

PARMARTH

Winter 2016 News Magazine



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A Historic Meeting with the Pope in Rome

Incredible Interfaith Events for Clean India in Varanasi and Rishikesh

First Ever Global Citizen Festival in India

Muslim Community Pledges for Swachh Bharat in Ajmer Sharif

As well as so much more...

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Visit our Websites

www.parmarth.org (Parmarth Niketan Rishikesh), www.gangaaction.org (Ganga Action Parivar),
www.washalliance.org (Global Interfaith WASH Alliance),
www.projecthope-india.org (Project Hope),
www.divineshaktifoundation.org (Divine Shakti Foundation)

A Historic Meeting with the Pope in Rome

Pujya Swamiji has a beautiful interfaith meeting with the Green Pope of Hope.



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Pujya Swami Chidanand Saraswatiji, President of Parmarth Niketan, Rishikesh and Co-Founder/Co-Chair of the Global Interfaith WASH Alliance and Sadhvi Bhagawati Saraswati, Secretary-General of the Global Interfaith WASH Alliance (GIWA) and President of Divine Shakti Foundation, met with Pope Francis at the Vatican in Rome as part of a two day International Symposium on Interreligious Sharing and Witnessing about Mercy for Peace and Reconciliation organized by KAICIID and the Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue. Taking place on the 3-4 November the Symposium has brought together top leaders of the world's major religions to reflect upon the concept on Mercy in the world's religions, and the crucial role

it can and must play in peace and reconciliation.

His Holiness Pope Francis shared beautifully about the emphasis that so many of the religions place on mercy and how important it is to bring this into our lives today. He said: "To bow down with compassionate love before the weak and needy is part of the authentic spirit of religion, which rejects the temptation to resort to force, refuses to barter human lives and sees others as brothers and sisters, and never mere statistics. He further emphasized how important in today's world it is that we all, people of every religion, cultivate mercy within our selves and share it with others. He said: "We receive God's forgiveness in order to share it with others. Forgiveness is surely

the greatest gift we can give to others, because it is the most costly. Yet at the same time, it is what makes us most like God."

Pujya Swamiji presented His Holiness Pope Francis with an elaichimala (mala made of fresh cardamom pods), and explained to the Pope that it was a green mala, both in color and also an eco-friendly, organic, "green" mala for a "green" Pope!

Pujya Swamiji lovingly said to Pope Francis: "You are bringing a new vision and new concept of religion, a green vision, a vision of religion that thinks, cares and acts for the whole planet. You are a Pope of Hope – bringing new hope to so many people across the world."

He also presented Pope Francis with a proposal for a high-level Summit on the Ganga and Jordan Rivers, the challenges being faced by these ancient and sacred rivers and the people who live on their banks.

Sadhvi Bhagawati Saraswati shared with Pope Francis that the Global Interfaith WASH Alliance is preparing booklets on the importance of WASH (Water, Sanitation and Hygiene) in every religion and she humbly requested Pope Francis to write the foreword for the book on WASH in Christianity.

She also presented Pope Francis with a copy of "By God's Grace", Pujya Swamiji's biography which she authored. *



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First Ever Global Citizen Festival in India

History Made at Global Citizen Concert as Saints, Singers and Stars Join Together in a Swachhta Sankalp.

Leaders representing India's six major faiths brought an audience of more than one lakh people to their feet as all joined hands and pledged to join forces at Mumbai's Global Citizen Festival for a Swachhta Kranti (Clean Revolution): India's burgeoning social movement to protect and save lives by ensuring everyone, everywhere has access to healthy, sustainable water, sanitation and hygiene.

The historic Festival, which attracted a global audience of some 1 billion people, is renowned for its unique

mission for drawing together youth who are motivated to take actions for the environment and public good. The event drew together performers including Coldplay, Amitabh Bachchan, Ayushmann Khurrana, Parineeti Chopra, and Shraddha Kapoor.

The faith leaders, representing Buddhism, Christianity, Hinduism, Islam and Sikhism, were assembled by the Global Interfaith WASH Alliance (GIWA), with the technical support of UNICEF, and through the leadership and guidance of GIWA co-founder, HH

Pujya Swami Chidanand Saraswatiji, who is also President of Parmarth Niketan, Rishikesh.

The faith leaders made their unique appearance in reaction to the fact that more young children are dying every year in India than in any other nation in the world. A primary reason for this is the poor state of India's sanitation, with nearly 600 million people defecating in the open. At the same time, India's water is simultaneously becoming more scarce and polluted, leading to growing instances of drought and disease. According to the assembled faith

leaders, nothing short of a people's-led movement can conquer these pressing issues.

HH Pujya Swami Chidanand Saraswatiji said, *"Right now, as you all know, our world is at a tipping point.... it is up to us to decide which way things shall turn. My sisters and brothers, there is a great and mighty solution to all that ails us. It is you."*

Muslim Leader, Dr. Kalbe Sadiq, Chairman & Founder of the International Islamic Sufi Foundation stated, *"No*



Roundtable Leading Up To the Global Citizen Festival

The Global Interfaith WASH Alliance’s Roundtable on Water, Sanitation & Hygiene (WASH) for All, organised with the technical support of UNICEF India, took place as the lead up to the Global Citizen India Festival in Mumbai recently. It was a unique opportunity for GIWA’s Interfaith Leaders, led by HH Pujya Swami Chidanand Saraswatiji, moderated by Sadhvi Bhagawati Saraswatiji, with the support of UNICEF, joined by Media and Business Leaders who came together to talk and pledge for working towards fulfilling SDG6.



Respected Shiv Khemka of TGELF was lauded for his great commitment and dedication to this cause and for his efforts to put together the Global Citizens Festival for the first time in India. The media partners present at the meeting included a diverse range of senior editors and editors from Hindi, Urdu and English papers. At the end of the fruitful roundtable there was a collective pledge to work together as one family with the common vision and mission of improving WASH for all.



longer can we turn the other way as billions of litres of sewage contaminates water that should otherwise be clean, pure and drinkable. Let us commit together to end the pollution, save our water.”

Said Sikh Leader, Bhai Sahib Bhai Mohinder Singh Mukhi-Sewadar of Guru Nanak Nishkam Sewak Jatha in the UK, “Cleanliness is synonymous with Godliness. So let us revere the air as our Guru, the water as our father and the earth as our mother. Let us pledge to leave behind a positive legacy to be enjoyed by the future generations that will follow us.

Jain Leader, Dr. Lokesh Muniji, Founder of Ahimsa Vishwa Bharaticommented, “Now

is the time to forever end the senseless deaths of far too many young children due to poor water, sanitation and hygiene. Now is the time to dream big and act heroically. Now is the time for a Swachhta Kranti.”

Sadhvi Bhagawati Saraswatiji, Secretary General, Global Interfaith WASH Alliance, led the leaders and the audience in a historic pledge. She shared that “GIWA commits, by December 2019, to inspire 2 million people, including at least 400 faith leaders, to live and act toward creating a world of improved cleanliness, sanitation and hygiene, in which fresh water flows pure and sustainably for all,” and she urged the audience to join hands and hearts in this critical mission. *

GIWA Interfaith Leaders Meet During the Global Citizen Festival



On the occasion of the Global Citizen India Festival in Mumbai, the Global Interfaith WASH Alliance's core leaders met, with the technical support of UNICEF India, to discuss how each of them would commit and contribute to concrete actions towards their collective mission to improve WASH and work towards #SDG6 within their congregations and communities. The meeting was opened and welcomed by Pujya Swamiji, and moderated by Pujya Swamiji and Sadhvi Bhagawatiji.

