

PARMARTH

Winter Edition - 2016 Newsletter
H.H. Pujya Swami Chidanand Saraswatiji



Historic Signing of Joint Declaration to End Slavery



Honouring the 50th Nirvaan Divas of Parmarth's Founder



U.S. Ambassador Breaks Ground for a GIWA Bio-toilet Structure



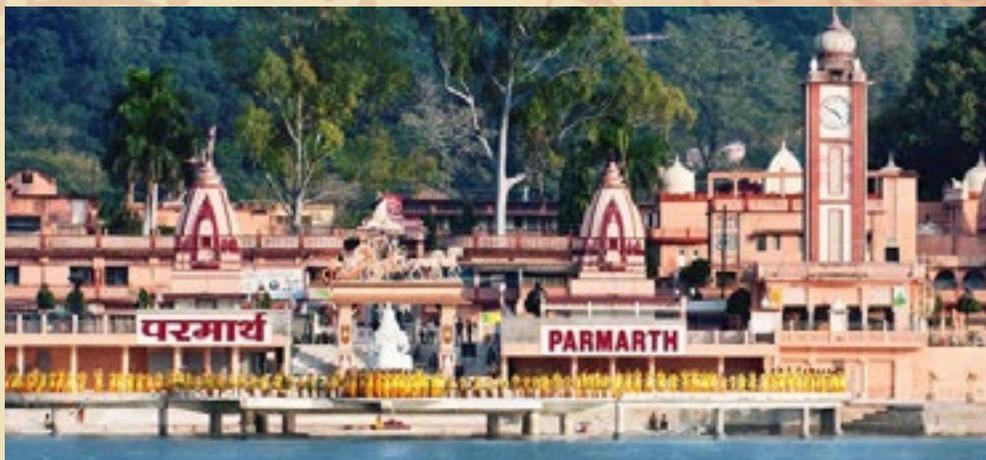
Hinduja Brothers Celebrate a Service Filled, Green Birthday



Inauguration of the Incredible Lord Jagannath Temple



Dev Diwali Sends Message of Interfaith Harmony in Varanasi



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Honouring the 50th Nirvaan Divas of Parmarth's Founder

A galaxy of saints graced Parmarth for the 50th anniversary of the Nirvaan Divas of the founder of Parmarth Niketan, Brahmleen HH Pujya Mahamandaleshwar Swami Shukdevanand Saraswatiji Maharaj. (Nirvaan Divas is when someone attains mahasamadhi and leaves their body.)

The celebration was led with great devotion, eloquence and love by Pujya Swami Chidanand Saraswatiji and was graced by the presence of HH Pujya M.M. Swami Asanganand Saraswatiji, HH Pujya Swami Ramdevji, HH Pujya Prabhu Swamiji, HH Pujya M.M. Swami Harinarayanandji, HH Swami Chinmayanand Saraswatiji, HH Pujya Brahmachari Brahmaswarupji, HH Pujya M.M. Swami Umakantanandji, Pujya M.M. Swami Harichetanandji, HH Pujya Baba Hath Yogiji, HH Pujya Mahant Ravindra Puriji, as well as Mahamandaleshwars and the heads of nearly every major traditional ashram and lineage in Rishikesh and Haridwar.



It was agreed that the grand Nirvaan Divas was truly a Nirmaan Divas, a day for pilgrims and devotees to reflect on their lives of how we all can take the teachings and the divine message of HH Brahmleen Pujya M.M. Swami Shukdevanand Saraswatiji's life to inspire and fill our own lives with meaning, reaffirming our commitment to be of service for the welfare of all. He was a saint who personally oversaw the management and day-to-day activities of the ashram, tirelessly serving to ensure that Parmarth was a place that filled pilgrims and visitors with great devotion and inspired people to be of service.

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Historic Signing of Joint Declaration to End Slavery



During the Global Freedom Network gathering in Delhi, nine Indian spiritual leaders of varied faiths signed a joint declaration to end modern slavery within a generation. This landmark declaration was signed by the following religious and spiritual leaders from the Hindu, Muslim, Christian, Jewish, Jain, and Baha'i faiths:

Pujya Sri Sri Ravi Shankarji, Pujya Swami Chidanand Saraswatiji, Respected Dr. Mufti M. Mukarram Ahmedji; Respected Imam Umer Ilyasiji; Respected Jathedar Avtar Singhji, Respected Mr. Alwan Mashiji; Respected Rabbi Ezekiel Isaac Malekarji; Respected Mr. Shatrughun Jivnaniji and Respected Acharya Dr. Lokesh Muniji.

Pujya Swamiji expressed His great support for the Chairman of the Global Freedom Network (GFN), philanthropist and founder of the Walk Free Foundation, Mr. Andrew Forrest and his daughter Ms. Grace Forrest, for being behind this initiative. Pujya Swamiji had detailed discussions with other respected speakers at the Forum, including Nobel Peace Prize winner, Shri Kailash Satyrathi, and Ms. Swati Malihwal, Chairperson of the Delhi Women's Commission and many other activists to find avenues in which faith leaders and faith-based organizations can support this vital work.

