

Tribal dancers to debut at Ahmedabad's 131st Jagannath chariot procession

Ahmedabad's 131-year-old Lord Jagannath chariot procession will have a new feature this year: tribal dancers will join music bands, gymnasts' teams and beautifully caparisoned elephants when the three chariots crisscross the city July 4.

'The tribal dancers (from Dangs district) will perform between 6 a.m. to 7.30 a.m. before the start of the rath yatra (chariot procession),' said Mahendra Jha, a trustee of the Shree Jagannathji temple here.

The 18-km procession would be flagged off Chief Minister Narendra Modi, who would be accompanied by his cabinet colleagues. Gujarat's chief ministers have traditionally flagged off the journey.

This year the procession will include 16 elephants, 98 trucks, 30 akhadas or gyms, 18 bhajan mandlis, music bands and devotees of foot, Jha said, adding that around 2,000 sadhus from across the country too are also expected to be there.

Ahmedabad's yatra comprising the chariots of Lord Jagannath, his brother Balabhadra and their sister Subhadra, commemorating the journey of Lord Krishna from Gokul to Mathura is the oldest in the state and possibly the second largest in the country after the one taken out in Puri in Orissa.

Tens of thousands of devotees line up alongside the roads and the yatra passes through parts of the Old City, many of them communally sensitive.

Jha said adequate security measures were taken to ensure a peaceful event.

The police last week carried out a detailed survey to decide on the number of personnel to be stationed along the route. Besides, meetings with citizens' peace committees were being held to maintain communal harmony during the procession.

The verification of the trucks which will take part in the yatra was also being done with the help of road transport office, police said.

(© IANS / India eNews)