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Published by Anonymous on Jul. 01, 1994

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Sri Satguru Sant Keshavadas, founder and president of the Temple of Cosmic Religion, will celebrate his 60th birthday in July by inaugurating the Gayatri University and the Bhagavadgita Mandir in Bangalore. He is asking devotees to perform the daily discipline of reciting "Namo Bhagavate Pandurangaaya" and to write one page or more per day of "Om Sri Rama Jaya Rama Jaya Rama" until July, 1995. "Your spiritual sadhana will be the best birthday gift for me," he said.

Kalyankatta's head-shaving has landed them in the Guinness Book of World Records. The tonsuring center, run by the Tirumala Tirupati Devasthanams (TTD) in Andhra Pradesh, India, recently saw 600 barbers shave 72,078 heads in 24 hours. That's 120 per barber, or 12 each hour for a 10-hour day! Thousands of people waited up to eight hours for their turn. The TTD Trust earns US\$330,000 per year selling human hair to wig manufacturers.

Hindus are objecting to the British government's new national curriculum, saying too much emphasis has been placed on teaching Christianity and British history. "The national curriculum has taken an ethnocentric attitude instead of reflecting the needs of a multicultural society," said Mr. Subha Sarkar, a primary school headmaster who says the curriculum contradicts efforts of multi-cultural education. "They have ignored the importance of Indian history, religion and culture," added London teacher Jayeeta Bhowmick.

The animated Ramayana, a spectacular, 5 million-dollar production by acclaimed Japanese filmmaker Yugo Sako-with an Indian staff of art directors and consultants and 300 Japanese animators-will finally be released at the end of June in Jakarta, Indonesia. The USA release date is Sept 16th. It will open simultaneously in 500 theatres nationwide. Further inquiries may be directed to the film's USA distributor: Krishna Shah at (213) 876-4052 in Los Angeles.

The Malaysia Hindu Sangam has developed a "Hindu Propagation Action Plan" to contend "with proselytizing forces that seek to destroy the Hindu Dharma and supplant it with alien faiths..." Set to launch on December 1, 1994, the plan includes education, training and counseling, as well as media, cultural and religious services. Sangam President M. Subramaniam says much has been done, "but 'much' does not seem to be enough: such is the dimension and extent of the conversion problem."

The Swami Tilak Foundation will conduct a World Philosophy Conference August 5-7, 1994, in Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada. Representatives from all religions and from 60 countries are expected to attend. Admission and meals at the "totally non-commercial" conference are free. Contact: Naren Nagin, 3753 Price Street, Burnaby, British Columbia, V5G 2K9, Canada.

An appeal to help rebuild is coming from the Shree Lakshminarayana Temple in Kerala's Trichur District. The temple, which burned under mysterious circumstances in early 1993, was a repository of rare Tantric records on somayagam and agnihothram. Everything in the three-story structure was destroyed. The appeal states, "Lord Shree Ram found that even a squirrel can help in construction of a bridge across the sea." Funds can be sent to: N.M. Neelakandan Namboodiri, Treasurer, Reconstruction Committee, Panjal Post, Via, Cheruthuruthi 679 531, Kerala, India.

Indian soldiers are learning yoga to control body temperature, fatigue, anger and oxygen-use. A team of army personnel undertook training at the Bihar School of Yoga, focusing on asana and pranayama, in order to better endure harsh desert heat, bitter mountain cold, as well as other mental and physical hardships.

Indian art scholar Stella Kramrisch, whose venerable career spanned nearly six decades, died in August, 1993, at her home in Pennsylvania. Recognized as one of the clearly brilliant scholars of indigenous Indian art with a "critical acumen and profound knowledge of the history and philosophy of art," her prolific work included *The Vishnudharmottaram: A Treatise on Indian Painting* (1924), *The Art of India: Traditions of Indian Sculptures, Painting and Architecture* (1954) and *Manifestations of Siva* (1981).

4,500-tons of rare and sacred sandalwood is reportedly being stored by the government of Tamil Nadu, all of it the confiscated contraband of smugglers. Government attempts to auction off the cache were thwarted by a law banning exportation of sandalwood. Attempts to change that law are now underway.

Ten Ayurvedic medicines will undergo AIDS-related clinical trials sponsored by the Government of India. The Indian Council of Medical Research will test the anti-degenerative herbal drugs on people infected with human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) to see if the ancient compounds can prevent development of AIDS. Fourteen million people worldwide are infected with HIV according to the World Population Profile from the U.S. Census Bureau. Projections for the year 2020 include an actual population decline in Thailand, and growth rates sharply dropping in the Central African Republic, Congo, Kenya and Zimbabwe.

"Hinduism in South & Southeast Asia: Adoption and Adaptions" is the topic of one panel at the 13th International Association of Historians of Asia (IAHA) Conference set for September, 1994, in Tokyo-that is, if panel organizer Dr. Amarjiva Lochan of the University of Delhi can raise funds to attend. Dr. Lochan notes the IAHA is helping fund a "Christianity in South & Southeast Asia" panel, "but they do not have money for my panel." Contact: Secretary General, 13th IAHA Conference, Inst. of Asian Culture, Sophia University, 7-1 Kioi-cho, Chiyoda-ku, Tokyo 102, Japan.

A Film of Vivekananda is to be produced by noted Indian director G.V. Iyer. Mithun Chakraborty has been cast as Ramakrishna Paramhansa, Sargvadaman Banerjee as the famed swami. The film will depict the life of Vivekananda from his childhood to his triumphant return to India after participating in the World Parliament of Religions held in Chicago in 1893. Iyer has chosen Bombay stars Hema Malini, Jaya Prada, Juhi Chawla and Meenakshi Seshadri to play prominent roles in the film. Reddy said, "We are using these beautiful women to lure the audiences. The focus of the film will definitely be on spreading of Vivekananda's message." The film will be produced in Hindi and English, then dubbed into all Indian languages.

NRI Today, "The Magazine for Non-resident Indians," offers insights into life for, and the lives of, Indians living outside Bharat. Editor/publisher Venugopal R. Naidu says the magazine was started "to boldly celebrate the success stories of Indians abroad." Contact: NRI Today, LB-9, Prakash Deep, 7-Tolstoy Marg, New Delhi

110001, India.

Buddhist monks in Japan are unionizing. The Kokubunji Seven, called "the world's first religious trade union," was organized by a married monk (he also has a daughter and a mortgage) who was punched in the head and fired by the chief priest of Kita-ku Kokubunji temple in Osaka, one of 87,000 Buddhist institutions in Japan. There, a monk's income is taxable, temple jobs are highly sought-after and incomes are impressive: the fired monk earned nearly \$92,000 last year. However, some Japanese Buddhists consider odd the idea of temple labor disputes and monks on strike, and are contributing to the legal defense of temples.

The grand Ashwamedha Yajna planned for July, 1994 in Chicago has been rescheduled for 1995 because Holy Mother Bhagavatidevi Sharma, head of the Gayatri Pariwar Mission, has decided to start a special sadhana for the next year. She will be staying in Haridwar and has postponed all of her travel plans. The Mission announced, "The purpose of this sadhana is to emancipate humanity dangling in the swing of prosperity and destruction. The circumstances around the globe are adverse and corruption of intellect has made human activities vicious and sinful. The eradication of evil tendencies is possible only by internal might austerity."