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U.S. Ambassador Breaks Ground for a GIWA Bio-toilet Structure

United States Ambassador to India, Shri Richard Verma, laid the first bricks for a new girls' bio-toilet structure being built by Global Interfaith WASH Alliance (GIWA) and Divine Shakti Foundation (DSF), of Parmarth Niketan. The Honourable Ambassador, his wife, Ms. Pinky Verma, and children joined Pujya Swamiji, the Co-Chair/Co-Founder of the GIWA and President of Parmarth Niketan and Sadhvi Bhagawati Saraswatiji, Secretary General GIWA and President of the DSF, for this auspicious ceremony.

The structure will be used by nearly 2000 girls at the Government Girls' Intercollege. Currently, they face insufficient access to clean, private toilets, a problem commonly found in many of India's schools.



Pujya Swamiji said on the occasion: "We aren't just building toilets, we are creating Sanitation Ambassadors. The girls here will be among the first to attend classes offered by GIWA's new World Toilet College, so that they can become strong and powerful advocates for a Swachh Bharat."

Sadhvi Bhagawatiiji added, "Without private, clean and safe washroom facilities, girls are more likely to drop out of school and fall into the trap of poverty. It is so beautiful to have our U.S. Ambassador, who is truly a Green Ambassador, with us today to add his hand and his heart to these efforts."

Ambassador Verma told the audience, "...I am sure that this bio-toilet complex will serve as a basic and essential facility to ensure that you grow and thrive as leaders of tomorrow.' On behalf of President Obama, on behalf of myself and my family, we are your partners and your friends. We stand beside you and with you, and I look forward to coming back very soon."

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[Watch how a bio-toilet works](#)



Hinduja Brothers Celebrate a Service Filled, Green Birthday

The Hinduja Brothers, along with eighty members of their extended family, came to Parmarth Niketan, Rishikesh, for a special spiritual retreat during the month of December. The year 2015 marked the birthdays of four of the brothers. Shri SP Hinduja celebrated his 80th birthday, Shri Gopichand Hinduja his 75th, Shri Prakash Hinduja, his 70th, and Shri Ashok Hinduja celebrated his 65th. Deeply inspired by Pujya Swamiji and previous trips they made Parmarth Niketan in 2001 and 2004 to celebrate the centenary of their father and mother, respectively, the brothers and their entire family returned home to Parmarth Niketan to mark the occasion.



Pujya Swamiji said, “The Hinduja brothers’s decision to celebrate their birthdays as Green birthdays here on the banks of Mother Ganga is a testament to their sanskaras and their values. This is truly the message that is needed today. They could have gone to Switzerland or anywhere in the world, but they decided to come to Uttarakhand, the Spiritual Land, illustrating that this Himalayan State is truly simply heaven, a confluence of both beauty and divinity.”

Shri Gopichand Hinduja said, “We have been associated with Pujya Swamiji for so many years, and we are always inspired by His vision and leadership, under which such vital and multi-faceted service projects are thriving. From the first ever Encyclopedia of Hinduism, which He has conceived and which was launched by the Hon’ble Prime Minister of Great Britain, to His work for Water, Sanitation and Hygiene, Swachh Bharat, as well as so much more. We are glad to be associated with these efforts....We pledge to come at least once every year....”

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Hinduja Brothers Celebrate a Service Filled, Green Birthday (CONTD)

During their stay, the Hinduja family enjoyed the divine Ganga Aartis, meeting with the Hon'ble Chief Minister of Uttarakhand at Parmarth Niketan as well as the daily satsang sessions with Pujya Swamiji and Sadhvi Bhagawati Saraswatiji.

They also hosted a special bhandara for the families of the safai karamcharis (street sweepers) in the Rishikesh municipality, providing food and giving blankets to the families.

Shri Ashok Hinduja visited the Kendriya Vidyalaya in Rishikesh with Pujya Swamiji. The principal of the school, Shri Rachana Deviji, warmly welcomed them to her campus and held a special ceremony in which the two dignitaries shared words of inspiration and awarded certificates of excellence to outstanding students.

Touched by the enthusiasm of the students, Shri Ashok Hinduja said that he would extend the Hinduja scholarship to these students.



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Plans Launched for the World Toilet College on World Toilet Day



Dettol Banega Swachh India (BSI), the World Toilet Organization, the Global Interfaith WASH Alliance and Peheil, the Initiative of Dainik Jagran, joined forces to celebrate United Nations World Toilet Day. The event was launched with a symbolic “Urgent Run for Toilets,” a global event to raise awareness via runs and marathons in locations worldwide.

This inaugural ceremony was blessed by Pujya Swamiji who was joined by Shri Bibek Debroy, noted economist and member of the Niti Ayog; Shri Ravi Bhatnagar, Manager External Affairs, RB; Shri Sanjay Gupta, Editor & CEO of Jagran Prakashan Limited; Shri SM Sharma, Chairman Jagran Peheil The Initiative; Mr. Jack Sim, Founder and President of the World Toilet Organization; Professor Kishore Munshi, IIT Mumbai; and Shri Radheshyam Gomla.

