

22nd January 2024: Beginning of Indian Cultural Renaissance

January 25, 2024

Please read 11 lines of a BACKGROUNDER ON Prime Ministers between 1947 and 2014 on page 2.

Please read IMPORTANT POINT-OF-VIEW of Dr. Syed Rizwan Ahmed about the Mira Road attack on a Hindu procession, and the EDITORIAL COMMENT on page 3.

Please read on the BACKGROUNDER ON PM Narendra Modi's 11-day Anushtian, including interesting information on the ancient temples on pages 3-15. It includes a BACKGROUNDER on Guru Sri Ramanujacharya on pages 11-12.

January 25, 2024, **Ayodhya**, Uttar Pradesh, Bharat (India): A magnificent temple has been re-built at the birthplace of Lord Ram, one of **Hinduism's most revered deities, after 495 years**. On Monday, January 22, 2024, the Prime Minister **Narendra Modi** performed the age-old ceremonies of "**Pran Pratishtha (consecration is a rough translation)**" of the deity at the inner sanctum in a ceremony, widely seen as a **landmark departure in behavior** from that of nearly all the earlier Prime Minister or Presidents of India from 1947 to 2014.

Modi's "**Dandavat Pranam (bowing respectfully is a rough translation)**", on Monday, after going through **11 days of tough ascetical practices for putting himself in a pious state** for performing the ceremonies on January 22, touched the innermost chords of ordinary Indians.



Ayodhya, India: Ram Janmabhoomi temple:
January 22, 2024: The day of "**Pran Pratishtha**" of "**Ram Lalla**"

After the **Pran Pratishtha** of **Ram Lalla**, PM Narendra Modi addressed the nation with a message of unity. He said, " Now is the time to take a pledge to build a strong, capable and grand and divine India and to build a strong foundation for the India of the next millennium."

He added, " Ram is not fire, Ram is energy. Ram is not a dispute, Ram is the solution. Ram is not just ours, **Ram belongs to everyone**. Ram is not only present, Ram is eternal."

In a tweet on January 21, 2024, **Dr. Anand Ranganathan** said, " The stones may be old, but they are chiseled afresh. **The civilization may be ancient, but it is born again.** .. The day may be like any other, but it marks a **new dawn.**"

After the Day of Renewal of January 22, when the temple was opened for ordinary Indians on Tuesday, the number of people, who thronged the temple, was not expected by anyone. On each of the two days- 23rd and 24th-as many as **half a million pilgrims** came to the temple. **Yogi Aditya Nath**, the Chief Minister of the State of Uttar Pradesh (*the State, in which Ayodhya lies*), rushed back from **Lucknow** (*the capital of UP*) to Ayodhya to personally help manage the difficult task of the huge number of persons, who were keen to visit the temple. (*For comparison, every year 35 Mn, 30 Mn and 10 Mn pilgrims visited the Golden temple, Tirupati or Vaishno Devi respectively*)

----A brief BACKGROUNDER ON Prime Ministers between 1947 and 2014----
Most of the Prime Minister or Presidents of India till 2014 were from the westernized upper classes of India, who had no belief in the ceremonies performed in Hindu temples. If any one of them did perform these ceremonies, he/ she would go through them privately. But, leaving aside a negligibly small %age of India's Hindus, all the Hindus continued to go for pilgrimages and to visit temples.

However, as the population of India increased from 80 Mn when the British East India Company entered India to 1400 Mn in 2024, no one cared for providing **public infrastructure facilities like roads, water, electricity and public transport facilities at the places of pilgrimage**. The secular governments provided tourist facilities at places like Shimla, Mussoorie, Coorg, Shillong or Kashmir. But millions visited pilgrimage places, where hardly any facility was provided.

January 22, 2024, **Mira Road, Mumbai**, Maharashtra, India: On the Day of Renewal, Hindus were holding a rally, when Muslims attacked them in Mira Road, a locality in Mumbai, where Muslims live in large numbers. Many persons in the rally suffered

severe injuries. Police investigations showed many illegal structures and encroachments by miscreants in **Naya Nagar area of Mira Road**. On **23rd January**, **bulldozers** were deployed in the area to demolish these structure. Police issued a fresh advisory on Jan 24 asking all groups not to forward any messages related to clashes on social media.

