

Southampton Priest Bans Yoga From Church Hall

Source

UNITED KINGDOM, September 26, 2012 (BBC): A priest has banned yoga from a church hall because the class was “not compatible” with the Catholic faith. Instructor Cori Withell from Hampshire said her yoga and Pilates classes at St. Edmund’s Church building in Southampton were cancelled with 10 days to go. Father John Chandler said that the hall had to be used for Catholic activities, and he banned it because it was advertised as “spiritual yoga.”

Ms. Withell, from Eastleigh, said the church accepted the booking two months ago. She was called later and told that yoga was “from another religion,” so she could not have the hall. A separate Pilates class she had booked was also cancelled. Ms. Withell said she did not use meditation in her classes, just exercises. She added: “As a nation we have an obesity epidemic. I was trying to bring some exercise to the community and coming across blocks like this is frustrating.”

Fr. Chandler said the church was “misled” by Ms. Withell’s booking because he said at first the hall was booked for Pilates and then he found out it was also for spiritual yoga. He said: “Yoga is a Hindu spiritual exercise. Being a Catholic church we have to promote the gospel, and that’s what we use our premises for. “We did say that yoga could not take place. It’s the fact that it’s a different religious practice going on in a Catholic church. It’s not compatible. We are not saying that yoga is bad or wrong.”

A spokesman for Portsmouth Catholic Diocese said: “It’s not possible for Catholic premises to

be used for non-Christian activities, and there is a dilemma with yoga as it can be seen as Hindu meditation or as relaxation. “There is no national policy on this and the decision is for each priest.”

Golden Future for Gujarat’s Somnath Temple

Source

GUJARAT, INDIA, September 30, 2012 (Daily Mail): Gujarat’s Somnath Temple is set to receive a grand gift, of a size more often associated with the Tirumala Temple in Tirupati.

Two diamond merchants, who have chosen to remain anonymous, have pledged a gold-plated Gauripeeth (the rounded elevated area around the Shivalingam) for Lord Somnath. P.K. Lahiri, secretary of the Somnath Trust, said they have been exploring possibilities with the goldsmith who did a similar job in Badrinath, but no decision has yet been made.

”Gifts have been coming to the trust and big ones at that,” Lahiri said, noting that Maheshwari Samaj made a pledge of US \$760,000 last year, paying it in installments to build a guest house, and Kokilaben Ambani recently gifted US \$380,000 to the trust.

”People make pledges for certain reasons and we implement their wishes with the money they donate,” he said. He confirmed this one, if done, would cost around US \$1.33 million to US \$1.425 million and would be the biggest ever.

Museum of Hindu Civilization

Source

TORONTO, ONTARIO, September 30, 2012 (Marketwire): The Board of Directors at the Canadian Museum of Hindu Civilization were awarded the Canadian Forces Medallion for Distinguished Service today for their role in creating a monument for fallen soldiers.

The memorial, called Monument to the Fallen, was built by the Indo-Canadian community to offer respect and gratitude to the Canadian Forces.

”The Board of Directors, committee, and donors of this monument embody the kind of public support that means so much to the men and women serving in our military,” said Brigadier-General Omer Lavoie, who presented the medal on behalf of the Chief of Defense Staff General Walt Natynczyk.

The medallion is awarded in recognition of outstanding service performed by persons or organizations outside the active military community. It is the highest honor bestowed upon civilians for service of a rare and exceptionally high standard, which accrues great benefit to the Canadian Forces as a whole.

Harvard seeks collaboration with Patanjali Yogpeeth

September 27, 2012

By: Jagdish Bhatt

Dehra Dun: Though yoga guru, Baba Ramdev and his Patanjali Yogpeeth of late seem to be in the news for wrong reasons, but there is something for the saffron clad Baba, who is all out to take against the centre on the issue of FDI, something to cheer about.

The Harvard University, has written to the Patanjali Yogpeeth that with its collaboration, the world renowned University would like to

undertake courses in both yoga and ayurveda. While Baba Ramdev is in doldrums in the country because of his ante against the Congress, his efforts are being appreciated the world over.

In fact, both yoga and ayurveda have been under the constant watch of the world community since quite some time and of late their importance has not only been recognized, but appreciated even by well known scientists in the field of medicine, which is perhaps why Harvard has approached Patanjali Yogpeeth.

Sources in the Patanjali Yogpeeth said that they had received a letter from senior vice president and secretary of Harvard University, A H Covan in which the latter had proposed that courses in yoga and ayurvedic medicines be started at Harvard in collaboration with the Yogpeeth, which was being looked into.

They said that of late the western world had recognized the importance of both yoga and ayurvedic medicines and the letter mentioned that even NASA is now keen to ensure that its scientists benefit from yoga and ayurveda.

Asked as to by when the proposal would get through, he said that right now the issue is just at a proposal stage and various aspects of the issue have to be studied, but every effort would be made to start the courses at Harvard at the earliest.

Now, Crash Course For Priests To Counter Crunch During Durga Puja

KOLKATA, INDIA, October 18, 2012 (firstpost.com): As the city remains busy doing last-minute shopping before the Durga Puja festivities kick off this weekend, a group of young men rehearses shlokas and rituals at a crash course to counter a priest shortage in Kolkata. Due to the mushrooming puja committees in the city and its outskirts, a

shortage of skilled priests has been felt each year. To match the demand, the West Bengal Pandit and Purohit Association is running a crash course at Maniktala temple for priests ahead of the Durga Puja.

