



SECT INITIATION. Hindu men take a dip to become Naga Sadhus, or naked holy men, at sangam, the confluence of three holy rivers during the Kumbh Mela, or pitcher festival, in Prayagraj Uttar Pradesh state, India. At every Kumbh, including this year's, thousands of devotees are initiated into the reclusive sect of the Naga Sadhus, naked, ash-smeared, cannabis-smoking Hindu warriors and onetime-armed defenders of the faith who for centuries have lived as ascetics in jungles and caves. (AP Photo/Rajesh Kumar Singh)

Naked pot-smoking sect grows at Indian Hindu fest

PRAYAGRAJ, India (AP) — At the world's largest pilgrimage in Prayagraj in northern India, tens of millions of Hindu faithful travel to the sacred sangam — the confluence of three holy rivers — to take a dip.

The Kumbh Mela, or pitcher festival, is a series of baths by Hindu sadhus and sadhis, holy men and women, and other pilgrims who believe the ritual cleanses them of their sins and ends the process of repeated reincarnation.

For some, stripping down for a holy dip also signifies the stripping away of the material world.

At every Kumbh, including this year's, thousands of devotees are initiated into the reclusive sect of the Naga Sadhus — naked, ash-smeared, cannabis-smoking Hindu warriors and onetime-armed defenders of the faith who for centuries have lived as ascetics in jungles and caves.

On so-called royal bathing days, the Naga Sadhus lead the 13 monastic orders' processions — on garlanded horses, elephants, and tractors — through the festival grounds and into the river, armed with tridents and swords.

Performed by senior priests, the elaborate process of initiation comprises five rituals, starting with the shaving of heads and beards, ritual offering of saffron robes, wearing prayer beads, applying ash

on the body, and giving up their last piece of clothing.

The aspirants have to take a vow of celibacy, practice tough physical and mental conditioning, and renounce worldly possessions and family ties.

After a purifying bath in the river and a prayer ceremony, the sadhus have to perform "Pind Dan," a Hindu funeral ritual to pay homage to their ancestors for the salvation of their souls.

Usually this ritual is performed only after a person dies.

But the last "Pind Dan" ritual of the Naga initiation ceremony is for the sadhu himself, symbolizing the unity of his soul with god.

"They will consider themselves dead, and only their soul will live on. They will pronounce themselves dead even while living," said Santosh Mishra, a 50-year-old priest of the Juna Akhara monastic order.

After they are ordained, the Naga Sadhus must remain partially or fully naked for the rest of their lives, sleep on the ground, limit themselves to one meal a day, obey their leaders and gurus, and protect the Hindu religious traditions.

The ancient Kumbh festival, which UNESCO added to its list of intangible cultural heritage in 2017, runs through early March. About 150 million people are expected to attend.

The assessment said that the impact of the melting could range from flooding from the increased runoff to increased air pollution from black carbon and dust deposited on the glaciers.

Saleemul Huq, director of the International Center for Climate Change and Development, an environmental research center in Dhaka, described the findings of the report as "very alarming," especially for downstream nations such as Bangladesh.

"All the countries affected need to prioritize tackling this upcoming problem before it reaches crisis proportions," he said in an e-mail. Huq was one of the study's external reviewers.

The study said that even if the most ambitious Paris climate accord goal of limiting global warming to 1.5° Celsius (2.7° Fahrenheit) by the end of the century were met, more than a third of the region's glaciers will be lost. If the global rise in temperature were 2° C (3.6° F), two-thirds of Himalayan glaciers will melt, it said.

The 2015 Paris Agreement was a landmark moment in international diplomacy, bringing together governments with vastly different views to tackle global warming. It set a headline target of keep-

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Malaysia crowns Pahang state's Sultan Abdullah as 16th king

By Eileen Ng
The Associated Press

KUALA LUMPUR, Malaysia — Sultan Abdullah Sultan Ahmad Shah of central Pahang state was crowned as Malaysia's 16th king under a unique rotating monarchy system, nearly a month after the sudden abdication of Sultan Muhammad V.