IMPORTANT POINT-OF-VIEW to avoid riots: After the Mira Road attack on a Hindu procession, **Dr. Syed Rizwan Ahmed**, a popular YouTuber, has said that India must recognize that relations between the young hotheads of the two communities are not good. Hence, he says that either Hindu processions may not be permitted in areas, with a substantial %age of Muslims in the area or adequate arrangements must be made by Police for such procession. **Dr. Ahmed** says that a grand mosque in Ayodhya, in accordance with the SC **verdict of November 9, 2019** must not be permitted because it would lead **to a concentration of Muslims around the mosque**. This would **create a point for riots in Ayodhya**, similar to those of Mira Road on 22nd January 2024.

EDITORIAL COMMENTS by www.DiGiNews360.com : Muslims are 14% in India. But in any area, when Muslims population reaches about 35%, they become aggressive and it becomes difficult for non-Muslims to live with dignity. On the other hand, even a single Muslim family in a non-Muslim area, enjoys rights, equivalent to those of all the others.

----A BACKGROUNDER ON PM Narendra Modi's 11-day **Anushthan**----

Anushthan means "a tough regime of 'ascetic practices including fasting and living only on coconut water, sleeping on floor, without a mattress' along with 'regular worship and ensuring that thinking is for the benefit of all and not having any negative thoughts' etc."

PM **Narendra Modi** visited many of India's ancient temples, during these 11 days, following all the rituals in each case. Thus he took bath 22 times during these days.

January 12, 2024, **Panchvati, Nashik, Maharashtra**, Bharat: PM **Narendra Modi** announced that he was embarking on a special 11-day **Anushthan** until the **Pran-Pratishtha** of Lord Ram in Ayodhya on January 22, 2024.

PM Modi's Tweet: "Prayed at the **Shree Kalaram Temple in Nashik**. Feeling incredibly blessed by the divine atmosphere. A truly humbling and spiritual experience. I prayed for the peace and well-being of my fellow Indians."



*January 12, 2024: PM **Modi** taking part in a Puja at **Ramkund in Nashik***



January 14, 2024: : PM Modi taking part in **Pongal Puja** at **Delhi**



January 16, 2024, **Lepakshi, Andhra Pradesh, Bharat**: PM **Narendra Modi** prayed at **Veerabhadra temple** (*built in 1530 AD*). The temple is dedicated to **Virabhadra**, a fierce **incarnation of Lord Shiva**.

It is one of the centrally protected monuments of national importance and is considered one of the most spectacular Vijayanagara temples.

The **fresco paintings, in bright colors** with scenes of **Rama** and **Krishna** from the stories of the **Ramayana**, the **Mahabharata** and the **Puranas**, are well preserved.

In **Veerabhadra temple**, there is a very large **Nandi** (*mount of Shiva*), about 200 m away from the temple which is carved from a **single block of stone, which is said to be one of the largest of its type in the world**.

The temple is home to many **Kannada inscriptions** as it is located close to Karnataka border.



January 16, 2024: PM **Modi** praying at **Veerbhadr Temple in Andhra Pradesh**



January 16, 2024: PM **Modi** seeing **Puppet show at Veerbhadra Temple**

January 17, 2024: East Nada, **Guruvayur**, Kerala, Bharat: The Guruvayur Temple is dedicated to **Guruvayurappan**, a form of **Vishnu**, but popularly known as **Krishna**. It is one of the most important places of worship for Hindus in Kerala and Tamil Nadu and is often referred to as **Bhuloka Vaikuntha** (means "Heaven on Earth"). It is located in Thrissur District.



January 17, 2024: PM **Modi** praying at **Guruvayur Temple**, Kerala

January 18, 2024, **Triprayar, Thrissur**, Kerala, Bharat: PM **Narendra Modi** prayed at Thriprayar Shree Ramaswami Temple.

