, INDIA, May 25, 2014 (Times Of India): The frescoes on the roof of Sri Meenakshi Sundareswarar Temple and the kolams (rangoli) patterns on the floor are outstanding works of art. The kolams, drawn by connecting hundreds of thousands of dots, are obviously the outcome of strenuous efforts. Now, efforts are being taken to preserve and repaint the kolams.

A grand kolam connected by a hundred thousand dots is in the corridor near the sanctum sanctorum of Lord Sundareswarar. It was drawn by a group of women about 35 years ago to keep the tradition alive and also as a form of penance. Family members of the original artists are now repainting them and are expected to complete the exercise in a day or two.

Painting of kolams in the temple was started by Lalitha Sankar. She had learned its intricacies from S. V. Thambirasu, a master kolam artist. Lalitha used to draw beautiful kolams on the floor of the temple way back in 1979. Subsequently, a small group of women trained by her managed to draw one hundred thousand kolams in the temple corridors. They were repainted from time to time. Now, Lalitha's daughters-in-law have taken up the task. They first draw the design with chalk and then paint over it. They are guided by older women adept in the art.

Drawing of kolams is an integral part of Indian culture. It is believed kolams bring

prosperity to homes. It is also said the wellbeing of the artist is enhanced when one bends to draw the designs early in the morning.

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### **Archaeological Survey of India Team Inspects Jagannath Temple for Quake Damage**

BHUBANESWAR, INDIA, May 22, 2014 (Telegraph India): An expert team of the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) today inspected the 12th century Jagannath temple in Puri to find out whether the earthquake that hit the state yesterday had any impact on the temple. The team visited the temple following a magnitude 5.9 earthquake centered 274 km SE of Konarka, India.

Temple administration sources said a team of engineers, led by the deputy archaeological superintending engineer Tapan Bhattacharya, today inspected the temple. "Keeping in mind the vast structure of the temple, it is difficult to find out minor cracks suddenly and the loosening of plasters of the structures at various points. However, the temple is safe at this moment," said a senior official.

According to the ASI report, the structure is standing on the southeast direction from the garbha griha (sanctum sanctorum) of the main Jagannath temple in which direction a fault line is suspected as several structures were affected in this direction during earlier earthquakes. "It is advisable to regularly monitor and check for any sign of distress on the temple structure," the report said.

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## Sanskrit in Lok Sabha

The oldest language had a presence in the Lok Sabha

today when under the leadership of Foreign Minister Smt. Sushma

Swaraj many Members took oath in Sanskrit. Those were Cabinet

Minister Sushree Uma Bharati from Jhansi, Smt. Sumitra Mahajan

from Indore ( M.P.), Shree. Chandra Prakash Joshi from Chittod

(Rajasthan), Shree. Sunil Singh from Chatara ( Jharkhand )

etc. We are proud of them. Their initiative to boost up the mother

tongue of all Bharatiya languages i.e. Sanskrit is respectable.

We hope the new government will follow the same path & will

make arrangements for the speedy recovery of the divine language

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## Hindu Mandir Priests' Conference Held in May

Source

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. Ekatmata 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.

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### *Arsha Vidya Newsletter*

Annual Subscription: Rs.180/-

**Published by V. Sivaprasad**

Trustee, Sruti Seva Trust,  
Anaikatti, Coimbatore 641108

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**S. Srinivasan - 0422-2657001**

**Printed by B. Rajkumar,**

**Rasi Graphics Pvt. Ltd.,**

40 Peters Road, Madras 600014.

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