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There was experiential sharing by Swati Mohapatra, UNICEF, Communications Specialist, Advocacy and Communications. There was also sharing about district wise approach to Swachh Bharat Mission, India by Shalini Prasad, UNICEF, Communications for Development Specialist (WASH), joined by insightful inputs by Manish Wasuja, UNICEF, WASH Specialist and Purvi Malhotra, Communications and Advocacy Officer at UNICEF India. Wrap up was done by Stephanie Raison, UNICEF, Officer in Charge of Advocacy and Communication as well as Pujya Swamiji and Sadhviji.



Special Dinner on Eve of Global Citizen Festival



GIWA's Interfaith Leaders were invited to a special high level dinner the night before the Global Citizen Festival (GCF), hosted by TGELF's Shiv Khemkaji, in which they spoke about the need for the movement to end poverty and collective action and pledge to bring this shift. They encouraged a multi-sectoral, diverse stakeholder involvement to bring about a shift in global consciousness, such that equal and fair distribution of wealth and resources ensured the provision of basic resources for everyone, every where. Pujya Swamiji met with the CEO of GCF, Mr. Hugh Evans, and personally lauded and blessed him for the great work he was doing.

The Faith Leaders Assembled by GIWA Included:

Pujya Swami Chidanand Saraswatiji, President of Parmarth Niketan, Co-Founder of Global Interfaith WASH Alliance.

Sadhvi Bhagawati Saraswatiji, Secretary-General, Global Interfaith WASH Alliance, President, Divine Shakti Foundation.

His Eminence Drukpa Thuksey Rinpoche, is the heart son of HH Gyalwang Drukpa.

Bhai Mohinder Singh, leads the Sikh community Guru Nanak Nishkam Sewak Jatha (GNNSJ) as chairman and spiritual successor to the founding Saints.

Maulana Kalbe Sadiq Saheb, Founder of Tauheedul Muslimeen Trust, Islamic scholar (Shia Leader).

Diwan Zainul Abedin Ali Khanji, Religious Head and Sajjada Nasheen of the Ajmer Sharif Shrine (Sufi Leader) .

Imam Umer Ilyasiji, President of All India Imam Association (Sunni Leader).

Acharya Lokesh Muniji, President of Ahimsa Vishwa Bharti (Jain Monk).

Ven Bhikkhu Sanghasenaji, Founder-President of Mahabodhi International Meditation Centre.

Sufi Mushahid Khan, Chairman and Founder of International Islamic Sufi Foundation.

Swamini Adityananda Saraswati, Director, Programmes, Policy and Development of the Global Interfaith WASH Alliance.

East Meets West at Major Interfaith Gathering at Parmarth Niketan, Rishikesh

Globally-Renowned Leaders from Multiple Faiths Attend Alongside Dignitaries and Audience from 20 Nations.



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The world came together for a major, high-profile interfaith gathering in which faith leaders from the West came to learn from faith leaders from the East. Attending were dignitaries and audience members from over 20 nations.

The esteemed leaders joined forces in focusing on how to globally expand values of respect between religions as well as an appreciation for the diversity and dignity of all people. The event highlighted the values of respect between religions and appreciation for diversity and dignity of all people.

In addition, a careful look was given to environmental issues, with revered faith leaders deter-

mining clear steps as to how religious bodies can combine forces to play crucial roles in creating a clean and sustainable world. During the proceedings, the leaders highlighted the need for interreligious cooperation, including the need to promote sanitation for India and universal consciousness regarding environmental responsibilities such as this.

Said HH Pujya Swami Chidanand Saraswatiiji, "Today signifies a great day in which the tremendous forces of faith came together and joined hands for a sustainable and peaceful world. The need for this gathering couldn't be greater in these changing times, as the world heats up and our natural resources, such as water, are at risk. The Ganga alone is flooded with

3 billion litres of sewage a day, a bane which we must end if we are to ensure a healthy future. Such pressing issues call for historic measures that can only be taken if the world comes together and stays together in fellowship and mutual-understanding."

Rabbi David Rosen, International Director of Interreligious Affairs of the American Jewish Committee commented: "In Judaism, there is the concept of Tikkun Olam, which means the repairing of what is broken in our world. For this, we must embrace one another as brothers and sisters under the same sheltering sky, appreciate our similarities and differences and come together to solve the issues that impact us all. Today symbolizes a wonderful step forward."

Sadhvi Bhagawati said, "The focus of fellowship and universal consciousness for our environment is founded upon teachings inherent in our Indian culture. The very tenant of Vasudeva Kutumbakam, for example, says we are all members of the same global family, interwoven like silken threads of a beautiful fabric. Today, this beautiful gathering brought forth great and poignant messages for peace, which comes from thoughtful dialogue, peaceful fellowship, and working together to ensure all people may benefit from a clean, healthy and sustainable world." *



Among the dignitaries at the event were:

Pujya Swami Asanganand Saraswatiji, Managing Trustee, Swami Shukdevanand Trust.

Pujya Swami Chidanand Saraswatiji, President of Parmarth Niketan, Co-Founder of Global Interfaith WASH Alliance (GIWA).

Rabbi David Rosen - AJC International Director of Inter-religious Affairs.

Rabbi Noam E. Marans, Director AJC of Interreligious and Intergroup Relations.

Maulana Syed Arshad Madaniji, President, JamiatUlama-i- Hind.

HH Drikung Kyabgon Chetsang, the 37th throne holder of the Drikung Kagyu Lineage and 7th reincarnation of the Chetsang Rinpoche.

Diwan Zainul Abedin Ali Khanji, Religious Head and Sajjada Nasheen of the Ajmer Sharif Shrine.

Lama Lobsangji, Global Buddhist Congress Convener and Founder of International Buddhist Confederation (IBC).

Maulana Luqman Tarapuriji, National President, Global Imam Council (Sunni Leader).

Paramjit Singh Chandhokji, Chairman of DSGMC (Delhi Shiromani Gurudwara Management Committee).

Bhaisahib Satpalji, Ambassador of Sikh Religion-Western Hemisphere.

Dr. Sadhvi Bhagawati Saraswatiji, Secretary-General GIWA, President of the Divine Shakti Foundation.

Sufi Mushahid Uz Zaman Khan, Founder and President of International Islamic Sufi Foundation.

Ven Bhikkhu Sanghasenaji, Founder of Mahabodhi Meditation Centre.

Swami Parmadvaitiji, Founder of World Consciousness Pact, South America, Vrindavan.

AND MANY OTHERS

Participants and audience members came from over 20 nations including: Brazil, the United States, Ecuador, Columbia, Spain, Germany, the United Kingdom, Australia, Sweden, the Netherlands, New Zealand, India and others.



Interfaith Leaders Give Keys to Clean and Green India to Students

Swachhta Ki Chabi (Keys to Clean India) Given to Swachhta Ambassadors (Ambassadors of Cleanliness).

The Global Interfaith WASH Alliance (GIWA), Ganga Action Parivar (GAP) and Divine Shakti Foundation (DSF) came together with interfaith leaders of the American Jewish Committee (AJC) to hand over the newly built bio-toilets and a recently-launched WaterSchool herbal garden to the students of the Kendriya Vidyalaya (Rishikesh) school. A symbolic key, prepared by the students, was handed over by the respected faith leaders to the children as a symbol that with this green technology and curriculum, focused on preservation and protection of our environment and natural resources, they too have the keys to unlock a cleaner and greener world.

Pujya Swami Chidanand Saraswatiji, with whose vision and blessings the project was undertaken and completed, shared the great need for ending

the practice of open-defecation and hence the importance of using and maintaining our toilets. He led a mass pledge for Swachh Bharat, Swachh Vidyalaya that brought all of the school children to their feet. Their Principal Ms Rachna Dev was especially honoured for being a Green Principal and bringing the principles and values of cleanliness and environmental preservation to the lives of the children.

