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"What is Body Consciousness" and "Utility and dangers of egoism in the armed forces" were two themes of a three-day workshop conducted for the Indian Army by the Aurobindo Ashram. This latest of five programs in two years was held at the College of Combat in Mhow, Madhya Pradesh, and was intended to boost motivational levels by imparting spiritual training to the officers.

Less beef is consumed in India than any other country in the world, according to a 1997 consumer survey by the Roper Starch Worldwide research company. Eighty-two percent of Indians surveyed enjoy a vegetarian main dish daily--compared to just eight percent of Americans and 27 percent of people worldwide. Malaysia leads the world in fish consumption.

Tharu priests in Nepalese villages are renowned for saving people bitten by cobras, which regularly kill several thousand people a year in the Indian subcontinent. The priest and a band of assistants will rush to the house of the stricken person, perform prayers and administer treatment until the person revives many hours later. Mukhiya Tharu, priest of Bhakari village, has cured 70 people. Great, but how many has he lost? Not a single one, he says.

Over 75 trustees and heads of temples gathered in Udupi, Kerala, to protest the proposed "Hindu Religious and Charitable Institutions and Endowments Bill, 1997." The bill would bring every Hindu temple and monastery, including the huge institutions of Mata Amritanandamayi and of Sree Narayana Dharma Sanghom Trust, under tight government control. Institution heads would be required to submit their yearly budget for approval by a government body. Government boards would be set up to assist in the administration of the monasteries, and "to define the powers and duties of the madhathipathi (abbot)." The proposed bill impacts only Hindu institutions, not those of any other faiths.

New York Hindus partied from noon into the late night during Deepavali celebrations attended by 150,000 people on October 5. New York Mayor Rudolph Guliani attended and declared it "India Day." The ten-hour event was held at the South Street Seaport in Manhattan and included singers and dancers--notably the Nrityagram Dance Ensemble of India now on tour in America.

At least one Malaysian Hindu is upset with the December cover of the UK Communications International. It displays Lord Siva Nataraja, King of Dance, holding various communication icons in His hands, such as a microwave tower and satellite. He stands upon a globe and is encircled not by a ring of fire, but a ring of telephone receivers. It's become common in recent years to use the multi-armed dancing Siva image to depict complex, interrelated activities, such as high tech issues.

"God is Dead" wrote German philosopher Friedrich Nietzsche in

the late 19th century. Today, for the first time in history, most Germans believe him. According to a poll by Der Spiegel magazine, only 45 percent believe in God, and just a quarter in Jesus Christ. Both results reflect the strong non-religious trend in West European nations. In contrast, 96 percent of Americans believe in God or a Divine Spirit.

Vinod Prakash's son and bride found a unique way to support their father's and grandfather's relief program in India. They told their wedding guests to not send presents, but to give money to the India Development and Relief Fund's orphanages, woman's vocational programs and medical services. The fund sends 100 percent of donations to India. Contact: IDRF, 5821 Mossrock Drive, North Bethesda, Maryland, 20852-3238, USA.

National Curry Day is November 10 in the UK, home to 8,500 Indian restaurants with annual sales of <sup>us</sup>\$4.5 billion. Tops among several unusual items produced for the day, which included a one-ton Jalfrezi, a spicy cut vegetable dish, was a curry-flavored ale made by Firkin brewery. There were no reports on consumer reaction.

While India struggles with the concept of a national language--anything other than English--in the European Union, reports The Economist, "One in three people now speak English well enough to get along in conversation, making it the Union's lingua franca." Forty percent or more of the

people in France, Germany, Sweden, Denmark and Holland speak English.

Naimisaranyam, a Malayalam-language magazine promoting Hinduism in Kerala seeks financial assistance to continue its publication, local teaching programs, carnatic music concerts and book production. Just US\$80 a month is needed. Contact: Sree Hari. K.K., Editor, Naimisaranyam Spiritual Magazine, P.O. Etakkad-Nadal, Kannur, Kerala, India 670 663.

Two women priests have been appointed to regular temple duties by Ma Amritanandamayi at temples owned by her ashram in Kerala. Soumyamritha and Nalini, brahmacharini residents of the ashram, where they were taught puja ritual, are the first women to officiate at a public temple in Kerala. It is common for women to be priests within women's ashrams, and women served as priestesses in Vedic times. Other organizations, notably the Arya Samaj, have also trained women priests. Women are generally complemented as being more attentive to their devotional duties than their male

counterparts.

Among a long string of dignitaries visiting London's ornate Swaminarayan Temple was the president of Uganda, Yoweri Kaguta Museveni. Personally welcomed by Swaminarayan leader Pramukh Swami Maharaj, Museveni invited Indians to resettle in Uganda, from which they were summarily ejected by Idi Amin in 1972.

The UK World Council of Hindus proudly announced that their text book, Explaining Hindu Dharma: A Guide for Teachers, has sold out. The text was produced by sixteen authors over three years and is approved for use in UK schools. Hinduism is now an option for the "General Certificate of Education Examination." Thousands of 16-year-olds, many of them non-Hindus, selected this option in 1997. Contact: Dr. Nawal K. Prinja, [nprinja@aol.com](mailto:nprinja@aol.com).