

Obama gets giant 'Hanuman' from India for election success

Amid reports that US presidential hopeful Barack Obama carries a 'tiny monkey god' as a talisman, priests at a Hindu temple in the Indian capital presented a gold-plated idol of Hanuman with a prayer for his success in the elections.

Convinced in their belief that the 46-year-old Illinois senator was a devotee of Lord Hanuman, the revered monkey god worshipped by Hindus as a symbol of courage and faith, the priests of the Sankat Mochan Dham Hanuman temple here organised an elaborate prayer service of the 15 kg idol before presenting it to Carolyn Sauvage-Mar, chairperson of Democrats Abroad-India, who said she was receiving it on behalf of the presumptive Democratic nominee.

Thronged by devotees, especially since Tuesdays are considered to be auspicious by Hanuman worshippers, the 108-feet-tall Hanuman temple wore a festive look in the crowded Chandni Chowk area in the city's old quarters.

Lalu Maharaj, one of priests who performed the prayers along with a clutch of other priests before giving away the idol, said that they have prayed for Obama's success in the November elections.

'Tuesday is an auspicious day for Hanuman devotees. Therefore, we performed a 'puja' of the Hanuman idol and then presented it to Carolene who will in turn gift it to Obama,' Maharaj told IANS.

Brij Mohan Bhama of the Sankat Mochan Dham said that they have also appealed to the Indian people in the US to support Obama in his endeavour.

'Barack Obama is a great believer in lord Hanuman. His victory will benefit India,' Bhama added.

Aarti Misra, a Hanuman devotee who had come to the temple in Chandni Chowk like she does every Tuesday and Saturday, was equally impressed with Obama's faith.

'I am sure Obama will be successful in his endeavour. A person who believes in lord Hanuman and has his blessings can cross the greatest hurdles in life with ease. I will pray for him,' she said.

Obama, who defeated his rival Hillary Clinton in an epic 17-month long electoral primary battle for the Democratic party nomination, also carries a tiny Madonna and Child figurine as a good luck charm, according to reports in the American media.

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