Garbed in aqua blue regalia, Sultan Abdullah, 59, took his oath of office in a nationally televised ceremony at a cavernous hall in the national palace. Dozens of dignitaries, led by Prime Minister Mahathir Mohamad and his cabinet ministers, attended the event.

Nine ethnic Malay state rulers take turns as the country's king for five-year terms under the world's only such system, which has been maintained since Malaysia's independence from Britain in 1957.

Sultan Muhammad V, 49, of northeast Kelantan state, abruptly resigned January 6 as Malaysia's king after just two years on the throne in the first abdication in the nation's history. No reason was given, but it came after he reportedly married a 25-year-old former Russian beauty queen in November.

British-educated Sultan Abdullah, a prominent figure in sport bodies, was sworn in after inspecting a military honor guard and receiving a 21-gun salute at



KING CROWNED. Malaysia's King Sultan Abdullah Sultan Ahmad Shah salutes next to Queen Tunku Azizah Aminah Maimunah during his welcome ceremony at Parliament House in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. Sultan Abdullah, ruler of central Pahang state, was named Malaysia's new king, replacing Sultan Muhammad V, who abdicated unexpectedly after just two years on the throne. (AP Photo/Yam G-Jun)

parliament. He is a council member of the world football governing body, Fédération Internationale de Football Association (FIFA); president of the Asian Hockey Federation; and an executive board member of the International Hockey Federation.

Known as Yang Di-Pertuan Agong, or "He Who is Made Lord," Malaysia's king plays a largely ceremonial role, since administrative power is vested in the prime minister and parliament. But the

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Study says a third of Himalayan glaciers can no longer be saved

By Binaj Gurubacharya
The Associated Press

KATHMANDU, Nepal — One-third of Himalayan glaciers will melt by the end of the century due to climate change, threatening water sources for 1.9 billion people, even if current efforts to reduce climate change succeed, an assessment warns.

If global efforts to curb climate change fail, the impact could be far worse: a loss of two-thirds of the region's glaciers by 2100, said the Hindu Kush Himalaya Assessment released by the International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development.

"Global warming is on track to transform the frigid, glacier-covered mountain peaks of the Hindu Kush Himalayas cutting across eight countries to bare rocks in a little less than a century," said Philippus Wester of the center, who led the report.

The five-year study looked at the effects of climate change on a region that cuts across Asia through Afghanistan, Pakistan, India, Nepal, China, Bhutan, Bangladesh, and Myanmar. The area, which includes the world's tallest mountain peaks, has glaciers that feed into river systems including the Indus, Ganges, Yangtze, Irrawaddy, and Mekong.

I-5 ROSE QUARTER IMPROVEMENT PROJECT PUBLIC INVITED TO COMMENT

You are invited to review and submit comments on the Project's environmental study, including Sections 106 and 4(f), from February 15 to April 1, 2019 at 5 pm. You may review the document and provide comments in the following ways:

OPEN HOUSE
March 7, 2019, 5:30 pm – 8 pm
Leftbank Annex – Clubroom
101 N Weidler St., Portland, OR

PUBLIC HEARING
March 12, 2019
Oregon Convention Center
Room A108
777 N EMLK J Blvd, Portland, OR
• 4:30 pm – 6 pm – Sign up to speak
• 5 pm – Event begins: Presentation followed by public comments

ONLINE OPEN HOUSE
February 15 – April 1, 2019
www.i5RoseQuarter.org

EMAIL
info@i5RoseQuarter.org

Visit www.i5RoseQuarter.org for a project overview, to review the Environmental Assessment and to learn additional ways to comment.

For ADA (Americans with Disabilities Act) or Civil Rights Title VI accommodations, translation/interpretation services, or more information call 503-731-4128, TTY 800-735-2900 or Oregon Relay Service 7-1-1.

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