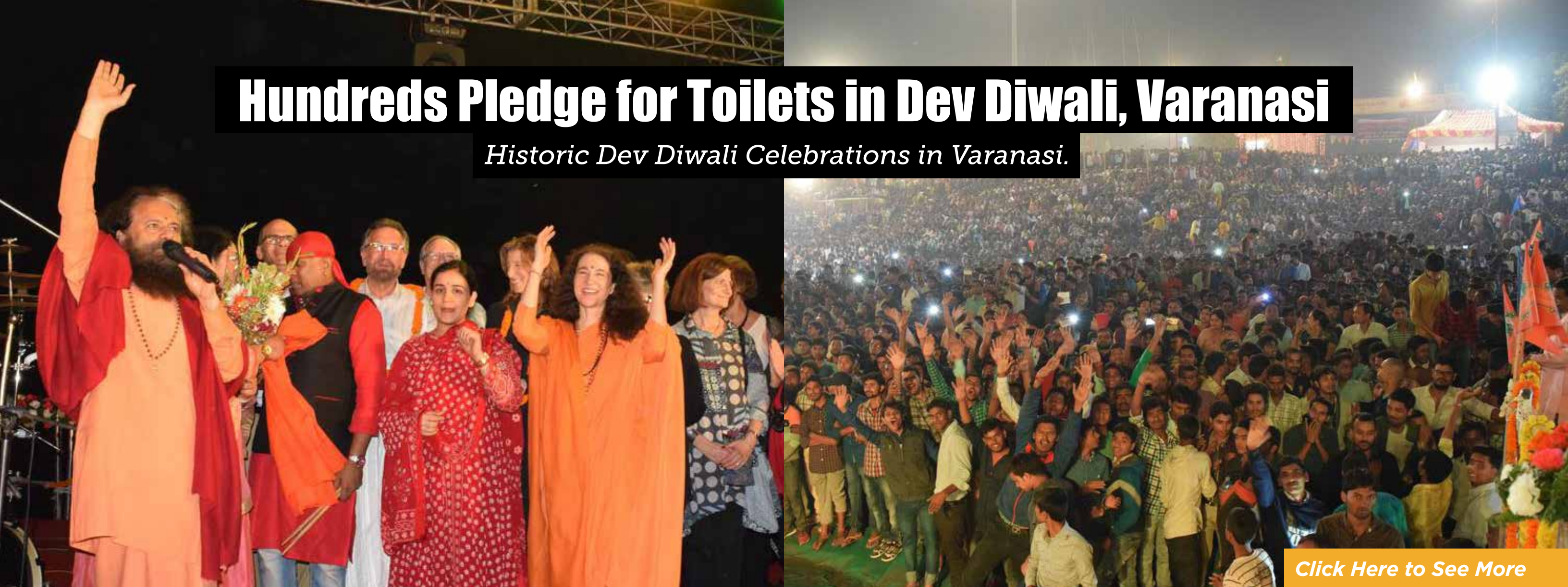
A special dance drama was shared by the Yamuna Action Parivar- Braj Vrindavan Act Now illustrating the great need to protect and preserve our sacred water bodies and natural environment, which had the children, parents and teachers dancing at the symbolic victory of human values and its crucial role in creating a sustainable, joyful and peaceful world. *



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Hundreds Pledge for Toilets in Dev Diwali, Varanasi

Historic Dev Diwali Celebrations in Varanasi.



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On the auspicious occasion of Dev Diwali and Kartik Purnima, an incredible and historic Sarva Dharma Swachhta Sankalp 2016 (Interfaith Cleanliness and Harmony Pledge) took place on the 14th November on the Assi Ghat. It was led by Global Interfaith WASH Alliance (GIWA) Founder HH Pujya Swami Chidanand Saraswatiji, GIWA's Secretary General Sadhvi Bhagawati Saraswatiji, blessed by GIWA's Faith Leaders from India's many faiths and the American Jewish Committee (AJC).

Highlights from the historic event included performances by Sivamani, Runa Rizvi Sivamani and special appearance by Kailash Kher, for a confluence of Sangeet (Music), Swachhta (Cleanliness & Sanitation) and Spirituality. It commenced in a massive Swachh Bharat and Open Defecation Free India Sankalp led by Pujya Swamiji and GIWA's Faith Leaders with thousands of pilgrims and devotees raising their hand in support to build and use toilets. *



Welcoming the American Jewish Committee Home to India

Meeting with the US Ambassador.

As the delegation of AJC leaders, led by Rabbi David Rosen, landed in Delhi prior to the programs in Rishikesh and Varanasi, Pujya Swamiji took them to meet with the Ambassador of the United States to India, Shri Richard Verma, who warmly welcomed them to Roosevelt House. They discussed the upcoming interreligious event in Rishikesh and their participation in the Dev Diwali program in Varanasi, as well as their mission for interfaith harmony, world peace and environmental preservation.*



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Pujya Swamiji Leads Lakhs in Pledge at Ajmer Sharif Shrine

Hari and Ali come together for true Hariyali.

Pujya Swami Chidanand Saraswatiji inspired a crowd of lakhs (hundreds of thousands) in a beautiful display of interfaith harmony at the famous Ajmer Sharif Shrine-Dargah Shariff of Hazrat Khwaja Moinuddin Chishti during the 33rd General Session of the Jamiat Ulama I Hindi on November 13, 2016. The theme of the large plenary session was "Islam's message of universal peace and India's pluralism and diversity – the way to holistic development." Some 2 lakh (two hundred thousand) people from Muslim communities across India and around the world gathered together to hear messages of universal peace and love for all humanity.

During His beautiful, heart-felt speech, Pujya Swamiji lauded Respected Maulana Mahmood A Madaniji, Secretary General of the Jamiat Ulama I Hind, for his leadership and his vision of peace and for bringing together the community and promoting human values. Pujya Swamiji also spoke about the universal brotherhood of all humanity, with a particular focus on the unity of Hindu and Muslim communities for the progress and development of the nation. He mentioned that true Hariyali (prosperity and growth) could only happen when Hari (symbolising the Hindu community) and Ali (symbolising the Muslim community) could come together as one family.

Afterwards, He inspired all to join together in a massive pledge of unity and oneness. Pujya Swamiji also spoke beautifully about working together for a Swachh Bharat and bringing improved WASH to all communities. A few days later, the President of the Jamiat Ulama Hind, Respected Maulana Syed Arshad Madaniji, graced and blessed a high-level interfaith gathering at Parmarth Niketan (Rishikesh), bringing together prominent leaders from the west and the east to discuss Environmental Preservation and World Peace. *



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Pujya Swamiji Speaks about Sanitation, Swachh Bharat and Namami Gange

at FICCI FCC Conference in Delhi.



Pujya Swami Chidanand Saraswatiji spoke at the Foreign Correspondents Club of South Asia (FCC) in New Delhi recently at a special event organised by FCC and FICCI on the theme of Clean Ganga, Climate Action and Swachh Bharat. Sadhvi Bhagawati Saraswatiji, Secretary-General GIWA and some of the GIWA's faith leaders, Bhai Mohinder Singhji, Acharya Lokesh Muniji, Bhai Sahib Satpal Singhji, Paramjit Singh Chandhokji, President FCC S Venkat Narayanji, Senior Director FICCI Nirankar Saxenaji came together with Pujya Swamiji to share about GIWA's recent interfaith events in Varanasi, Rishikesh and Bombay dedicated to these vital national campaigns.

