

CHANGES TO THE THAIPUSAM FESTIVAL 2022 DUE TO COVID-19 PANDEMIC

1. The annual Thaipusam Festival, a significant religious event for Hindus in Singapore, falls next year on Tuesday, 18 January 2022. The festival honours Lord Thendayuthapani, also known as Lord Muruga, the God of valour and youth. In previous non-COVID years, devotees usually fulfill their vows for the festival by carrying either a Paal Kudam (milk pot) or Kavadi (wooden or metal structure with milk offerings) from Sri Srinivasa Perumal Temple) to the Sri Thendayuthapani Temple in Tank Road.

2. The upcoming Thaipusam in January 2022 is falling during the time while COVID-19 pandemic restrictions are still active. The world is experiencing new waves of infections and, in Singapore, there is a real need to be cautious and avoid any new clusters of infections.

3. Given the more than 150-year-old historical significance of Thaipusam, in consultation with regulatory authorities, will hold the festival with necessary COVID-19 restrictions in place. The organisers seek the full cooperation of all devotees for the successful conduct of the 2022 Thaipusam festival.

4. The festival organisers wish to inform all devotees planning to participate in the upcoming festival that there will be changes to the conduct of the festival.

5. Adhering to current restrictions, the following key changes will be implemented for the Thaipusam Festival in 2022:

- a. There will be NO foot procession from Sri Srinivasa Perumal Temple to Sri Thendayuthapani Temple.
- b. The festival will be conducted in and around Sri Thendayuthapani Temple.
- c. ONLY Pre-prepared Paal Kudams (milk pots) by the Temple will be allowed as offerings.
- d. All devotees are allowed to take only the Pre-prepared Paal Kudams arranged by Sri Thendayuthapani Temple as there will be no place for preparations. Please do not bring your own Paal Kudam (milk pots)
- e. All forms of Kavadis including spike Kavadis or any variations of body-pierced Kavadis are NOT allowed at the upcoming Thaipusam Festival.

- f. All devotees including Paal Kudam carriers with piercing, such as in tongue, cheeks, forehead, arms and legs or carrying any other forms of objects/implements will NOT be allowed.
- g. Only pre-booked devotees, via the online portal, who are able to display the online confirmation, will be allowed to take the Pre-prepared Paal Kudams. Details on the online booking system and when devotees can register will be made available soon.
- h. The number of Paal Kudams allowed will be capped at a number to ensure safe management measures in the Temple.
- i. Any devotee offering Paal Kudam can only be accompanied by one person. Any group exceeding 2 persons will not be allowed to enter the Temple through the Paal Kudam queue. This is to ensure more devotees are able to participate.
- j. General devotees who wish to enter the temple to pray must also pre-book their time slots online to comply with the safe management measures in the Temple. Those without pre-booking will NOT be allowed to enter the Temple.
- k. All entering Sri Thendayuthapani Temple will have to use the TraceTogether App or token to scan their entry. No NRIC or other ID scanning will be available at the entry point.
- l. **ONLY fully vaccinated devotees** will be allowed to participate and allowed entry into the temple.
- M. Devotees who are medically ineligible for all COVID-19 vaccines under the National Vaccination Programme will be allowed to participate as per current guidelines as well.

6. The following general advisories need to be taken into consideration by all who wish to participate in the festival:

- a. Due to the overall restrictions to avoid crowding both outside and inside the Temple, only a limited number of devotees will be allowed to book at each of the time slots.
- b. Any groups carrying any musical instrument or any amplification device will NOT be allowed to enter the Temple.
- c. General devotees who are coming to the Temple to pray need to maintain a safe distance from each other at all times and to wear masks at all times.

d. Devotees are to continue walking through the assigned pathway without stopping and to leave the Temple premises immediately upon completion of the Paal Kudam offering and prayers.

e. No gathering of devotees or supporters are allowed outside the Temple.

f. No food can be consumed within the Temple.

g. All elderly, young children and those who are not very mobile are encouraged to pray from home.

h. Thaipusam prayer sessions will be live streamed, so devotees are able to pray from their homes.

7. All of the above measures are carried out for the safety and well-being of the devotees and their families. The intent of the organisers is for as many devotees as possible, within the restrictions, to be able to participate without breaching any of the safe management measures. All devotees need to be responsible towards the national cause of preventing any COVID-19 infection spreads.

8. The organisers appeal to the devotees for their full support in conducting a successful Thaipusam Festival 2022.

9. More details will be provided closer to the event. The above-mentioned advisories are subject to change as variations in the COVID-19 situation closer to the event date may impose constraints that may impact the manner in which the event may be conducted. Devotees are requested to visit our website for the latest updates