

# In times of corona, Sitamarhi temple deities wear masks [Patna]

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## FULL TEXT

PATNA: The deities of a famous temple in Sitamarhi, close to Indo-Nepal border, are wearing masks in a symbolic gesture to send out the message to devotees that even gods are taking precautions against the Covid-19 virus. The Mangla Dham temple, located near Bajpatti railway station, draws a steady stream of devotees, but now entry of devotees has been banned in the wake of the state-wide lockdown.

"The temple has idols of deities like Ram Janki, Radha Krishna, Shankar-Parvati, Ganesh, Ridhhi-Shiddhi, Nandi, Maha Laxmi, Panch Mukh Gayatri and Kaal Bhairav," the temple priest refusing to disclose his name, said, adding, "Everyone should wear a mask and take precautions."

Pramod Kumar, (45), who lives near the temple at Shaheed Ramphal Tower Chowk, said, "Devotees are not being allowed to offer prayers, but puja and aarti is being performed by the priest on a regular basis. The main entrance of the temple situated in the block premises has been locked from outside as a precautionary measure."

Another devotee, Ramesh Pandey, (38), who works as a postman, said he was taken aback when he saw the deities wearing masks. "Initially I couldn't believe my eyes. Many other residents like me later visited the temple to see it for themselves," he added.

"On Navratra, usually a large number of devotees throng the temple every year. But this year the temple premises wears a deserted look on the occasion of Chaitra Navratra, which started on Wednesday. Most devotees paid obeisance to the gods at home this time," the priest said.

Altogether 4,500 temples across the state have been shut in the wake of lockdown to prevent the spread of coronavirus.

## DETAILS

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