Pujya Swamiji discussed the need to find innovative and sustainable solutions to the many environmental challenges the nation and the capital face. Addressing the rising air pollution issue,



Pujya Swamiji shared GIWA's film on Agriboard technology, which converts and compresses stubble and left over agricultural waste. This usually ends up getting burned and causing massive levels of pollution but it can be made into prefabricated and resilient construction sheets that can be used to create homes and buildings. He highlighted green technologies such as the Agriboard, Eco -Crematorium and Bio-Digester technology and inspired all stakeholders and the large number of media partners to contribute to these efforts with their time, talent and technology. *

Read the highlights of these important discussions in this beautiful piece by India Today and The Economic Times:

www.indiatoday.intoday.in

www.economictimes.indiatimes.com



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Launch of the WaterSchool Programme

Launch of WaterSchool on the banks of the River Ganga.

The Global Interfaith WASH Alliance (GIWA) is extremely pleased to announce the launch of the first WaterSchool Programme in the Ganga-Himalayas. It will be implemented by GIWA, in partnership with Swarovski. WaterSchool will teach children across this environmentally-vital area how to love and protect their water resources as caring stewards.

The programme was launched here on the banks of the River Ganga with the vision, leadership and blessing of Pujya Swamiji, in the presence of Hon'ble Shri Pritam Singh Panwarji,

Uttarakhand's Hon'ble Urban Development Minister, Ms Donna Goodman, Global Program Director Swarovski Water School, Sadhvi Bhagawati Saraswatij, Clemens Scheiber, Senior Manager of Swarovski WaterSchool Operations, and others.

More than fifteen schools participated, with over 2,000 students and pilgrims from over 10 countries celebrating the exciting launch programme. The event focused on raising awareness in schools on the vital need to conserve, protect and preserve water for today and for the future. *



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Global Handwashing Day

Celebrating the Power of Clean Hands.

On Global Handwashing Day, we celebrated the power of washing our hands with soap to prevent diarrhea, pneumonia and other waterborne illnesses, which take so many innocent lives every day. Pujya Swamiji, Sadhvi Bhagawatiiji, Bharat Mitra, President-Founder of ORGANIC INDIA, and others visited Prakash Bharatiya to inspire children to pledge to be Sanitation Ambassadors and encourage their communities and families to wash their hands with soap.

At the event, a beautiful new hand-washing station was presented to the school and its children through the WaterSchool programme, to help safeguard the health of students and teachers alike.

One little bar of soap can cut diarrhea (the second leading cause of children's deaths in India) by half and pneumonia (the first cause) by a 25%. It can also protect you from the flu, cholera, Ebola, and so much more. We encourage you to make the pledge for good health by immunizing yourself and your children with the protective power of soap and water! Join us in spreading the word in homes, schools and places of worship. *



Gandhi Jayanti:

Dedicated to Yoga and Swachh Bharat.



On the auspicious occasion of Gandhi Jayanti, Pujya Swamiji was the Chief Guest and Keynote speaker at the 50th anniversary of Bharatiya Yoga Sansthan. More than 10,000 people gathered together at Chhatrasal Stadium to hear Pujya Swamiji speak on how to LIVE yoga, not just do yoga. Pujya Swamiji explained that yoga is not what we do on the mat for 30 or 60 minutes a day, but rather yoga is who we are! He emphasized that the best yogi is an “upyogi” one who is helpful to others and to humanity. “Unless you are also an Upyogi, you cannot be a true yogi”.

Pujya Swamiji praised the Bharatiya Yoga Sansthan and said that through Yoga we are able to not only “Make IN India” but actually to Make India! He inspired everyone to pledge at the Chhatrasal Stadium that they would serve together to be of use to the nation by keeping it clean and

free from open defecation. He alluded to the fact that the stadium which was on the Mahatma Gandhi Road was truly the best way to start this historic day and commit ourselves to walking the path of the great leader whose vision for India still guides us today. Pujya Swamiji’s message and the entire event not only inspired the thousands there at the stadium but through live stream on Sadhana channel countless many all across India and the world. *



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Shilpa Shetty & Family Meet with Pujya Swamiji and Sadhviji

Actress Shilpa Shetty joins for Divine Ganga Aarti.



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Shilpa Shetty Kundra and Shamita Shetty joined with their beautiful family to take part in the world-renowned divine Ganga Aarti ceremony at Parmarth Niketan (Rishikesh). Touched and inspired by their time on the banks of Mother Ganga, satsang with HH Pujya Swami Chidanand Saraswatiji and Pujya Sadhvi Bhagawati Saraswatiji they said that Rishikesh and the Aarti experience was truly soul-connecting and purifying. Shilpa Shetty also shared that people may go to Switzerland and other picturesque places of natural beauty in the world but Uttarakhand and Rishikesh is truly spiritual land, where spirituality and yoga is in the air and the soil.

Pujya Swamiji blessed them with a sacred Rudraksha sapling, offering His words of respect to departed soul of Surendra Shetty and said that their visit to this sacred land was a sangam (a sacred confluence) of sansar (the material world) and sanskara (spiritual-cultural values). He lauded the family in not only succeeding in the business and film industry but also in staying deeply connected to their roots and their values. During their visit Shilpa Shetty and her family discussed several service initiatives that were blossoming and thriving under Pujya Swamiji’s vision and leadership and expressed their support for these noble causes for the welfare and well being of all. *

Kailash Kher Comes Home

From the Kedarnath Launch of Jai Jai Kedara to Ganga Aarti in Rishikesh.



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During the auspicious time of Navratri, famous, beloved artist, musical genius and divinely talented Kailash Kher came home to Parmarth Niketan after his yatra to Kedarnath Dham and launch of the special tele-series on Kedarnath with the Hon'ble Chief Minister, Shri Harish Rawat and Pujya Swamiji. While at Parmarth Niketan, Kailash Kher performed divine Ganga Aarti with Pujya Swamiji and sang a beautiful devotional bhajan, reminiscing about his time as a young Rishikumar at Parmarth.

He also shared inspiring words of deep gratitude and love for having come home and to be in the divine presence of Pujya Swamiji. Pujya Swamiji blessed him, his sister Nutan and his team for their great commitment and dedication to bringing the Indian spiritual cultural tradition alive for the young generation and staying deeply grounded to their values and roots. Pujya Swamiji gifted them a beautiful rudraksha sapling and a sacred shawl as his aashirwad. During the Ganga Aarti, Kailash Kher led a special sankalpa (pledge) to prevent the pollution of rivers and the practice of open defecation. *





Swaminarayan Sadhana Shivar at Parmarth

Pledge to Work for Swachh Bharat & Open Defecation Free India

A beautiful, weeklong Swaminarayan Gurukul Parivar Sadhana Shivar took place this season, in which Pujya Swami Madhavpriyadasji inspired and urged his devotees and followers to join the Hon'ble Prime Minister, Pujya Swamiji and himself in the efforts for a Swachh, Sundar and Swasth Bharat.

During the Shivar, Pujya Swamiji spoke beautifully about protecting and preserving all of creation as the best and true form of worshipping Bhagawan Swaminarayan. He shared that in making their communities ODF and swachh they were truly putting their meditation into action.

Sadhvi Bhagawatiji gave a beautiful speech in the women's shivar in which she shared the importance of devotion in our lives and how it

truly is our devotion and connection to the Divine that brings the joy and peace to our lives

Pujya Swami Madhavpriyadasji led everyone in a beautiful sankalp about the fruition of his Swachh Bhaart pledge on the banks of Mother Ganga by engaging over 108 villages in this mission. He shared that the time had come that we must carry jadu (broom) in one hand and japa mala (rosary) in the other. He shared, "Sanitation must truly become our meditation in order for us to collectively change the dire sanitation and hygiene needs of our nation, protecting the lives of over 1200 young children who perish every day due to lack of WASH." He had everyone raise their hands together to pledge and vow to work towards this mission, promoting open defecation-free India and being the change they want to see. *





Serving Together for a Clean and Green Swargashram

Large-Scale Clean Up: Swachh, Sundar Swargashram.

