

Maa Maha Gauri Pooja on Ashtami in Navratra Festival

Maa Durga is worshiped as Maa Mahagauri on Eighth Navratra. Mahagauri is the eighth form of Goddess Shakti. Her color is white. Whiteners is shown by shell, moon etc. Mahagauri means one clean and bright like a ray of lightning.

This is the form of Goddess Parvati when she did penance to get Lord Shiva as her husband. It is believed that due to the intense Tapas performed by her without moving caused soil and dust to collect on her body. Lord Shiva cleaned her with water from Ganga that's why she got whiteners as shine and got the name as Maha Gauri. Purity is depicted in this form of Durga.

The Goddess is in the form of eight-year old child with complexion as fair as a conch, moon and jasmine. Her clothes and ornaments are white and pure. She has three eyes and four arms. Her right upper hand is in the pose of allaying fear and right lower hand holds a trident in it. The left upper hand holds a tambourine and the lower one is in the pose of blessing. All sins of devotees are washed away due to her worship. Her power is unfailing and instantly fruitful.

The eighth day of Navratra Pooja has much importance. Durga Ashtami Puja is held in many parts of India. If a human worships after fast he/she gets fruits immediately. In front of Portrait of Goddess Mother as in front of Parvati Mata in Lord Shiva Temple one can worship Maa Maha Gauri. She appeared in the form of Maa Ambaji, Maa Kalika, Maa Bahucharaji etc.

She stays in devotees' heart and gives best fruits if we worship any form. Wearing red, saffron, yellow, white, pink color would be auspicious for the devotees on this day. Maa Mahagauri can be seen in a temple at Kankhal near pilgrim center Haridwar.

She is like an eight-year-old girl. She is intelligent and peaceful, possesses three eyes and four arms, and uses the bull as her vehicle. The Eighth swarup of Ma Durga is Ma "Maha Gauri." Her clothes and ornaments are white and clean. She rides on bull. The Ninth Swarup of Maa Durga is Mata Siddhidatri. There are eight Siddhis or accomplishments, they are- Anima, Mahima, Garima, Laghima, Prapti, Prakamya, Ishitva and Vashitva. Maha Shakti gives all these Siddhis. It is said in 'Devipurani' that the Supreme God Shiv got all these Siddhis by worshipping Maha Shakti. With her gratitude the half body of Shiv became of Goddess and there fore his name 'Ardhanarishvar' has become famous. This Swarup is depicted as seated on a lion and has four hands. She is the giver of all forms of accomplishments[Siddhis]. As per the Brahmapurana there are 18 types of achievements which are Anima, Mahima, Garima, Ladhima, Prapti, Prakaamya, Ishitva, Vashitva, Sarvakaamaal, Saadhita, Sarvagmatva, DurShravana, Parkaayapraveshan, VakaSiddhi, Kalpavrushatva, Shrishti, Samharkaransamarthyaa, Anaratva, Sarvanyayakatva, Bhavana and Siddhi. Seated upon a lotus, most commonly, is the possessor of different Siddhis /accomplishments to grant her devotees. Mata Siddhidatri's famous pilgrim centre, is located in Nanda Parvat in the Himalayas.



NAVRATRI SPECIAL RECIPE

Kala Chana Sundal



Ingredients

- ½ cup kala chana or black chickpeas
- 2.5 to 3 cups water for pressure cooking the black chickpeas, ¾ tsp black mustard seeds, ¾ tsp urad dal/spilt & skinned black gram, 1 green chili, chopped
- 1 dry red chili, kept whole or halved & deseeded
- a pinch of asafoetida/hing (optional)
- 1 to 2 tbsp grated fresh coconut, 10 to 12 curry leaves/kadi patta, few drops of lemon juice (optional), 1 tbsp coconut oil or peanut oil, rock salt as required

Method:

Soak the kala chana or black chickpeas overnight. Next day, in the same soaked water, cook the chana in a pressure cooker till they are completely cooked. add more water if required in the cooker. Add salt too when cooking the chana. then strain the kala chana and keep aside. Don't drain the stock. it is rich in nutrients and can be used for making chapatis or added to breads, curries and even dals. Heat oil in a pan. add the mustard seeds and urad dal. The mustard seeds will crackle and the urad dal will get browned. They almost take the same time to cook on a low flame. Immediately, add the curry leaves, red chilies and asafoetida. Fry for 10-15 seconds. Now add the cooked black chana and salt. stir and saute for 4-5 minutes on a low to medium flame. Switch off the flame and add the coconut. Sprinkle the lemon juice. Stir well.