According to the United Nations, “The aim of World Toilet Day is to raise awareness about the people in the world who don’t have access to a toilet, despite the fact that it is a human right to have clean water and sanitation.” Worldwide, some 2.4 billion people—or close to one-third of the global population—don’t have access to improved sanitation, with an estimated 1 billion people forced to relieve themselves in the open. The problem leads to wide-spread disease and death, particularly in India, where the majority of the global problem exists. Said Global Interfaith WASH Alliance Co-Founder/Co-Chair, Pujya Swami Chidanand Saraswatiji, “From here on in, sanitation must become our meditation, for it is a medication that can save and protect the lives of countless children. Let us not rest, as our duty to God and Nation, until Hon’ble Shri Narendra Modiji’s great vision for a Swachh Bharat is realized in every home, on every street and in every city, village and town.”

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Inauguration of the Incredible Lord Jagannath Temple



A beautiful Temple of Lord Jagannath was inaugurated by Pujya Swamiji, Pujya Ramesh Bhai Ozaji (Bhaishri), Pujya Bal VyasShri Shrikantji, Pujya Anurag Thukur Kanahaiyaji and many others. The first of its kind in the State, the temple is built in sandstone to appear as if it is riding on a chariot and is considered an architectural marvel. Established by the Emami Group and led by the spiritual vision of joint chairmen Shri RS Agarwalji and Shri RS Goenkaji, the temple is located at Balgopalpur in the Balasore district. The temple was designed and built under the guidance of noted architect and sculptor Padma Vibhushan Raghunath Mohapatra and his group.

Pujya Swamiji said: "It is so beautiful to see the friendship, partnership and oneness of Shri RS Agarwalji and Shri RS Goenkaji. They have raised their families with such sanskaras, such values. I often say: you can give your kids cars, but what is truly priceless is their sanskaras. If they can

remain rooted in their values and nourished by their spiritual-cultural heritage, then they need no other gift; and simultaneously every other gift becomes infinitely more meaningful."

Plans for a school for at least 1000 tribal children were also announced after the inauguration. The initiative was lauded by all the revered saints. To be in service of humanity is the true worship of the divine.

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GIWA Comes Together with UNICEF for the Ganga Sagar Mela in West Bengal

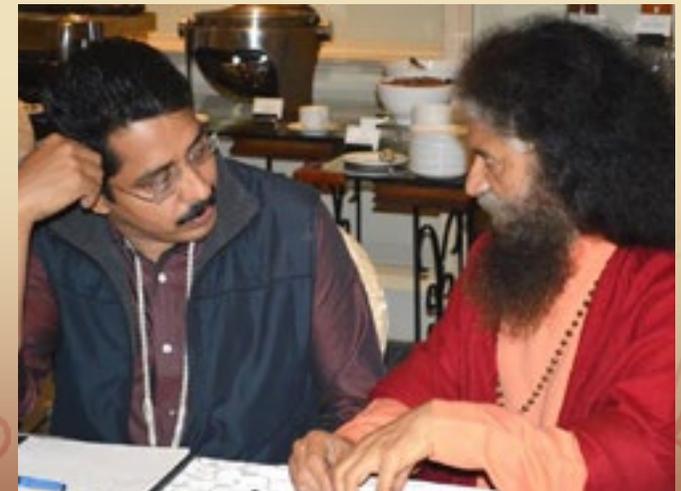
On November 28, UNICEF hosted a fruitful consultation to address the issues of water, sanitation, and hygiene in the state of West Bengal. By bringing together the local faith leaders with those representing the major religions of India through the Global Interfaith Wash Alliance (GIWA), participants addressed Swachh Bengal (Clean Bengal).

Pujya Swamiji said, “Let WASH be our worship. Today, let us begin here in West Bengal by ensuring all leaders of this beautiful state’s faith and tribal communities come together, hand-in-hand, to forge historic results. Let us form a network that will reach every corner, city, hamlet and home of West Bengal to end the devastation of open defecation.”

Pujya Swamiji then announced that the upcoming Ganga Sagar Mela will provide a significant platform from which to begin. As an outcome, a follow-up meeting was held the next morning with the Hon’ble District Magistrate of Kolkata, Shri PB Salim, and his team to discuss and plan a mass awareness event with faith leaders during the upcoming Mela, which will take place later in January.



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Meditation in Action Pledge Inspired During a Special Yoga Camp

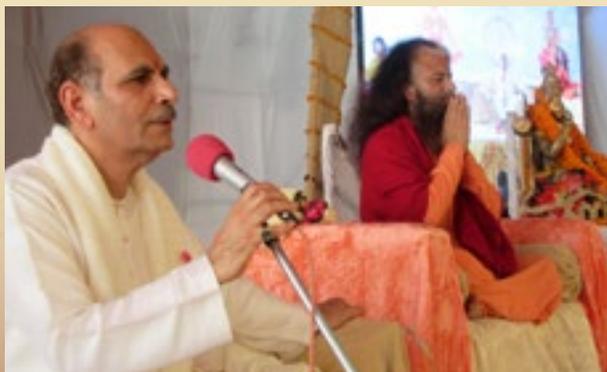
A three-day Sadhna Shivir (Yoga and Meditation Camp) was organized by Pujya Shudhanshuji Maharaj in November at Parmarth Niketan with over seven hundred devotees attending and concluded with the divine blessings of Pujya Swamiji.