A beautiful and large scale clean up took place in Swargashram, Rishikesh, where more than 300 participants from the Swaminarayan Sadhana Shivir, led by Pujya Madhavpriya Swamiji, participated during their time at Parmarth Niketan (Rishikesh). They were inspired and encouraged by Pujya Swami Chidanand Saraswatiji to bring spirituality and sadhana (devotional practice) into action. Also, they were encouraged to have the name of the lord, Jai Swaminarayan, on their lips and the work of the lord, serving selflessly for a Swachh Bharat (Clean India), in their hands. He also explained that just as spiritual practice helps purify our internal environment so too the physical act of

cleaning our outside environment helps purify the external environment, hence bridging the gap between our external and internal spaces so that they may be truly reflect the Divine.

Sadhvi Bhagawati Saraswatiji led participants and volunteers from across the world to join in these efforts. She was also joined by Sue Perkins, English comedian, broadcaster, actress and writer, Victoria, Fred and their crew from BBC doing a documentary along the River Ganga. The massive cleanup concluded with a refreshing and rejuvenating Ganga Snan (bath in the sacred River Ganga). *



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Sudhanshuji Maharaj's Dhyana Shivir at Parmarth

Pujya Swamiji shares that Sanitation & Meditation must go together



Pujya Sudhanshuji Maharaj came home to Parmarth Niketan for their Dhyana Sadhana Shivir on the banks of Mother Ganga. He was warmly welcomed and greeted by Pujya Swamiji. Pujya Swamiji also formally welcomed all participants home and inspired them to take this divine opportunity on the holy banks of Mother Ganga to truly go within. He shared that this was a land in which along with the Guru's blessings the divine touch and transformation was also easily possible. He encouraged

the devotees to take this meditation into action and service, ensuring that their communities are clean and green for all. He shared that just as the broom cleans our streets and homes so too does dhyana clean our internal world allowing us to be tools of the Divine Grace, in that grace then service of all of creation only becomes natural and innate.

Everyone joined in a special and Divine Ganga Aarti ceremony and felt deeply inspired and blessed to be at their Himalayan home. *

World Peace Forum

Global Interfaith WASH Alliance participates in bringing peace to the world.



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The Global Interfaith WASH Alliance's Ms. Nandini Tripathi, Director of Programme Implementation, participated at the Sixth Annual World Peace Forum in Jakarta, Indonesia, recently. The high level meeting included over 180 religious leaders, activists, scholars, and civil society organisations and government representatives from 42 countries across the world gathered to discuss Countering Violent Extremism: Human Dignity, Global Injustice, and Collective Responsibility. Co-organized by SMK MUHAMMADIYAH, the Cheng Ho Multi-Culture Education Trust, and the Centre for Dialogue and Cooperation among Civilisations CDCC from the 1st – 4th November, 2016 in Jakarta.

The Forum was inaugurated by H.E. Presiden Joko Widodo, President of the Republic of Indonesia. The Forum explored the pull and push factors that trigger violent extremism and shared the challenges and best practices in preventing, mitigating and responding to violent extremism. It was supported by the Religions for Peace and other international and national organizations. A two-page resolution was developed to suggest and recommend the way forward. *



Sri Sathya Sai International Heart Care and Research Centre

Love All, Serve All.



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[Pujya Swamiji starts speaking from 25:23](#)

Pujya Swamiji and Sadhvi Bhagawatiji recently graced and blessed the dedication ceremony of the Sri Sathya Sai Sanjeevani International Centre for Child Heart Care and Research in Baghola, Palwal Dist, Haryana. The centre was set up under the tenet of “Love All, Serve All” and will provide free of cost and best quality services to all in need, irrespective of colour, caste, religion, status or nation. Pujya Swamiji blessed the occasion by saying, “Who can say Baba is gone? Baba is not gone, Baba is always on. This centre will not only provide not only the best quality treatment but will also provide

the divine touch and transformation through the spirit and the motto of love all and serve all...” The Hon’ble Prime Minister, Shri Narendra Modiji, inaugurated the centre via live webcast and shared his close relationship with Sri Sathya Sai Baba and the organisation. He acknowledged that the centre will be a great blessing to many and it will help give new life to thousands of children, not only in Haryana but throughout northern India. He also gave appreciation to all the respected dignitaries of the Sathya Sai organisation and offered his salutations to Pujya Swamiji and Sadhviji. *



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Signing MOU for Robotic Technology to Help Maintain a Clean Ganga

Creating Ganga Parivar Sevaks (Volunteers) to Protect the National River.

A Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) was signed between Carnegie Mellon University (CMU), Global Interfaith WASH Alliance (GIWA) and Ganga Action Parivar (GAP) in which an agreement was made to work together in training and empowering volunteers and stewards along the 2,150km stretch of the River Ganga with the technology that is needed to effectively protect the River.

GIWA’s Co-Founder and GAP’s Founder, Pujya Swamiji envisions creating Ganga Parivar Sevaks (GPS) along the banks of the sacred national river guarding, monitoring and serving 1km stretches of river bank. These GPS would be equipped with physical GPS devices, in the form of a smart phone

device, so they can monitor, record and report the regular water quality levels. In addition to this they would have Ganga Patrolling Systems, i.e. drones, robotic waste disposal and water testing systems to record/report river health in real time.

Pujya Swamiji shared his vision for the River Ganga with both Ms. Burcin and Mr. Nirankar Saxenaji, Senior Director of FICCI. Both are eager to work together to provide their support to this vital effort. The MOU was signed by Ms. Rachel Burcin and Sadhvi Bhagawatiji with the blessings of Pujya Swamiji and in the presence of Mr. Nirankar Saxenaji from FICCI, Ms. Savita Saxenaji and Ms Nandini Tripathi from GIWA and GAP. *

Conference of Women Champions - Swachh Bharat Mission (Grameen)

Women lead the way to a Clean, Beautiful and Healthy Bharat



The Global Interfaith WASH Alliance was honoured to have participated in the Swachh Bharat Mission's National Conclave of Women's Champions in Delhi this November.

The event, organized by the Ministry of Drinking Water and Sanitation (MoDWS) with the support of UNICEF, had the aim of sharing best practices from across India, while encouraging and honouring such efforts in parts of the country where women are playing a leadership role.

Alongside the Hon'ble Minister of Drinking Water and Sanitation, Shri Narendra Singh Tomar, and the Hon'ble Secretary of the Ministry of Drinking Water and Sanitation, Shri Parameswaran Iyer, 300 women participated, including Sarpanches, Anganwadi workers, Block Development Officers, and Assistant District Collectors from across the nation.

Speaking at the inaugural plenary session of the event, Hon'ble Shri Parameswaran Iyer appreciated the efforts made by women who have led the construction and use of toilets, not only in their households, but also their entire villages and districts, women who have led self-help groups that lent money to villagers to build toilets in their homes, women who were grassroots government officials as well as women civil society activists present at the event and across the country.

Afterwards, Swamini Adityananda Saraswati, Director of Programmes, Policy and Development, Global Interfaith WASH Alliance, spoke at an animated panel event which brought all participants into working groups to discuss proactive approaches towards enabling improved sanitation and menstrual health management practices for girls in school.

Said Swamini Adityananda, "Here in India, 24% of girls drop out of school once they reach adolescence. Let us break this cycle, which leads to poverty and pain, by ensuring every girl, everywhere, has access to safe, clean and private washroom facilities. At the same time, no longer should one girl suffer from the stigma, pain or lack of dignity imposed on them due to misconceptions regarding their monthly cycles. Instead, let us, together, promote a new reality, in which all girls are uplifted and understood, through improved understanding and mutual support."

