FactsDid you know

Royal death taboos: a year without razors, betel, or European forts

Royal Death Taboos: A Year Without Razors, Betel, or European Forts

Cochin residents went without turbans for ten days. Travancore's Nayar Brigade shaved their moustaches and hair, except a loose kudumi. Calicut citizens shaved their heads and beards. The new king, or, in later Travancore practice, the heir-apparent Elaya Raja acting for the busy monarch, began a strict year-long penance. For twelve months he could not shave his beard or cut any hair on his head or body, and he could not trim his nails. He could not chew betel or sleep on anything but a mat. He could not sleep with women, and he ate only once a day. After washing before his meal, he could not drink anything until he had eaten. He could not enter any European Company fort or factory, or any place where people killed or ate cows, forcing Dutch Commandants to wait upon the Rajah at his court whenever they needed to meet him.