During the course of the camp, Pujya Sudhanshuji Maharaj said, “Tragically, violence and terror are rampant in our world. Humanity and human values seems to be dissipating. This is of massive concern to us all, however the solution is simple—we must change the hearts and purify the minds of the younger generation.”

Pujya Swamiji added, “The key to a peaceful world starts with the heart not with a gun. Changing our hearts, changing our ways will change our world. Today, on the holy banks of Mother Ganga, in the lap of the Himalayas, we are not only concluding a Sadhna Shivir (Yoga and Meditation Camp) but also a Sankalp Shivir (Pledge Camp). Today we are committing to bringing our meditation and our yoga into action. Let us pledge to make our communities free from open defecation, work to improve access to clean water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH), end the practice of modern day slavery, plant and give more and more trees on every holiday and special occasion.” Pujya Sudhanshuji Maharaj’s lauded the incredible work that the Global Interfaith WASH Alliance (GIWA) was doing under Pujya Swamiji’s divine leadership and vision.



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Prayer for Paris and Pledge for World Peace on the Banks of Mother Ganga



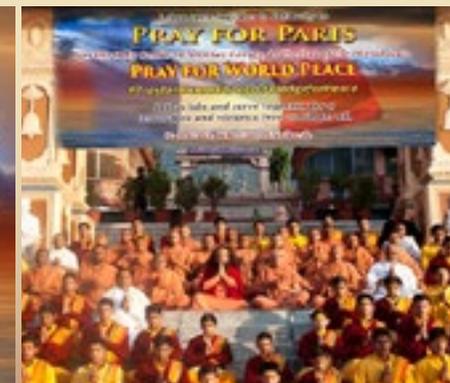
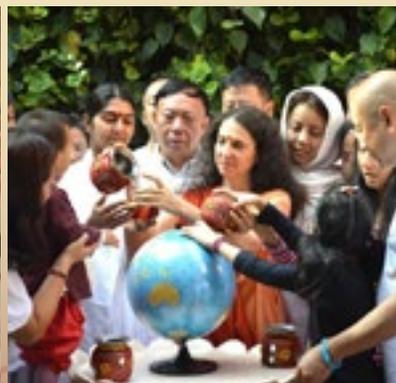
Saints, pilgrims, devotees and yogis from all across India and across the world joined together to pray and pledge for world peace and for all of humanity, in the wake of the recent terrorist attacks in Paris, the violence in Beirut and the refugee crisis across Europe.

Led by Pujya Swamiji and Sadhvi Bhagawati Saraswatiji, a sacred prayer with burning earthen oil lamps was held for peace, light and universal sisterhood/brotherhood. The participants were inspired to commit and pledge to cohesive action so that they can become beacons of light and life, of hope and healing across the world.

Pujya Swamiji led the moment of silence by sharing, “Let us pray for Paris and let us also pray and pledge for world peace. We are one family. For those who have lost their lives and for those who have lost their loved

ones, in their time of grief, let us join with them in this moment of silence and introspection.”

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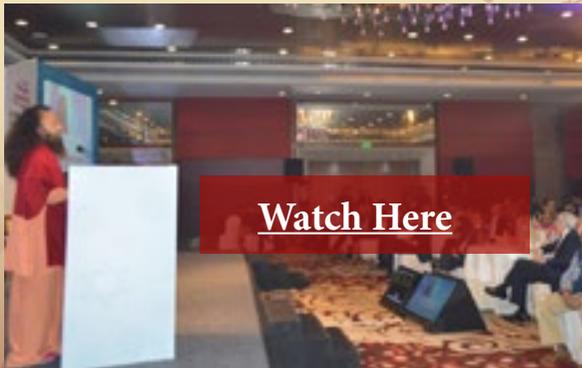
Shared Value Summit in Delhi



A unique Shared Value Summit was held to discuss business models that can make a difference to the world. An annual event organized by the Institute for Competitiveness, India, the Indian link in the global network of the Institute for Strategy and Competitiveness at the Harvard Business School, it brings together the foremost thinkers, leaders and shared value practitioners to discuss, deliberate and formulate action strategies of how economic progress can be made along with the greatest social impact.

Pujya Swamiji blessed the gathering by sharing, “Faith for ages has created a very deep, intrinsic understanding of values in our lives and our actions; however, tragically, over the recent years values have been side-lined in the race to fill our greed. Now, however, more and more global and local platforms are beginning to involve and include faith leaders and faith-based organizations in their discussions. It is wonderful to see that you are all gathered here today discussing how the values of peace, love and harmony can come into our businesses, reinstating the great importance of shared values in our lives and our workplaces...”