Also speaking at the Conclave were Lok Sabha Speaker, Smt Sumitra Mahajan Minister of State Shri Ramesh Chandappa Jigajinagi, Ms Vrinda Sarup, Secretary, Department of Food and Public Distribution, Ms Navraj Sandhu, Additional Chief Secretary, Haryana, Ms. Arundhati Bhattacharya, Chairperson and MD State Bank of India. Shri Amitabh Bachchan sent a recorded video message for the women champions of the Swachh Bharat Mission.



GIWA Takes Part in United Religion Initiative's High Level Meeting in USA

Calling for the Faiths to come together to protect our water resources

The Global Interfaith WASH Alliance was pleased to have participated in a beautiful meeting in San Francisco, California, USA, hosted by the United Religions Initiative's Environmental Resource CC.

During the meeting, people from around the world came together to discuss ways that individuals of all faiths across the planet could join forces to help protect the environment and improve environmental sustainability.

Day one of the meeting was graciously hosted by former US Secretary of State George Schultz at his scenic penthouse overlooking the Pacific Ocean. All were held spell-bound as he discussed his leadership for the ratification of the historic Montreal Protocol, which was

the first UN treaty for the protection of our world by limiting ozone-depleting chemicals.

The next day's meetings were held at the beautiful Global Support Office of United Religions Initiative with dignitaries including Bishop William Swing, the Founder/President of URI and former Archbishop of San Francisco, Victor Kazanjian, Executive Director, URI and people from around the world. There, plans were made with the participation of Swamini Adityananda Saraswati, GIWA's Director of Programmes, Policy and Development, for interfaith groups across the world to come together and work hand-in-hand towards safe-guarding our world's increasingly-fragile natural resources, such as water.*

First Ever Ganga Mahotsav in Haridwar

Spreading the Message of Swachhta Kranti along the banks of Mother Ganga.

The first annual five day Ganga Mahotsav programme in Haridwar, was organized by Haridwar Nagrik Manch, with the inspiration and guidance of HH Pujya Swami Chidanand Saraswatiji. It was held at the Rishikul Grounds in central Haridwar alongside Har Ki Pauri. It was inaugurated by the Hon'ble Chief Minister of Uttarakhand, Shri Harish Rawatji and Mayor of Haridwar, Manoj Gargji. A massive rally took place bringing together more than 25 NGOs and religious organizations. Parmarth Niketan Rishikumars and guests from more than 15 countries also participated in the rally from Hari Ki Pauri to the Rishikul Grounds, a stretch of 2

kms. GIWA set up its WASH on Wheels and inspired people to take the Swachhta Kranti pledge to end open defecation in their communities. Public service announcements and puppet shows took place during peak hours to raise awareness amongst those living along the River Ganga's banks. There was inspirational and motivational Swachhta signage placed throughout Haridwar. Special cultural programmes were offered every day with the largest and main show highlighting the visit of famed Bhajan singer, Smt Anuradha Paudwalji. She, inspired by Pujya Swamiji, led a beautiful ODF India and Swachh Bharat pledge which inspired thousands to



raise their hands in support of this vital mission and vision.

Pujya Swamiji, who was on a visit to Rome, blessed and guided the entire process and planning of the festival in advance, and sent His special blessing saying, "Ganga is our Mother and she is the lifeline of millions of people living along her river bed. She represents our culture and our heritage, our history, literature and spirituality. If Ganga dies, India dies. If Ganga thrives, only then can India thrive. Hence, it is all of our collective duty to protect the river and end the practice of open defecation and other forms of pollution that led to millions of litres of sewage contaminating her aviral and nirmal flow." *



ABVP, GAP & GIWA Conducts Yatra for Clean Ganga & Swachh Bharat

The Mission for Clean Ganga Begins with You and Me.



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Akhil Bharatiya Vidyarthi Parishad (ABVP), Ganga Action Parivar and Global Interfaith WASH Alliance (GIWA) organised a special Ganga Awareness Yatra from Gangotri to Haridwar in which a core group of youth trekked down from Gangotri to Haridwar. They stopped along the way connecting with schools, municipalities and villages and accessed the real time pollution levels in each region.

They organized clean ups and rallies to raise awareness on the vital and crucial need to protect our fresh water bodies, to end the

practice of open defecation and the crucial need to build and use toilets.

The yatra took place from the 19-27th October and concluded in Rishikesh and Haridwar, where massive clean ups were undertaken with the joint efforts of Parmarth Rishikumars.

Pujya Swamiji personally blessed and inspired the youth to continue on their mission. He shared that it is only when each one of us takes personal responsibility to protect our sacred lifeline will our future be secured. He

lauded the efforts of these young students and appreciated the great dedication and commitment of ABVP towards this vital cause.

The event in Haridwar was also blessed by Pujya MM Swami Kailashanand Brahmchariji, Mahamandaleshwar of the Panch Agni Akhada Siddh Peeth Darshan, Kali Mandir, Haridwar, and graced by ABVP President Sunil Ambekarji and many other dignitaries. There was a joint pledge to protect all water bodies and to work in our communities and localities for a Swachh Bharat. *



Diwali with the soldiers at the border

Interfaith Leaders Celebrate Diwali with Soldiers at Border.

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On Diwali, the nation stood united in salutation to every soldier who keeps our lives safe and free from terror, violence and fear. The nation honoured the sacrifices that our army and security forces make every day to guard our borders. As Hon'ble Prime Minister of India, Respected Shri Narendra Modiji recently urged the nation to boost the morale of our soldiers - the Army, Naval forces, Air Force and all security forces - by sending them greetings on Diwali. In this spirit, President of Parmarth Niketan, Pujya Swami Chidanand Saraswatiji, Founder/President of Ahimsa Vishwa Bharti Jain, Acharya Dr. Lokesh Muni ji, President of All India Imam Organization, Respected Imam Umer Ahmed Ilyasi ji and representatives on behalf of Chief Jathedar of Akal Takht, Golden Temple, Amritsar, Sant Giani Gurbachan Singh ji joined together to embark on a march to visit our brave soldiers at the Wagah Border, near Amritsar.

They lauded the efforts of the army, blessed their great service to the nation and performed prayers for national integrity, unity, peace and harmony. The interfaith leaders reached Amritsar by morning and attended a special prayer at Harminder Sahib Gurudwara and later reached the border to address the soldiers and thousands of patriotic visitors. Respected faith leaders shared that the nation stands with our soldiers and remembers them fondly on the auspicious occasion of Diwali.

On the occasion Pujya Swamiji said, "Every human and all creatures value their life but as a soldier you put your own life on the line to protect your nation. This is why today, on Diwali, the entire nation is with you-as one family- with full gratitude that it is because of you we are able to celebrate a joyous and peaceful Diwali. I pray that you may know at all times that you are empowered and strengthened by the blessings of all faith leaders and have the prayers of the people of

this great nation behind you. To me, you are the true diya (the light) that brightens the way for our secure future. May God continue to bless you."

Pujya Acharya Lokesh Muniji and Pujya Imam Umer Ahmed Ilyasiji urged, "We invite you to join this journey towards respect and sharing the responsibility of our respected guards. The army is toiling and putting all his efforts to protect our nation. This is a moment when we can show them that we are with them by lighting a candle for our brave soldiers. We urge everyone to join this national movement and share their messages on social media and twitter by placing #Sandesh2Soldiers in your posts and wishing our soldiers a blessed and safe Diwali."

Respected faith leaders also invited media to be part of this historical movement. *



Diwali at Parmarth

Diwali Celebrations Brings Light and Love to All.