Maha Ashtami Pujan & its benefits



have a stable and prosperous life. Achieving success and self fulfillment is also a very common blessing and benefit that Navaratra Puja will bestow upon you. For a complete spiritual enlightenment, this puja is very beneficial.

When is the Puja performed?

There are three main Pujas that are performed during this time, especially on the day of Maha Ashtami. The Pujas that are performed in this period are Mahanisha Bagalamukhi Puja, Navratni Maha Ashtami and Maha Kali Ashtami.

The Maha Ashtami is performed on the eighth day of Navratra. It is on this day that the Pujas are performed on all the Shakti Peeths in India. Goddess Bagalamukhi and Maha Kali are worshipped on this day for physical, material and spiritual growth, courage, strength and confidence.

Worshipping Devi Bagalamukhi:

If you want to get rid of your adverse situations that your enemies are causing you, you must perform a Puja to Devi Bagalamukhi. She is the Goddess who can protect you from all harms. Whether it is some legal problem, the threat of a sudden bad event or incident or even an accident; Devi Bagalamukhi will protect you from that. By performing a Puja and a Homa to Devi Bagalamukhi on the day of Maha Ashtami will avoid any kind of bloodshed in the family and deaths. She is the Adi Shakti who has the occult powers to turn the evil into good. She can paralyse the speech of your enemy, destroy the bad intellect and mal-intention of your enemy.

Maha Kali Puja:

The consort of God Lord Shiva, Maha Kali or Maa Kali is the symbol of strength or Shakti. Therefore, worshipping her brings power to the mind. When you offer a Puja to her on this auspicious day of Maha Ashtami, you will be able to get rid of the fear in mind and thereby achieve success. She can help you escape the grip of Black Magic and evil. Therefore, offering a Puja to Maha Kali on Maha Ashtami can bring peace and success in your life and also in your family.

Kanya Pujan - worshipping female trinity during Navratras



energy. Nine girls aka nine Kumaris are invited home, their feet are washed and decked with Alta. A delicious Bhog of Puris, Kale Chane and Halwa is offered to the little nine Devis. Post the bhog, the little girls are given gifts.

But why do we celebrate Kanya Pujan?

According to the Puranas, there was once a demon king by the name of Kolasura who took over the heavens and spread terror on earth. The Devas were helpless and therefore, they approached Ma Kali for help. Taking the Avatar of Maa Durga, Maa Kali killed Kolasura in a fierce battle. Therefore, Kanya Pujan is performed in honour of Maa Durga's triumph over Kolasura.

Significance of Kanya or Kumari Pujan

Many believe that the Puranas, there was actually created by Maa Durga, the Mother Goddess. In fact, such is the divine force of Maa Shakti that it became the foremost inspiration behind the creation of the universe, the gods and the cosmos. Maa Durga is the manifestation of feminine divinity and Kanya Pujan or Kumari Puja is a symbolic celebration of this Shakti.

Why Kanya Pujan?

As per the Striyah Samastastava Devi Bhedah, an ancient Hindu script, a woman is a personification of Mahamaya - Maa Durga. And a young girl who has not attained puberty is seen as the purest form of Maa Durga.

Maa Durga protects all her devotees from evils, bestowing them with knowledge and prosperity.

Navratra is a very big festival in India which occurs four times in a year. Of these four, the Chaitra or Vasant Navratra and the Ashad Navratra are very important. Of the many rituals of Navratra (they are more or less the same across both Navratras), Kanya Pujan or Kumari Puja is a very important ritual.