Sadhvi Bhagawatiji, one of the main speakers during the summit, shared, “Doing well and doing good are not mutually exclusive. Through the concept of shared value they can, and should, easily co-exist. Shared value provides an expanded definition of success and changes our concept of supply and demand. We supply not to the demand of greed, but to the demand of need. When we look truly at what society needs and develop our business models based on that, we earn a lot more than profit – we become pillars in the development of a healthy society.” Dr. Amit Kapoor, Honorary Chairman, Shared Value Initiative India & the Institute for Competitiveness gave the welcome address. Other eminent speakers included Hon’ble Railway Minister Shri Suresh Prabhu, Shri Suresh Narayanan, Chairman & Managing Director, Nestle India; Mark R. Kramer, Co-founder & Managing Director, FSG; David Wilcox, Founder, ReachScale; Anil Sinha, Regional Head, Advisory Services South Asia, IFC and many others.



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Enhancing Service Delivery to the Underserved

A “Social Enterprise Innovations Seminar - Enhancing Service Delivery to the Underserved” was hosted by the Federation of India Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FICCI), under the auspices of National Institute for Transforming India Aayog (NITI Aayog), with the World Bank Group as knowledge partner. Participants and speakers included Ms. Isabel Guerrero, Adjunct Lecturer in Public Policy for the Harvard Kennedy School and former Vice President of the World Bank Southeast Asia; Dr. A Didar Singh, Secretary General FICCI; Shri Nirankar Saxena, Senior-Director of FICCI; and Mr. Michael Haney, Senior Advisor, World Bank Group; as well as Ms. Jyotsna Sitling, Senior Officer from Small Industries Development Bank of India.



All were especially commended by Pujya Swamiji and Sadhvi Bhagawatiji for their work to address the underserved. Pujya Swamiji inspired those in attendance saying, “The very fact that we are gathered here discussing, planning and committing to actions we will take to serve the undeserved is a great step forward and truly the need of the hour. This to me is the real worship- the real pooja. Global Interfaith WASH Alliance is with you in whatever capacity you may need to provide the much needed clean water, sanitation and hygiene services to those who need it the most.”

Sadhvi Bhagawatiji, Secretary-General of the Global Interfaith WASH Alliance, shared, “It is becoming more and more evident that we cannot talk about progress, economic growth and success in a vacuum. We cannot have any progress or development without including those who are impoverished and lacking access to basic facilities we take for granted, such as toilets and clean water filters. Just like if the left leg is injured the right leg picks up the weight without hesitation, without any discussion and without any expectation of a reward, in the same way when we see our brothers and sisters underserved we don’t need to be told to act to meet that need. Today, with the increasing population in dire need, the call to action is even greater and more urgent, so let us join hands and join hearts, pledging to work together.”

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CELEBRATING TOGETHER



Dev Diwali Sends Message of Interfaith Harmony in Varanasi

On the auspicious occasion of Kartik Purnima, when the people of Varanasi celebrate their annual Dev Diwali, Pujya Swamiji led an inspired Ganga Aarti, joined by India's revered interfaith leaders, on the famous Assi Ghat of Varanasi. The grand event was organized by the Indian Council of Religious Leaders, and was sponsored by businessman and film-producer, Dr. B.K. Modi, in association with the Ganga Action Parivar, Parmarth Niketan.

Pujya Swamiji shared that the world-famous Ganga Aarti started on Dashashwamedh Ghat in December 31, 1999 when it was blessed and inspired by HH the Dalai Lama and many other revered saints. Since then it has gone on to become one of the highlights of "Incredible India!". Pujya Swamiji then wished that such Ganga Aartis would happen on all 84 ghats of Varanasi, one of the most historic and sacred cities of the world.

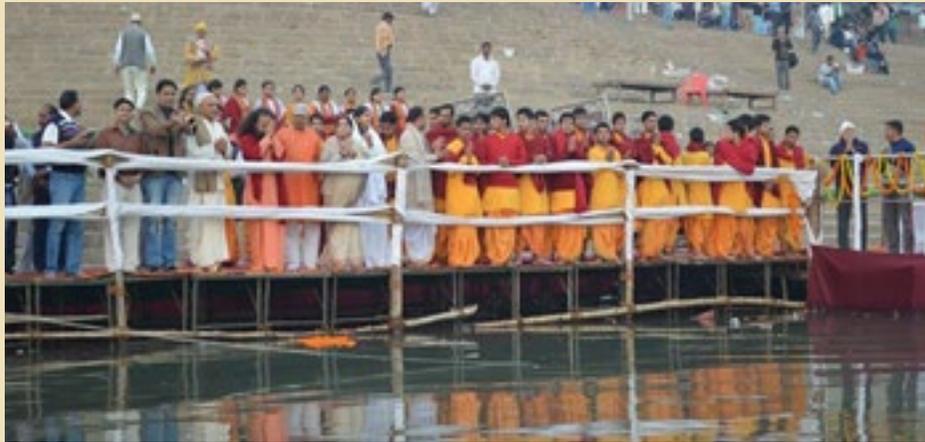
World-renowned, Bhajan devotional singer, Smt. Anuradha Paudwal, enthralled the audiences with her melodious and divine voice as she sang numerous popular songs. Joining her were Shri Rajiv Chopra and popular tabla maestro Shri Pandey.



