

'Sacred Bodhi tree still in good health'

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GAYA: The Bodhi tree, which symbolises the enlightenment of Lord Buddha, has started growing new leaves after the autumn season, thereby indicating that the old tree is still in a good health. The banyan (peepal) tree on world heritage Mahabodhi Mahavihara campus in Bodh Gaya has sacred values for the Buddhists across the world, as prince Siddhartha became Buddha after attaining enlightenment while practicing meditation under it more than 2,500 years ago.

As the tree was reported to be affected from mealybug disease, the Bodh Gaya Temple Management Committee (BTMC) signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) with the Forest Research

Institute (FRI), Dehradun, in 2007 for maintaining its good health.

Tree scientists from FRI conduct routine health check of the tree thrice a year. Even during Covid-19 pandemic, the scientists monitored the health condition of the tree through videoconferencing.

Mahavihara chief priest Bhikkhu Cchalibda said, "New leaves on the Bodhi tree are also an indication of arrival of the new year. The new year for Buddhist community begins from Vaishakh Purnima. Buddha Jayanti will be celebrated in Bodh Gaya on May 5.