Kanya Pujan - Ma Shakti

It is said that without observing Kanya Pujan, the Sadhana or devotion to Maa Durga during Navratra is considered incomplete. This is because the festival of Navratra is a celebration of worshipping feminine divinity in the form of Shakti, i.e. Durga. And Kanya or virgin girls or young girls (below the age of puberty) are considered Shakti incarnate.

Hindu Female Trinity

During the nine days of Navratra, devotees worship Maa Durga, Maa Lakshmi

and Maa Saraswati, i.e. first three days are dedicated to Maa Durga, fourth to the sixth day are dedicated to Maa Lakshmi and the last three days are dedicated to Maa Saraswati. These three Goddesses who form the divine female trinity in Hinduism represent feminine powers of wealth, wisdom, prosperity, knowledge, strength and spiritual wisdom.

Celebrating Ashtami and Navami

Of the nine days, Ashtami, the eighth day and the ninth day of Navratra, Navami are very important and auspicious. These days are most important as it is believed that the spiritual fervour reaches its highest peak during this time. Many perform Havan for Maa Durga and Kanya Pujan is performed as well.

Kumari Puja - an essential ritual

Kanya Pujan is an essential ritual in Navratra as it honours the divine feminine

NC symbol of J&K's unity: Dr Farooq



Newly joined members posing with National Conference President Dr Farooq Abdullah.

STATE TIMES NEWS

JAMMU: The Jammu and Kashmir National Conference President and Member of the Parliament from Srinagar Dr Farooq Abdullah on Friday said that NC represents the enduring multi-cultural ethos and pluralism of Jammu and Kashmir. This the Party President said at Jammu while welcoming scores of new entrants from different walks of life into the party fold. Dr Farooq Abdullah, who was attending the Lok Sabha, reached Jammu earlier today after the commencement of the budget session.

Those who joined JKNC include noted socio-political personality Syed Mumtaz Shah Bukhari of Surankote, Retd medical superintendent Dr. Ranbir Singh, Retd Deputy Director Dr DB Singh, Retd Zonal Education planning officer Chander Mohan Singh, Ex Sarpanch Karam Chand, Retd Police Cop Sarjeev Singh, Mool Raj Sharma, Miss Sumita Devi, Ronesh Chander, Wasim Akram, Habib Choudhary, Shahu Sharma, Mamta Mehra. JKNC Provincial President Jammu Rattan Lal Gupta, YNC Provincial President Ajaz Jan, Addl Spokesperson Th. Yashuvsrdhan Singh, Mumtaz Bajad, Laly Khan, Reyaz Ahmed DDC, Shadi Khan, Irfan Qureshi, others were also present on the occasion.

While welcoming the new entrants into the party fold, Dr Farooq said that the doors of the

party are open for those who want to strengthen the idea of pluralistic, democratic, progressive and United Jammu and Kashmir.

The Party, he stated takes pride in giving platform to all those individuals who want to do their bit to build bridges between different communities, regions and sections of the society," he said adding, "NC strategy and vision in politics is etched with the welfare of people and protecting the political, social and cultural interests of the diverse sections of J&K's society from all regions and religions."

Addressing the party functionaries, Dr Farooq said, "Perception of public's voice in administration and government has decreased due to the backsliding of democratic, governance deficit and administrative inertia. The hard earned gains of NC during its successive governments in terms of bridging building people's trust in government has received a setback. The anti-poor, anti-trader and anti-consumer policies being pursued by the incumbent administration have further increased the wedge between the administration and people. Our people don't know whom to turn to for help. Here our party functionaries have an important role to play in terms of giving voice to issues faced by our people. Our workers and functionaries have to knock on every door. There is no substitute to hard work, lots of leg work and sheer degree of optimism and determination," he said.