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Morning in Varanasi: Meeting with the Mayor



The morning after the grand Dev Diwali celebrations, Pujya Swamiji was cordially invited to bless the special 'Subh-e-Varanasi' (Morning in Varanasi) programme starting every day from 5:30 a.m., just before sunrise.

Pujya Swamiji led the sacred havan ceremony and blessed the Puja and Aarti ceremony. As He returned back from offering prayers to Mother Ganga, He silently inspired everyone to clean up the pieces of trash and plastic which littered the ghat and the banks of the river.

Pujya Swamiji had a very fruitful meeting with the Hon'ble Mayor of Varanasi, Shri Ram Gopal Mohleji, about how Global Interfaith WASH Alliance and Ganga Action Parivar can support the great efforts of the Nagar Nigam to ensure that each ghat

has adequate toilet/sanitation facilities, dustbins, a changing room for women and tree plantation wherever possible. He inspired the pledge that by the next Dev Diwali all 84 ghats of Varanasi would be clean, green and serene, encouraging all stakeholders to come forward and do their part to make this dream a reality.

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Lighting the Light of Devotion in Koti Deepothsav, Hyderabad



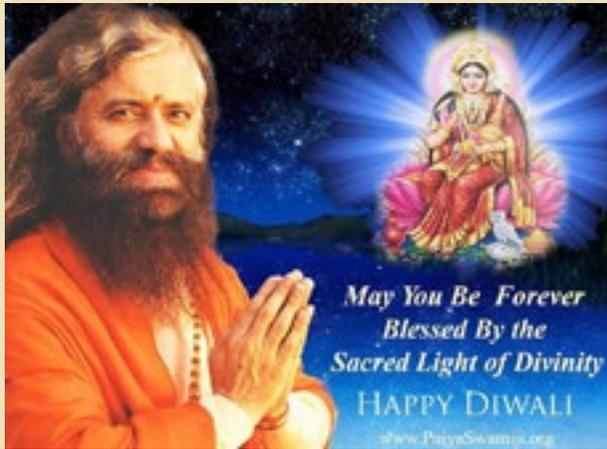
A very special Bhakthi TV's Koti Deepothsav - 2015 was held in Hyderabad at the time of Kartik Purnima, just after Dev Diwali in Varanasi. It was an incredible event in which hundreds of thousands of oil lamps were lit by thousands of devotees and pilgrims. Pujya Swamiji was graciously asked to bless the occasion with His presence and words of inspiration. Tapovanam Peetadhipathi Sachidananda Saraswati Swamiji also graced the event.

Pujya Swamiji lauded Mr. Narendra Chowdary - Chairman of Rachana Television Pvt Ltd and Bhakthi TV, also a Brand Ambassador of Swachh Bharat from the Telugu Region, for keeping the lamp of devotion and bhakti alive for millions. He shared that devotion was the most precious, most sacred treasure in our lives. He also shared that the time had come to bring our devotion, our bhakti, into action and work to protect our land from open defecation, littering and other forms of pollution. Since, the event was

held very near the famous Hussain Sagar Lake, Pujya Swamiji also spoke about the great need to preserve and protect our natural environment. He said that our precious aquifers were the lifelines of our communities, and it is essential that we use opportunities such as these festivals to also light the lamp of action in the hearts of everyone so that each one of us can become green ambassadors of change.



Diwali, the Festival of Lights, Brings Together our Global Family



Diwali at Parmarth was celebrated with a simple message of, “be green and celebrate green.” Fireworks were discouraged and instead, earthenware oil lamps were lit by pilgrims, yogis and visitors from nearly 31 nations. Organic and home-made prasad was distributed to all present on this special occasion.

There was also a large group of international students from the Norwegian University of Science and Technology who used the divine opportunity to reflect on the completion of their month long internship at Parmarth Niketan where they were studying Urban Development & Resilience (UDR) in association with the Indian Institute of Public Administration, Delhi.

During this time, they shared their findings in the form of an exhibition, illustrating that disaster reduction and disaster prevention were also ways in which we could celebrate the light of life and triumph the darkness of disaster.

Pujya Swamiji and Sadhvi Bhagawatiji reminded everyone, *“It is that sacred time of Diwali, the Festival of Light! On this day, as we light beautiful lamps in our homes, we must not only marvel at the glory and splendor, but we must also take the significance of the light into our lives. We must warmly welcome the Divine into our hearts and into our lives, as the people of Ayodhya welcomed back Bhagawan Rama”.*

[Read the Diwali Blessings from Pujya Swamiji](#)



A very special Diwali video of this truly global celebration

National Children's Day: Shaping a Green Future



National Children's Day (14 November), jointly organized by Parmarth Niketan (Rishikesh) and Planetskool, brought together our global family with the local school children as one team with one theme: to raise awareness on the crucial and critical need to protect our planet.

School children from Divya Prem Sewa, Vidya Bharti students and Parmarth Niketan Gurukul students performed thought-provoking pieces on Swachh Bharat and Namami Gange. Internationally acclaimed Estonian band, BomBillaz, performed the "Planetskool" theme song along with other riveting numbers that fused Indian classical mantras with reggae.

