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Malikappuram temple saw an increase in offerings

The Navagraha Temple near the Malikappuram Devi Temple has seen a rise in devotees seeking blessings and offerings. Navagraha Pooja is the most sought after offering of the temple. Ayyappa (men devotees) and Malikapurams (girl devotees) from Kerala as well as from other states like Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh, and Karnataka are buying Navagraha archana coupons. It is Rs 250 for the Navagraha Pooja. Apart from this, special pujas are also conducted in the temple to appease the Saturn, Moon, Jupiter, Rahu, Ketu, and Mars. This costs Rs 50 per coupon.

(PR-44)

40 counters set by Devaswom Board in Sabarimala to supply drinking water

Devaswom Board has made enough arrangements to supply medicinal drinking water to pilgrims who climb the holy hillocks of Sabarimala. The Board is adamant that no devotees should face difficulty with the unavailability of drinking water while climbing. The Devaswom Board set up medicinal drinking water counters which work round the

clock. A total of 40 counters have been set up from the Neelimala to Pandithavalam for the supply of boiled medicinal water. Around 305 employees have been deployed to supply drinking water.

The drinking water supply counters are located at Sannidhanam Sopanam, Valiyapandal, Malikappuram, Pandithavalam, Annadana Mandapam, Azhi and Vella Nivedya counter. There is a gas cylinder facility in 20 of the counters to boil the water.

(PR-45)

A dip in Bhasmakulam cleanse every one, bringing peace and solace to the mind

The pilgrims coming to Sabarimala sees it as a divine thing to immerse themselves in the Bhasmakulam. It brings peace and tranquillity to their minds. Devotees pay homage to Ayyappan only after immersing themselves in the Bhasmakulam and cleansed his body. Though the pool was adjacent to the flyover overlooking Sannidhanam many years ago, as the pilgrimage increased, the kulam (pond) was placed below the shrine taking into consideration the convenience of the devotees.

The pool is now about 100 meters away from Malikappuram temple. Earlier, the priests of temple immersed in the Bhasmakulam and cleansed their bodies before going for poojas. There is also a separate pond near the Bhasmakulam for cleaning utensils known in the name Pathrakulam. The Bhasmakulam is made of stone slabs on all four sides and granite in the middle. Water from the Urakkuzhi Theertham was used to fill the pond. Those who bathe in the ashes should not contaminate the pond by mixing soap and oil.

(PR-46)

Parakottypattu performance is unique and it will cast away the evils

Parakottypattu is a unique art form that takes place at the Mani Mandapam where it is believed to be the place where Ayyappan first sat at Sabarimala. It is near to the Malikappuram temple. From morning till the nada closes in the night, the Parakottypattu will take place at the temple premises. The performance of this unique art form is done by the performers belonging to the Hindu Velan community. Parakkottypattu is performed in the belief that it will avert evil and Shani dosha. Legend has it that when Manikandan was residing at Pandalam, the queen and the minister plotted to get rid of him. It is said that god Siva has come in the form of Vela and performed the

Parakottypattu to throw away the spell cast on Lord Ayyappa by the Pandalam queen and the minister.

In the initial days, the Parakottypattu was performed under the holy steps. As the rush increased, so did the convenience of the devotees, it was later moved to Malikappuram temple premises.

(PR-47)

Traditional forest routes see an increase in pilgrim flow

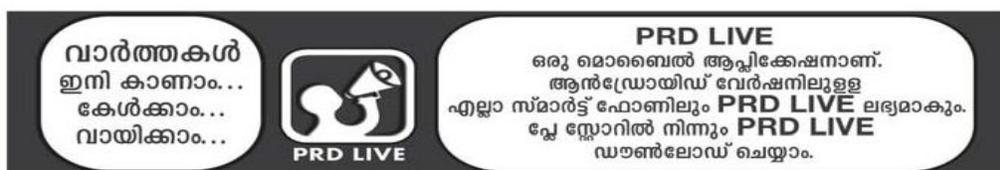
Since the opening of the Sanctum Sanctorum at Sabarimala for the Mandala-Makaravilakku the festival there saw a rise in pilgrims taking the traditional route through the forests. The forest path or Kananapatha was cleared by forest officials and the Devaswom board before the opening of the temple. On the day of the opening, 145 pilgrims reached the Sannidhanam through this route. In 11 days, more than 1,400 people have reached the Sabarimala temple through the traditional forest path. The trail is only open from 6 am to 2 pm. Forest officials estimate that the forest trail is dangerous at night because of the presence of elephants and other wild animals. Checkpoints have also been set up along the route. Those who come along the forest path take a dip in Urakkuzhi. It is predicted that the rush of pilgrims through this route will rise in the coming days.

(PR-48)

Pilgrim dies at Neelimala

A pilgrim who was on his pilgrimage to Sabarimala died of a heart attack. The deceased has been identified as Kameshwara Rao (40), a resident of Andhra Pradesh. According to Pampa police sources, the deceased died of a heart attack while climbing the Neelimala at around 11.15 am today. Kameshwara Rao is one of the 28-member team from Andhra Pradesh.

(PR-49)



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