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Divine Diwali celebrations at Parmarth Niketan, with the blessings of HH Pujya Swami Chidanand Saraswatiji, brought together people from all across the world and around India. Pujya Swamiji and Sadhvi Bhagawati Saraswatiji's inspiring words encouraged people from all walks of life to reflect on the deeper meaning and purpose of this beautiful festival of lights.

Pujya Swamiji shared how the Indian spiritual culture believes that everyday should be an *ustav* (a celebration) and explained that the root of the word *utsav* (uts) meant roots. He shared that these celebrations were opportunities to

connect with our roots, with our true Self and therein lies the foundation of making everyday a celebration. He also spoke about His recent trip to the border to celebrate Diwali with the soldiers and suggested that not just one diya but all of Diwali, on the banks of Mother Ganga, at Parmarth Niketan was dedicated to our soldiers and to our Hon'ble Shri Narendra Modi - Prime Minister Of India, for his great vision and dedication to the service of Bharat Mata. There was a beautiful song "Aai Meri Watan Ke Logo" by Sadhvi Abha Saraswatiji dedicated to our soldiers that reminded us of the great sacrifices of our soldiers and touched everyone deeply. *

Sadhvi Bhagawati spoke about the great significance of light in the Indian spiritual tradition. She encouraged everyone to take this time to let the light of truth and wisdom into our hearts and into our lives. She also shared how Diwali was a day in which we celebrate the return of Lord Rama from 14 years of exile but she emphasized how God is never really gone from our lives. We just forget God's unconditional presence and so Diwali is a time to welcome the Divine, by any shape or any form, back into our lives. She emphasized that the true wealth, the true prosperity for which we pray to Maha Lakshmi is not physical wealth, not what's in

our bank accounts but the inner awareness and experience of abundance which comes from being connected to the Divine. People and pilgrims from all walks of life and every part of the world joyously held the earthen lamps of Diwali.

Before the special Ganga Aarti ceremony there was a divine Lakshmi Poojan by the banks of Mother Ganga. Thereafter Lakshmi Ki Aarti and Gangaji Ki Aarti and sankirtan. There was also a pledge to serve our world as warriors of peace, light and love, especially to ensure that our sacred natural resources are protected and preserved for future generations. *

Swachhta Kranti in Vrindavan

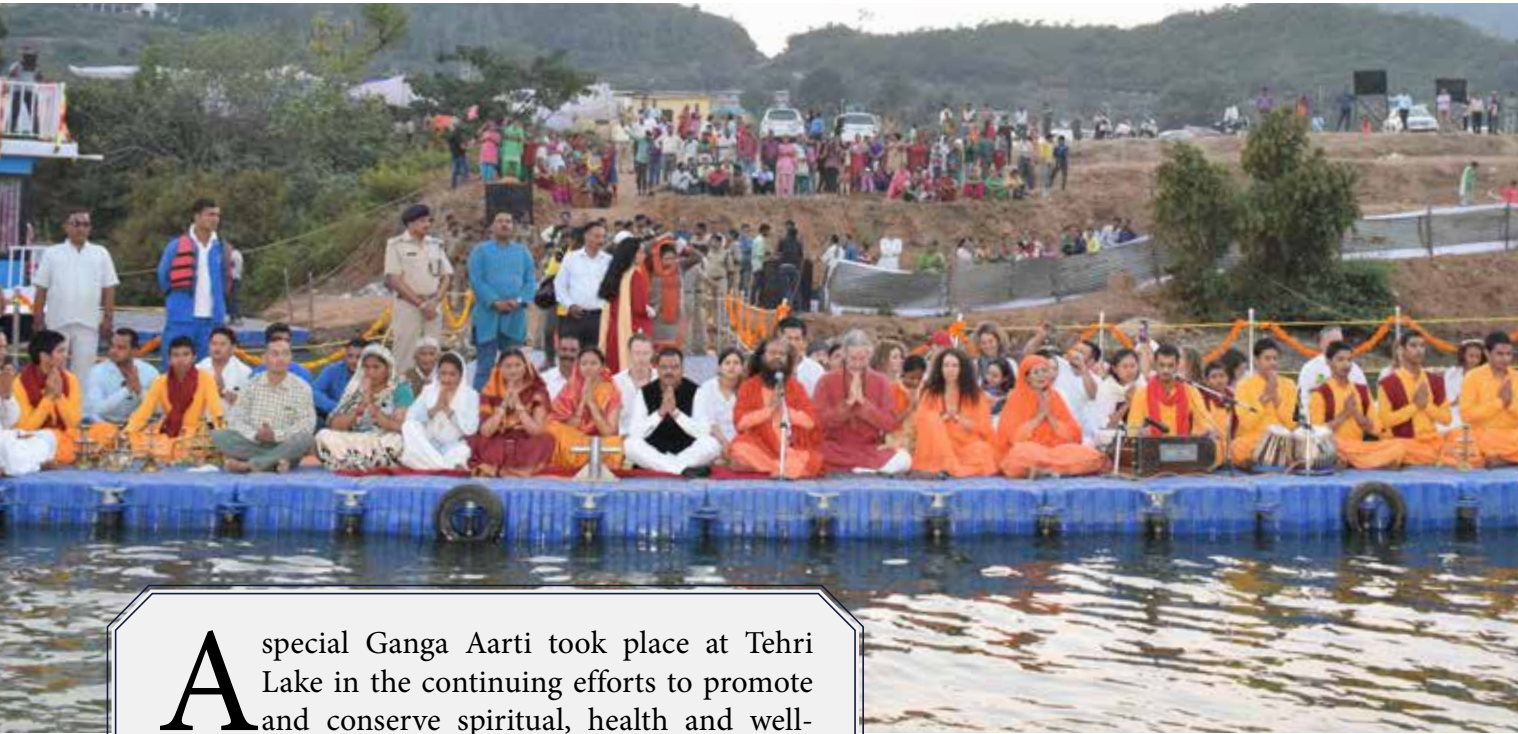


During the launch of a special programme to preserve and serve Braj Bhoomi, Braj Vrindavan Act Now, Ganga Action Parivar (GAP), Yamuna Action Parivar, and Global Interfaith WASH Alliance (GIWA) joined hands to pledge and plan for ending open defecation and cleaning all river bodies of pollution in Vrindavan. Sadhvi Bhagawati Saraswatiji, Secretary-General of GIWA and President of Divine Shakti Foundation (DSF) inspired all those present to use whatever ability, energy, experience and expertise they have to serve this sacred land. She led everyone in a pledge that they would work for cleanliness of the Yamuna and improved cleanliness, hygiene and sanitation in this holy area. She also ceremonially offered the first bricks that will be used in the construction of GIWA and GAP sponsored toilets in schools for children of Vrindavan. Blessed and inspired by Pujya Swami Chidanand Saraswatiji and Pujya Swami B.A. Paramadvaitiji, the programme is bringing together people from around the world to serve the land of Bhagawan Krishna! *



Ganga Aarti in Tehri

Uttarakhand: Simply Heaven!



A special Ganga Aarti took place at Tehri Lake in the continuing efforts to promote and conserve spiritual, health and wellness tourism. The Hon'ble Tourism Minister Shri Dinesh Dhanaiji and his entire team organized the trip. Yogis from more than 20 countries, a majority of them from Parmarth's Yoga Course, joined Pujya Swamiji, Sadhvi Bhagawatiji and Sadhvi Abhaji (Mataji) to meditate, practice Yoga asanas and take part in the evening Aarti ceremony.

During the visit, Organic India Founder President Bharat Mitraji and his team, who were visiting Parmarth, also joined in the journey to the beautiful reservoir.

They made extensive plans with the government on how to promote tourism to more international seekers and tourists.

