

Festivity atop Nilachal as Ambubachi event gents underway



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Thousands of people are thronging atop the Nilachal hill to attend the grand Ambubachi, the name of an event that begins on Sunday at the historic Kamakhya temple premises.

The temple belonging to the 16th century and the most important of the 51 Hindu 'piths' in India, will be remaining closed for three days. Hundreds of sadhus, saints and sanyasins from across the country and abroad are arriving for the tantric 'Ambubasi Mela'.

During the three days no religious rite will be performed in the temple with a beehive-shaped shikhara built by Koch dynasty king Chilarai in 1565, and priests and devotees will wear red clothes and offer garments of the same hue to Goddess Kamakhya.

Religious belief and mythology have it that the 'yoni' of Sati, wife of Lord Shiva, fell at the site of the temple when he was carrying her body in anger after she immolated herself. The sanctum sanctorum of the temple reached after passing two chambers has no image, but a natural underground stream emanating from a fissure in rock that symbolises the 'yoni'. At this time the water turns red due to iron oxidation and resembles menstrual blood.

The Kalika Purana describes Kamakhya as the 'yielder of all desires, the bride of shiva and bestower of salvation'. The fertility cult associated with the festival is of pre-Aryan origin with the people residing on the Nilachal hill worshipping the earth as 'Mother Shakti' who provided them food.

editor

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