Jugal, Kavinder hand-over keys of houses to beneficiaries under PMAY

STATE TIMES NEWS

JAMMU: As part of fortnight celebrations of Bharatiya Janata Party's Foundation Day, former Deputy Chief Minister and senior BJP leader, Kavinder Gupta along with MP Jugal Kishore handed-over keys to beneficiaries of Prime Minister Awas Yojna (PMAY) at Ward-61 in Channi Himmat in Jammu.

MP Jugal Kishore Sharma, while speaking on the occasion, congratulated beneficiaries and lauded Prime Minister Narendra Modi for taking care of the common people of world's largest democracy. BJP MP further said that though the previous Govt had also floated a scheme pertaining to housing but it was only a cosmetic affair under which houses were given to some selected people. Kavinder



MP Jugal Kishore Sharma handing over key of house to a beneficiary of PMAY.

Gupta, in his address, said that previous Governments left poor people in this sensitive region at the mercy of God least bothering to take special measures to ameliorate their sufferings. Accusing previous governments of not having will power to do any good for the welfare of the poor people, Kavinder said that it is sincere intention and strong will and determination of BJP Govt led by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, which provided houses to millions across the nation. Prominent among others present on the occasion included Vinay Gupta, Neeraj Puri, Narinder Gupta Koki, Raj Kumar, Jagan Nath, Badri Nath, Master Kewal Gupta, Jeevan Singh Charak, Raghubir Singh Charak, Mohinder Paul, Mirza Bhagat, Dinesh Kumar, Manohar Lal, Bhavarlal, Dinesh Kumar, Deepak Kumar, Harbars Lal Sharma, Vinod Gupta, Parshotam Kumar, Tarsem Lal, Vimal Sharma, Krishan Lal, Bittu Choudhary, Thoru Ram, Chander Shekhar, Manohar Lal, Devinder Kumar Sharma, Rishi, Pintu Pandita, Vishwadeep Gupta, Deep Raj and Devinder Singh Charak.

BIG FM Jammu partners with Geetanjali Salon to host comedy talent hunt 'BIG Laughter Fest'



BIG FM members and other participants of "Big Laughter Fest" posing for a photograph.

STATE TIMES NEWS

JAMMU: A good sense of humor and a good laugh is known to be the best mood lifter. Keeping this in mind, BIG FM partnered with Geetanjali Salon and brought out Jammu's first ever comedy show of a kind called "Big Laughter Fest" which was held at Radisson Blu, Jammu.

The talent hunt gave BIG FM listeners a chance to send in their entries to participate in the show. The best of the performances was facilitated at Radisson Blu, Jammu. The event saw 300 + listeners laugh out loud at witty and hilarious performances put up by one of India's best stand-up comedians and You-Tube sensation Gaurav Kapoor.

The event was attended

by Chief Guest Sarmad Hafeez, Secretary Department of Culture and Tourism, J&K along with Avny Lavasa, IAS Commissioner JMC.

Also present there was Ruchika Gupta, Director Geetanjali Salon; Mahesh Singh Jasrotia, GM Radisson Blu Jammu; M M Mathavan, Facility Director SMVD Narayana SSH Katra; Anindo Banerjee, Director Jammu Park Smart; Tahir Beigh from Beigh Construction Company and Shilpa from State Times.

Ayush Sharma of Jammu won the title of 'Jammu's Big Laughter King' after getting a tough competition from Shivam, Avid and Kanchan.

Jammu's budding standup comic Amit Singh

Andotra, known as 'Chui' opened for Gaurav Kapoor. Gaurav proved why he is one of the best, with his perfect comic timing and made the evening a memorable one. Speaking on the occasion, BIG FM spokesperson said, "BIG FM is known for its 'Dhun Badal Ke To Dekho' philosophy & through initiatives like these, we intend to bring out the best of talent from our listeners and give them opportunity to enjoy life at its best. We are always poised to connect with our listeners strongly and laughter is the best way to resonate deeply with them." RJ Juhie and RJ Rahul set the vibe of the show from the beginning where the audience couldn't control their laughter, and this continued till the end.