Famous child performer, Balshree Awardee Hansavi Tonk performed a classical Indian dance piece. Pujya Swamiji and Sadhvi Bhagawatiji, the Goodwill Ambassadors of Planetskool shared words of inspiration and

lauded Planetskool's founder and Technovite's CEO, Shri Suneet Singh Mausil, for his incredible initiative that brings the world closer and enriches students across the globe with positive human values. They gifted a beautiful Rudraksh sapling to Shri Bharat Chandra Saha of the Water Resources Investigation & Development Department, Government of West Bengal; Respected Vice Chancellor of Sanskrit, Mahavidyala Professor Mahavir Agrawal; and the Cultural Attache of Yemen, Dr Mazan Al Jifri.

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Green Birthday and Green Message



Famous and beloved Bollywood actress Dia Mirza came home to Parmarth Niketan during the course of a very special documentary she is shooting. The documentary is focused on raising awareness on the need to preserve and protect the National River Ganga.

She joined the divine Ganga Aarti ceremony, which was celebrating the special birthday of young Ayesha from London.

Ayesha's grandmother, Jyotsna Poddar, and grandfather, Saroj Poddar, had brought her to Parmarth last year for Saroj's birthday. She loved the town and was so inspired by her visit then that she decided to come again, this time to celebrate her own birthday. Little did she know that, by Gangaji's grace, she would not only be blessed by her Guru, Pujya Swamiji, but would also receive birthday wishes from Dia Mirza. She was gifted with a sacred Rudraksh sapling while everyone sang a sacred Sanskrit birthday song and showered her with rose petals. During the occasion, it was shared that in order for our youngsters to be inspired to

make every birthday a green birthday, sacred pilgrimage sites must be protected in their pristine and natural state.

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Kailesh Kher's Sister Gets Green Blessings on Her Wedding

Pujya Swamiji graced and blessed the Delhi marriage of Dr. Nutan Kher and her husband, Shri Narendra Mishra, wrapping them together in one beautiful flower mala as a symbol of their divine union – two bodies, but one soul. Dr. Kher is the sister of famous Bollywood singer and Sufi artist, Kailash Kher. Dr. Nutan Kher was especially thrilled to receive a sacred green Rudraksh sapling from Pujya Swamiji as a green reminder to keep their lives and all of their celebrations clean, green and serene. Pujya Swamiji also shared a beautiful message with simple mantras for a peaceful and joyous marriage.

Pujya Swamiji blessed Kailash Kher's family as they reminisced about his days in Rishikesh, sharing stories of his time as a young rishikumar at Parmarth Niketan in which Pujya Swamiji had deeply inspired him to continue his journey, telling him that one day he would go on to charm and to serve millions.



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SERVING HUMANITY



Swarovski and Hon'ble Education Minister Make Plans With GIWA

Donna Goodman, Global Program Director of the Swarovski Waterschool, joined Uttarakhand Education Minister Shri Mantri Prasad Naithaniji on the holy banks of Mother Ganga at Parmarth Niketan, with the blessings of Pujya Swamiji and in the divine presence of Sadhvi Bhagawatiji, Swamini Adityanandaji, Shri Radheyshyam Gomla and Shri Ram Mahesh Mishra to discuss the creation of waterschools along the banks of the national River Ganga. Plans included working in a number of schools along the banks of the sacred river to create models that could then be replicated to hundreds of schools throughout the state of Uttarakhand and throughout the nation.

The schools would be provided with:

- Adequate sanitation facilities and functional bio-toilets
- Clean drinking water systems
- Regular WASH education and activities in each school
- Other basic and crucial necessities of the students

Their fruitful discussions symbolically concluded with a global water ceremony in which the waters of the Amazon, the Alps and the River Ganga were poured onto a globe as a prayer that children all over the world, and especially through this partnership, would have access to safe and sufficient water, sanitation and hygiene. Donna also made a visit to Veerpur, Parmarth's organic garden, and joyfully planted a beautiful Rudraksh plant that she had been given to her by Pujya Swamiji.



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They Walked Away From Camp Using New Prosthetic Devices



An artificial limb and prosthetic camp was organized at Parmarth Niketan for those who are differently-abled, (lacking one or more of their limbs). Seventy two people with disabilities were provided with artificial limbs and calipers free of cost. These newly-abled people found great joy in exploring and utilizing their new hands and/or legs. Those who were previously unable to walk or use their limbs felt overwhelmed when they were fitted with devices that allowed them to be mobile on their own.

The camp was organised by Mahavir Seva Sadan, Kolkata, under the leadership of Shri Vinod Kumar Bagrodia, and Parmarth Niketan with the blessings and divine vision of Pujya Swamiji. This is the second camp held, and participants came from several areas including remote villages. At the close of the camp, the Director of Mahavir Seva Sadan, Shri S. K. Tulsian and lead technician Shri Sapan Kumar were honored by Pujya Swamiji with a beautiful Rudraksh sapling for their dedicated service. Dr. Ravi Kaushal, the superintendent of Shukdevanand Charitable Hospital, and other doctors were present.