Triprayar is also known as the **Dakshin Ayodhya**. The deity is **Rama**, the **seventh incarnation of Vishnu**, with four arms bearing a conch, a discus, a bow, and a garland. The temple is situated on the bank of **Karuvannur river**, which is called as **Theevra river- Dakshin Sarayu**. It forms a part of Canoli Canal, which connects Kozhikode and Kodungallur. The temple deity is the presiding deity of **Arattupuzha Pooram**., a 7-day festival. It is believed that the **idol here was worshipped by Krishna**. The temple also has shrines for **Shiva as Dakshinamoorthy, Ganesha, Shastha, Krishna, Hanuman** and Chathan.

Shastha is another name of **Ayyappan**, the offspring of **Shiva** and **Mohini**. His principal function is to act as a **Kuladevata** (*means "deity of a clan"*) of a given clan, as well as act as a **Guardian of a village's boundaries**.

Chathan is the **negative spirit** of Lord Shiva. Legends say, **Lord Shiva** was deceived into a relationship with a **tribal woman** which resulted in birth of a son who had negative powers of Lord Shiva. **Chathan** was destined to kill **Jalandhar**, an **Asura** (*means "a demon"*), who too was born out of negative

spirits of Shiva. **Chathan** once visited **Kailash** (a mountain in **Tibet** and **the abode of Lord Shiva**) to meet **Lord Shiva**, but was blocked by **Nandi** due to his horrifying appearance. After praying to **Lord Vishnu**, **Chathan** was able to meet **Lord Shiva** and was blessed by **Lord Shiva** and **Parvathi**. Then, **Chathan** was renamed as **Vishnu Maya** (means "The Illusion of being Vishnu").

Chathan, now called **Vishnu Maya** killed **Jalandhar** by assuming the form of **Sudarshana Chakra**, for which he was blessed and raised to level of a **Demi God** by **Lord Indra**.



January 18, 2024: PM **Modi** at **Thriprayar Shree Ramaswami Temple**, Kerala

At the **Thriprayar Shree Ramaswami Temple**, it was a pleasure to hear verses of the **Shri Adhyathma Ramayana** and other **Bhajans** (means "devotional songs") in **Malayalam** from young students.

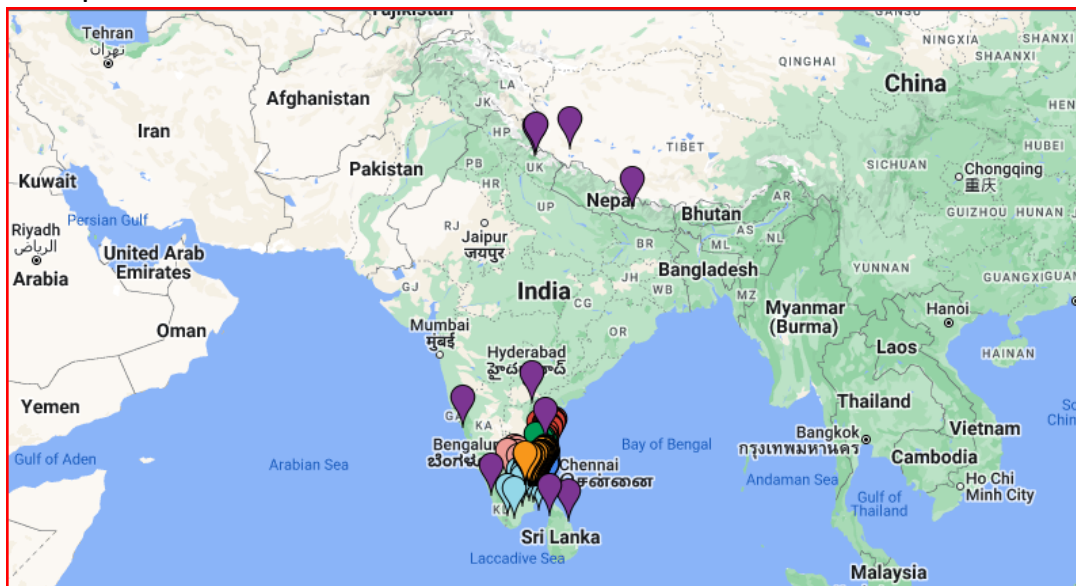
Thriprayar Shree Ramaswami Temple is the first among the four temples, located in **Thrissur** and **Ernakulam** districts, housing the four sons of King **Dasharatha**. The set of 4 temples, called as **Nalambalams** (**Nalu** means "four" and **Ambalam** means "temple"), the others being **Koodalmanikyam** Temple in **Irinjalakuda** housing **Bharata**, **Thirumuzhikoolam** temple housing **Lakshmana** and **Payammal** housing **Shatrughna** in that order. It is believed that worshipping these temples on a single day in the **Malayalam** month of **Karkadakam** is auspicious.