The Parmarth Rishikumars joined Pujya Swamiji in conducting an extraordinary and special Ganga Aarti on the lake with a pledge to keep all sources of water free from open defecation and any source of pollution. *



Gopashtami

Pledge to protect and preserve the Mother Cow

On the auspicious occasion of Gopashtami, HH Pujya Swamiji took part in a special Gau Poojan at the Parmarth Gaushala. On the occasion, Pujya Swamiji reminded us, "The cow is the mother of civilization. She gives and gives like the sun, nurturing many of us since infancy. It is our sacred duty to protect her. Today is the day to begin. Make the vow to stop using plastic bags, which, when eaten by cows, slowly and painfully kills them. And stop using leather, so that India's precious cows need not be killed only so that we may have nice shoes, sofas and car seats. Let this be a sacred duty remembered by all. Never should we allow anything or anyone to suffer simply for our own comforts." *



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Sanitation and Vaccination Go Hand in Hand in Rishikesh Slum

It's Possible to End Poverty: Serving Mayakund Slum Children.

“It’s possible to end poverty when we commit ourselves to putting an end to poverty every day.” Global Interfaith WASH Alliance (GIWA) Secretary-General and President of the Divine Shakti Foundation (DSF), Dr. Sadhvi Bhagawati Saraswatiji graced and inspired hundreds of children at the Mayakund slum yesterday during a beautiful and free health and hygiene camp, where children were given health examinations and received Vitamin A and albendazole.

She emphasized that vaccinations and sanitation must go hand in hand. “Health does not only come from these pills or drops. Health comes from how you live, every day. For a Swastha Bharat we need a #Swachh India we must have a clean India! She spoke about the importance of improved WASH, having clean water, washing hands and using toilets as basic to health and well being.

She encouraged GIWA and DSF volunteers to continue once a month camps to follow-up on the pledge taken and help ensure that basic WASH facilities were available to the children living in the slum. Sadhvi Bhagawatiji praised Municipal Chairman Deep Sharma for his great commitment and dedication to making Rishikesh completely ODF and helping to ensure a clean and free-flowing River Ganga. GIWA’s WASH on Wheels truck and volunteers were also available at the camp to raise awareness and encourage children by speaking

to them on the crucial importance of improved WASH and ending the practice of open defecation. They also played specially created Public Service Announcements for the children.

Sadhvi Bhagawatiji also served the children, their parents and the community a free, hot and vegetarian meal that was sponsored by the Divine Shakti Foundation (DSF). *

Free Eye Care Medical Camp

Quality services to 950 patients and 350 successfully operated for cataracts.



Pujya Swamiji lit the lamp at the opening of the free of cost Eye Care Medical Camp that was organized by Swami Shukadevanand Hospital, Parmarth Niketan. This camp was specifically for those with cataracts. The SDM of Rishikesh, Brijesh Tiwari was also present with his family at the opening ceremony. Pujya Swamiji said, "To serve the suffering humanity is a divine opportunity to be blessed with the essence of God."

Dr Purnima Roy from Australia led the team of 22 sevak (volunteer) doctors and assistants who were primarily from Australia but also the US and India were represented. The camp ran from 25 November to 7 December. The doctors screened patients with cataracts who then received a free operation to relieve them of their cataracts.

Dr Ravi Kaushal declared that a total of 950 patients were registered out of which 350 received a successful cataract operation. Patients were also given eye equipment, glasses, and medicines that were free of cost.

Dr Manoj Patel came for first time from Pittsburgh, PA, USA, to deliver his medical services as seva. He made several suggestions on how the care offered can be improved in view of the requirements of the patients.

The other doctors on the team who served were: Dr Shekhar Bhograj, Dr Premik Nagar, Dr Mustafa Parikh, Dr Kishor Pauja, Dr Janak Shah, Dr Raghu Verma, Dr Shailja Chaturvedi, Dr Jay Chandra, Dr Mukta Suchdeva, Dr Irina Kanaskar, Dr Simon Irvine, Dr Milind Bhide, Dr Vivek Jain, Dr Senthnan Ponniah and many others. *



Completion of the Animal Rescue Project

Dogs and animals provided quality care in camp organized by DSF and Parmarth Niketan



Two months out of the year, sevaks (volunteers) headed by Sofi Osochenko from Siberia, operate the Animal Rescue Project. Russian vets and technicians also come and volunteer their services primarily for the street dogs of Rishikesh. This project is co-sponsored and hosted by Divine Shakti Foundation-Parmarth Niketan Ashram. Sterilization of primarily male dogs, vaccination and treatment for street dogs and cats is free. A small donation is asked for pets. As most street puppies and kittens die from significant diseases, motorbike accidents or hunger, it is very important to control the population so that they are healthy and happy.

This November this year there were 48 surgeries performed that included sterilization of 44 dogs and 4 cats. All of the operations were done by Russian doctors. Roman Tomilenko served as operating surgeon and Katerina Polyakova served

as the surgical assistant in the first month, and in the second month Victoria Chursina served as operating surgeon and Olga Ivanova and Elena were surgical assistants. Volunteers from France, Argentina, Australia, US, Canada, Taiwan, Ukraine and many other countries assisted with the project.


Besides being sterilized, all dogs get vaccinated from rabies and viruses. They also are treated with anthelmintic and treated for skin diseases.

In three years, 327 dogs and cats in the area of Ramjhula, Laxmanjhula, Muni Ku Reti and Tapovan have been operated and treated through the camps. Thus the streets of Rishikesh have changed beyond recognition. Dogs are healthy and fit, there are no dogs with mange and you won't see hundreds of sick stray puppies starving to death.




All volunteers were blessed by Pujya Swamiji for their incredible and selfless dedication to service. At the end of the two month camp a special Rudraksha sapling was given to the young volunteers by the Former President and Prime Minister of Bosnia, Mr Haris Silajdzic and his wife, Selma Silajdzic. They were also appreciated and wrapped in a beautiful flower mala by the MLA of Rishikesh, Shri Prem Chand Aggarwalji at a special Christmas Eve celebration at the Parmarth Vidya Mandir School, Rishikesh. *






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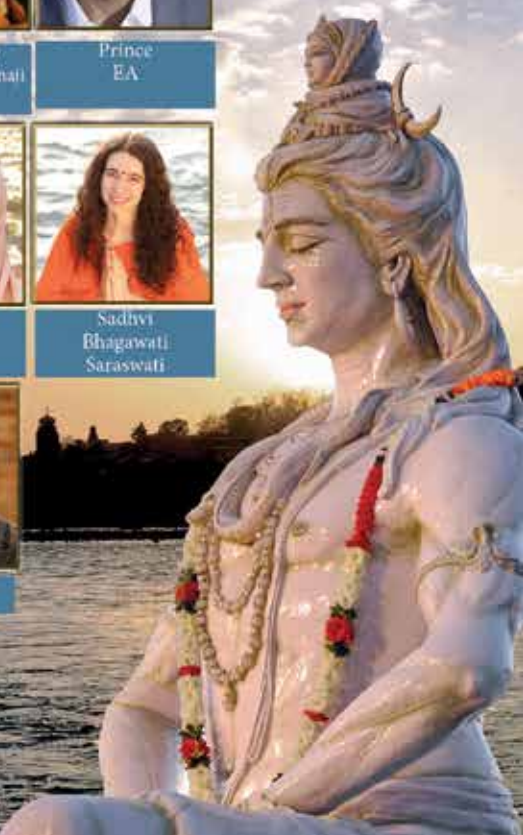




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 Rujita Diwekar	 HS Arun	 Deepika Mehta	 Laura Plumb	 Kia Miller	 Tommy Rosen	
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HH PUJYA SWAMI
SHUKDEVANAND
SARASWATIJI

Founder of Parmarth Niketan



**“You have the power to bring
the song of peace to the world.”**

- Pujya Swami Chidanand Saraswatiiji