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The Gift of Vision: Free Eye Camp at Parmarth Niketan

A wonderful eye-camp also took place this season at the same time as the prosthetic limb camp and continued for eleven days. The camp was led by a dedicated team of doctors under the vision and guidance of Dr. Purnima Roy, who for many years has been coming from abroad, bringing with her a team of doctors from America, Australia and all over India to serve the underserved Himalayan population at Parmarth Niketan.

More than 400 hundred patients had registered for the eye camp, nearly one third of them for cataract surgeries. A team of nine doctors provided their services during the camp. They operated on the cataract patients and provided lenses and other high-quality services at no cost to patients.

If you would like to contribute to the free medical camps, please contact volunteer@parmarth.com.



Dia, a Divine Light, Providing Hope and Healing to All

Dia Mirza was so deeply touched by her evening at the ashram during the divine green birthday of young Ayesha (read more about it on pg 21), that she visited again shortly thereafter.

During her second visit, she joined Pujya Swamiji, Sadhvi Bhagawatiji, the Chairman of Rishikesh Shri Deep Sharmaji, Parmarth Rishikumars and many others in a massive cleanup of the banks of the River Ganga.

Later she personally served hundreds of street sweepers and municipality workers in a big bhandara (feast) at Parmarth Niketan. The workers were so thrilled to meet and interact with Dia, a beautiful and famous Bollywood film actress who is also an incredible and divine human being. Pujya Swamiji said that she was truly a Dia, a divine light, providing hope and healing to all, as well as selflessly serving to make the world a cleaner, greener and more sustainable home for everyone, everywhere.



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Model Green Village of Veerpur Gets Started

Global Interfaith WASH Alliance and Ganga Action Parivar, under the leadership and inspiration of Pujya Swamiji, are working to transform the village of Veerpur into a model defecation-free village, and a clean and green example to India and to the world. By involving and inspiring all members of the community, including youth and local leaders from all castes and creeds to work together in a massive clean up and tree plantation, the villagers are enthusiastically supporting these efforts.

They are working to construct toilets in households that lack them, end defecation near the riverside, and install dustbins and clean water filters so that every household and every school in the village has access to clean water, sanitation and hygiene facilities.



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Dog Camp and Animal Rescue Project



Pujya Swamiji reminds us that service of all living beings, not just human beings, is the service of God and humanity.

Driven by this teaching, the Rishikesh Animal Rescue Project is being carried out at Parmarth Niketan, from 8 December - 30 January, led by veterinarians from Russia. The effort is hosted and supported by the Divine Shakti Foundation (DSF) and coordinated by the Animal Liberty organization based in Siberia and includes involvement of volunteers from Parmarth and the local community.

Dr. Oleg Levechenko, Viktoria Chursina, surgeon, assistants Kate Polyokovo and Olga Ivanova, along with coordination by Ms. Sofie Oshochenko, served more than 200 animals. The Siberian vets from Russia provided “ABC” (Animal Birth Control) or “family planning”, spaying and neutering

the dogs in the Rishikesh area. They treated and operated on other dogs whose condition and need ranged from skin diseases, parasites, mange, worms, flea infestation, and cancer.

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Weekly Free Medical Camps



With the blessings and inspiration of Pujya Swamiji and under the auspices of the Divine Shakti Foundation (DSF) and Parmarth Niketan, a dedicated team venture to a different village every Sunday to serve those with very limited access to medical care. The team provides free quality health services. Some of the villages visited recently are Nail Gaon, Mala Kundi and Nayal.

Some of the villages are only accessible by foot, and often there are no proper rooms for patient exams, no electricity or toilets. When facilities are not available, medical camps are held under the shade of a tree or near the river bank. Even with these poor conditions, hundreds of people come to receive quality medical care. Every week, fulltime volunteers are joined by part-time volunteers and short-term pilgrims interested in giving back in these fulfilling medical camps.

Medical and hygiene supplies are always needed. If you would like to contribute to the free medical camps, please contact volunteer@parmarth.com.

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Learn More about
Puja Swamiji and
Parmarth

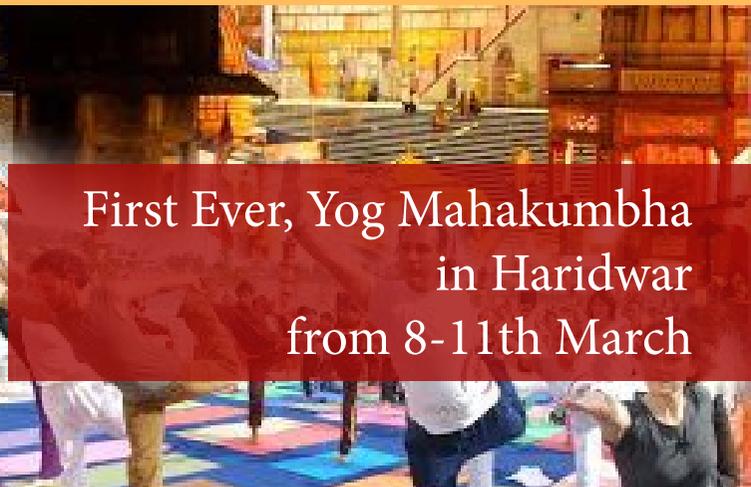


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