

## [News In Brief](#)

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"SEND US YOUR CHILDREN. Let them have one to six-years of cultural adventure." Such is H.H. Swami Tejomayananda's invitation to study at the Chinmaya International Residential School near Coimbatore. Based on the ancient Gurukulam system, the school offers Sanskrit, yoga, meditation and philosophy classes as well as fine arts and sports. Contact: P.R. Krishna Kumar, 1381 Trichy Road, Coimbatore 641 018, Karnataka, India.

BANNING COW SLAUGHTER became the first objective--and the first dispute--of India's short-lived Bharatiya Janata Party government. The total nationwide ban was announced by President Shankar Dayal Sharma in his opening speech to Parliament.

THE HIGHEST HIMALAYA exacts a high price for reaching the record books. Four Indo-Tibetan Border Policemen climbed 29,028-feet to conquer Mount Everest in May, unfurling the Indian flag and performing what may have been the world's highest puja. Three members of the expedition, and the first Indian team to reach the top of Everest from the Tibetan side, died a week earlier during a descent in vicious weather. They were Tse-wang Paljor, Dorjee Marup and T. Samania. Five others died near the same time in one of the most tragic

weeks on the mountain--three Americans, one New Zealander and a Japanese. Most were experienced climbers. Meanwhile a troupe of Bulgarian actors and musicians planned to stage the world's highest concert, performing at the Everest base-camp, elevation, 18,300-feet. They are expected to get a cold reception.

"AUM IN EVERY HOME." That catchy slogan is a call to action by the Hindu Aikya Vedi, a coalition of Hindu organizations in Kerala formed to challenge the ever-increasing rates of conversion to Christianity and Islam. Chaired by Jagad Guru Swami Sathyananda Saraswathy, the "Aum" campaign seeks contributions to sponsor full-time Hindu missionaries and literature to spread Hinduism in a state where, he claims, Hindus are now in the minority. Contact: Hindu Aikya Vedi, East of Court, Vanchiyoor, Trivandrum, 695 035, Kerala, India.

A BUDDHIST CHINA. An oxymoron? Perhaps not. "Many Japanese Buddhists anticipate a Buddhist revival of China--one in which Mao's populism and Deng Xiaoping's economic reforms will combine with Buddhist values of family and community to create a vision of an earthly utopia," writes Yoichi Clark Shimatsu. Japanese Buddhist leaders delight in China's commitment to agriculture, education and health care, while Beijing "looks to a Buddhist revival to fill the spiritual void in the Asian heartland so long as it does not challenge the nominally secular authorities," said Shimatsu.

HINDUISM HAS ARRIVED. I know because I saw it in the Washington Post. The august newspaper, famous for breaking the scandal that broke a presidency [Nixon's "Watergate"],

recently devoted an entire two-and-a-half-pages, a veritable landscape of newspaper space, to "Hinduism's Ancient Wisdom." Headlined "It's Not Just Bad Karma And Sacred Cows," the article did get better--quickly--competently and respectfully examining facets from puja to scripture to moksha. While not perfect (is Hinduism really only 4,000-years old?), it's nice for America's 1.2-million Hindus to see some positive press, especially within the Nation's capitol.

CONVERSION ALERT:nearly a quarter of Indonesia's 200-million people are now Christians, according to an Assembly of God mission executive. That's a 10% growth in five-years. Both Muslims and Hindus are impacted. This information was found in National & International Religion Report--a good source, by the way, of "insider" information on the Christian evangelical movement. Contact: P.O. Box 21505, Roanoke, Virginia, 24018-0560, USA.

"MYSTIQUE OF INDIA '96,"an exhibition of indigenous and alternative healing arts will be presented September 13-17 at Pragati Maidan, New Delhi. The India Trade Promotion Organization promises to focus on ayurveda, yoga, homeopathy, herbal medicines and music & magnet therapy.

CALCUTTA'S RAMAKRISHNA-Vivekananda Mission was one of three recipients of "the biggest and most valuable non-profit airlift of life saving drugs by the US-based humanitarian organization Heart to Heart," reports India Today. The 100,000-pounds of medicine was valued at us\$1.3-million.

H.H. PARAMHANS SWAMIMadhvanandaji, holy guru of Paramhans Swami Maheshwaranandaji of the Austrian-Indian Yoga-Vedanta Society, blessed the audience and activities at a recent event entitled "20-Years in Austria--Yoga in Daily Life," held in Vienna. Over 1,500 representatives of international yoga groups, as well as luminaries of politics, art and science attended. Swami Madhvanandaji, who took ill during his trip, told the audience, "You should practice your sadhana every day with discipline, then you will gain through yoga everything you desire."

THE FILIPINO HINDUcommunity has a voice, a forum and a resource in Samachar,published monthly by the Philippine Indians Seva Foundation. Contact: Room 205 Resvar Building, 250 Vito Crux, extension corner Sampaloc Avenue, Makati City, Philippines.

KIRTANANDA SRILABhaktipada, 58, erstwhile leader of the New Vrindaban Community in West Virginia, awaits sentencing after pleading guilty to federal racketeering charges in April. He could be imprisoned for 20 years. Bhaktipada said, "The mail fraud happened while I was in charge of the community. Therefore I had something to do with it. It was not done at my insistence, but I was aware of it. Therefore, I take responsibility." This ends a long court battle in which Bhaktipada's original 1991 conviction on six counts of mail fraud and three counts of racketeering (including conspiracy to murder) was overturned on appeal in 1993. He was excommunicated in 1987 by the International Society for Krishna Consciousness. He is living alone in a tiny secluded cabin awaiting sentencing.

TUBERCULOSIS IS RESURGING worldwide, and is now the leading cause of death among people with AIDS, according to the World Health Organization. The WHO currently estimates 15 million cases of TB around the world, and recorded nearly 3 million TB deaths in 1995.

CHICKEN AND BURGERS CAN'T beat chana bhatura and dosas among fast food lovers in India. "I eat here because the food is clean, fresh and cheap," said a taxi-driver of his favorite Udipi restaurant. The average meal at a Kentucky Fried Chicken (KFC) franchise costs triple that of a full meal at the typical Udipi restaurant, with less variety and no ambience. And KFC knows its bite of the market demands flexibility. "Forty-percent of the food offered at KFC outlets is vegetarian," says marketing-manager Ajay Banga.

WOMEN WORK, BUT may not profit. Delegates told the Asian Peasant Women's Forum that shifting the agricultural focus from cereal production for individual consumption to cash crops such as flowers (exported to Italy) and mushrooms (sent with other veggies to the Persian Gulf) is affecting the well-being of women farmers. Small farms, unable to afford expensive fertilizers, are selling out to the bigger, more competitive corporations. Those who can afford it labor twice as hard inserting fertilizer pills as they did spreading the old powders. And in Sri Lanka, where civil war has turned thousands of women into primary wage-earners, Dulcy De Silva reports "Many women go out to supplement the family income, to bring in wealth, but in the end, only 2% benefit. The rest have to deal with broken homes and the break down of family institutions. Ironically, they are looked down on by society and harassed at the working place."

BRITAIN'S PRINCE CHARLES is being credited, with not only building bridges with Hinduism [see our June issue], but among moderate Muslims in the UK also. Recent newspaper reports refer to him as "the unexpected apostle for building bridges between Hinduism and Islam." His respectful attendance and speeches at religious functions of both religions has increased their sense of belonging in Britain as well as improved relations between Christians and the minority religions.