Karkidakam is the last month of the Malayalam calendar. It falls during the month of **July** or **August**. During this month, the rains are slowly declining. This is the time considered to be most ideal for undergoing Ayurveda-based body rejuvenation therapies.

In memory of **Sethubandhan** (means "**Rama Setu**"), **Thriprayar** temple observes a festival on "**Thiruvonam** (means "**Sacred Onam Day**")" day in the **Malayalam Month** of "**Kanni**" (October – November) in every year.

Onam commemorates the return of the righteous **King Mahabali**.

January 20, 2024: Rameswaram island, Tamil Nadu, Bharat: The *Arulmigu Ramanathaswamy Temple* is dedicated to Lord Shiva. About 7,000 years back, it was established and worshiped by **Ram**, before he crossed the bridge to the present-day island of Sri Lanka. It is **one of the twelve Jyotirlinga** temples and *one of the 275 Paadal Petra Sthalams* (means "**holy temples for Lord Shiv**"), about which **Nayanars** (means "**Saivite saints**") composed and sang songs for devotees. The temple was **expanded during the 12th century by the Pandya Dynasty**, and its **Principal Shrine's Sanctum** was renovated by **Jeyaveera Cinkaiariyan and his successor Gunaveera Cinkaiariyan**, monarchs of the **Jaffna kingdom**. The temple has the **longest corridor among all Hindu temples in India**. It was **built by King Muthuramalinga Sethupathiy**, King of **Ramanathapuram Samasthanam**, during the last few decades of the 18th century. The King **Sethupathiy** built the third court of the temple.



275 Lord Shiva Temples, known as Paadal Petra Sthalams

The Ramanathaswamy temple is one of the Char Dhams (means “4 most holy places”), as defined by Adi Shankara (686–717 CE). The four Dhams are **Badrinath** (in **Uttara Khand** in the **North**), **Dwarka** (in **Gujarat** in the **East**), **Puri** (in **Odisha** in the **East**) and **Rameswaram** (in **Tamil Nadu** in the **South**). Hindus believe that visiting these sites is a path to achieve moksha (means “liberation” or “salvation”).



Jan 20, 2024: PM Modi at
at Sri Ranganathaswamy Temple



Jan 20, 2024: PM Modi at
Arulmigu Ramanathaswamy Temple

January 20, 2024: **Srirangam, Tiruchirapalli, Tamil Nadu, Bharat: Sri Ranganathaswamy Temple** is a Hindu temple dedicated to **Ranganatha** (a form of **Vishnu**). The temple is glorified by Alvars in their Naalayira Divya Prabhandam and has the unique distinction of being **the foremost among the 108 Divya Desams dedicated to the god Vishnu**.

It is one of the **oldest surviving active temple complexes** in India, with stone inscriptions from late 100 BCE to 100 CE. The temple is about 2500 to 3000 years old. Saint **Ramanuja** of 11th century and his predecessors of Bhakti movement- **Nathamuni** and **Yamunacharya**- prayed at the temple. Today the annual 21-day festival conducted during the **Tamil month of Margali** (December–January) attracts 1 million visitors.

In **early 14th century**, the temple was looted and destroyed by the Delhi Sultanate armies in a broad plunder raid on various cities of the Pandyan kingdom. The temple was **rebuilt in late 14th century**, the site fortified and expanded with many **more gopurams in the 16th and 17th centuries**.