”The number of pujas is increasing, but the number of priests has remained the same. As a result, those without having complete and proper knowledge of the rules get engaged as priests. Many of them chant wrong or miss steps while performing rituals,” Netai Chakraborty, president of the association, said. Applicants with a basic knowledge of rituals are allowed to enroll in the week-long workshop. Under the guidance of veteran priests, the students, mostly from the districts, are taught the rituals of worship and how to carry out the deity’s puja in accordance with Hindu scriptures. Not only does the course encourage newcomers to take their ancestral profession, but it also acts as a refresher course for those who have been into the profession for a few years

Devotees Converge At Temples As Nine-day Long Navratri Festival Begins In India

New Delhi/Faizabad/Ramgarh, Oct. 16 (Asian News International): Devout Hindus queued up at various temples across India to mark the beginning of the nine-day long festival of Navratri, which is held in honor of the Goddess Durga which is observed twice a year, once in April and the second time in October. A majority of Hindu devotees fast during these nine days and offer fruits and flowers to Goddess Durga as an act of worship. In Jharkhand’s Ramgarh district, foreign tourists also are arriving to participate. A priest, Girdhari Lal, said “Many priest and saints have also come, as they know about the importance of the festive season. People from across the country are also arriving.”

The devotees believe their wishes are fulfilled if they pray to Goddess Badi Devkali during the nine-day festival. The festival lasts for nine days in honour of nine manifestations of Durga, goddess of power, and fall in the months of April-May and September-October. It is believed that during the Navratri, Goddess Durga descends on earth to rid it of the demons and blesses her devotees with happiness and prosperity. On the tenth day people celebrate Dussehra, which marks the triumph of good over evil. According to Hindu mythology, on this day, Lord Rama beheaded the demon-king Ravana.

Srirangam Temple Among Five Tamil Nadu Sites In Unesco Tentative List

KUMBAKONAM, INDIA, October 15, 2012 (India Times): The Union minister for culture, Kumari Selja on Sunday visited famous temples around Kumbakonam and said that the culture ministry has included five sites in Tamil Nadu, including the famous Lord Sri Ranganathar temple in Srirangam, in the tentative list for UNESCO world heritage status.

She was on a heritage tour to Thanjavur on Saturday and on Sunday she visited some famous temples including the Lord Irvatheeswarar temple in Kumbakonam. Later, addressing media persons in Swamymalai, Selja said that Fort St. George in Chennai, Kazhugumalai in Tirunelveli district, Chettinad in Sivaganga district and Pulicat Lake in Tiruvallur district are the other four sites included in the list for world heritage status. Moreover, if the state government and the local administration send the proposal, the Centre would consider them for inclusion of the sites in the world heritage status list, she added

Shiva temple reopens in Srinagar after 22 years

SRINIGAR, INDIA, October 20, 2012: As part of continuous efforts to revive the centuries-old harmony and brotherhood in the Kashmir Valley, a Shiva temple at Rainawari in the city here was thrown open on Saturday to public after a gap of 22 years. The dilapidated temple was recently renovated by the Jammu and Kashmir Dharmarth Trust at a cost of US\$33,400.

Opening the temple, Rajya Sabha member Dr. Karan Singh said in 1846, Maharaja Gulab Singh, had set up Dharmarth Trust to look after the functioning of the various new and old temples so that the devotees can perform their religious activities. He said the trust looks after 100 temples in the state including more than 20 temples of the Valley at Pahalgam, Gulmarg, famous Kheer Bhawani, Sathoo Barbarshah in Srinagar.

The temples like Shri Amarnath Ji and Vaishnov Devi are being run by the Trusts established by the government of Jammu and Kashmir through an Act and maintained that ten million devotees visited Mata Vaishno Devi while 500,000 pilgrims paid obeisance at the holy cave of Amarnathji, Singh said. He said Jammu and Kashmir has a unique identity of thousands of years of composite culture and a number of holy shrines including Alamdar-i-Kashmir Sheikh Noor-ud-Noorani at Charar-e-Sharief, which has been reconstructed after it was gutted in a fire incident. Singh said it is very unfortunate

that one of the holiest shrines Peer Dastigheer Sahib was damaged in a fire and on which all the sections of the people of the state expressed their sorrow and grief.

Bangladesh Parliament Passes Hindu Marriage Law

DHAKA, BANGLADESH, September 20, 2012 (Hindu Business Line): Bangladesh's parliament has passed a landmark bill aimed at protecting the rights of the Hindu community members, especially women from marriage-related cheating. The new law — the Hindu Marriage Registration Bill 2012 — aims to provide legal and social protection to members of the Hindu community.

State Minister for Law, Justice and parliamentary Affairs Qamrul Islam moved the bill that was passed by voice vote, it was reported. The bill was placed in parliament on July 3. He said the law was being formulated since there was no such law in the country to register the marriages of Hindus. The minister said the marriage of a Hindu couple is held under religious customs and so has no documents.

The law would authorize the government and the local government authorities to appoint a marriage registrar to be known as the Hindu Marriage Registrar at every ward of the City Corporation and municipality. The bride would have to be minimum 18 years old and the groom 21 years, the report said.

Arsha Vidya Newsletter

Annual Subscription: Rs.180/-

Published by V. Sivaprasad

Trustee, Sruti Seva Trust, Anaikatti, Coimbatore 641108

Edited by S. Srinivasan - 0422-2657001

Printed by B. Rajkumar, Rasi Graphics Pvt. Ltd.,

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