Sri Ranganathaswamy Temple is located **on an island** between the **Kollidam and Kaveri rivers**. So it is vulnerable to flooding. The temple occupies an **area of 155 acres** with 81 shrines, 21 towers, 39 pavilions, and many water tanks integrated into the complex making it the **world's largest functioning Hindu temple**. The latest addition is the outer tower that is approximately 73 m tall, completed in 1987. (*Angkor Wat in Cambodia is the largest temple complex. But is today a tourist place, with no prayers being offered.*)

The temple complex has been nominated as a UNESCO World Heritage Site, and is in UNESCO's tentative list. In 2017 the temple won the UNESCO Asia Pacific Award of Merit 2017 for cultural heritage conservation, making it the first temple in Tamil Nadu to receive the award from the UNESCO.

Numerous inscriptions suggest that this Hindu temple served not only as a **spiritual center**, but also a **major economic and charitable institution** that **operated education and hospital facilities** and ran a **free kitchen**.

---- A BACKGROUNDER on Guru Sri Ramanujacharya----

Sri Ramanujacharya breathed his last in 1137 A.D. with his head on the lap of Embar Govinda (*a cousin of **Sri Bhagavad Ramanuja**, the acharya. Embar popularised the tenents of Sri Vaishnavism. Today, the use of **Embar**, before one's name, dignifies the descent of the family from Embar Govinda.*), feet on the lap of **Vaduga Nambi** (*a disciple of Ramanujacharya*) and listening to the recitation of the DivyaPrabhandam while looking at the Sri Padukas of **Yamunacharya**.



Sri Ramanujacharya 's body has been preserved, since 1137 AD, inside the Sri Ranganathaswamy Temple in Srirangam, Tiruchirappalli.

- **Yamunacharya** was a **Vishistadvaita** philosopher based in Srirangam, Tamil Nadu, India. He is best-known for being a preceptor of Ramanuja. He was born in the early 10th century CE, and was the grandson of **Nathamuni**, a famed yogi, who collected the works of the Tamil Alvars.
- The **Naalayira Divya Prabandham** (*means "Four Thousand Divine Hymns"*) is a collection of 4,000 Tamil verses composed by the 12 Alvars, who lived between 5th and 8th Century CE. It was compiled in its present form by **Nathamuni** and marked the beginning of the **canonization of the 12 Vaishnava poet saints**, and these hymns are still sung extensively today. The works were lost before they were collected and **organized in the form of an anthology by Nathamuni**.
- **Divya Prabandham** is recited in **Badrinath** every day. The Divya Prabandham is recited along with the Vedas, and it is given equal status to the Vedas, largely due to the efforts of Ramanuja.

TECHNOLOGY for PRESERVING the BODY: The Guru's mummified body or **Thaanaana Thirumeni** (*means "selfsame body"*) has been brilliantly **preserved for more than 887 years**. Rather than using chemicals, **sandalwood paste** and **saffron** are used to protect the mummy. A **coat of PachaiKarpuram (camphor) mixed with**

Kumkum (vermilion) is applied twice a year which **gives it an ochre/orange tint**. While the Egyptian mummies are placed in a sleeping position, wrapped in cloth and applied with several layers of chemicals, **Ramanujarcharya's body is kept in a sitting position and preserved with only natural herbs and substances**.

January 21, 2024: **Dhanushkodi**, Tamil Nadu, Bharat: Arichal Munai is the starting point of the **Ram Setu**. It is a few kms from the Dhanushkodi town. One can drive to this point on a road, with an enthralling view on both sides leading to the beach. Both sides of the road is covered with water and the road ends in the beach with a pillar, on which the Indian emblem has been depicted.



January 21, 2024: **Rameswaram**, Tamil Nadu, Bharat: The **Kothandaramaswamy Temple** is a shrine dedicated to Lord Ram. The temple is classified among the 108 **Abhimana Kshethram of Vaishnavate tradition**. The temple has the deities of **Rama, Lakshmana, Sita, Hanuman** and **Vibhishana**. The temple is **the place, where Vibhishana, the younger brother of Ravana, asked Rama and his vanara army for refuge**.

Lord Ram is depicted as having a bow (**Kothandam**), and hence the name **Kothandaramaswamy** for the idol.

The temple is surrounded by sea Located at a distance of 13 Km from Rameswaram, it forms the southernmost tip of the island.

The temple is the only historical structure to survive the 1964 cyclone that washed away Dhanushkodi. and remains a tourist attraction. It is easily accessible from Rameswaram.



