

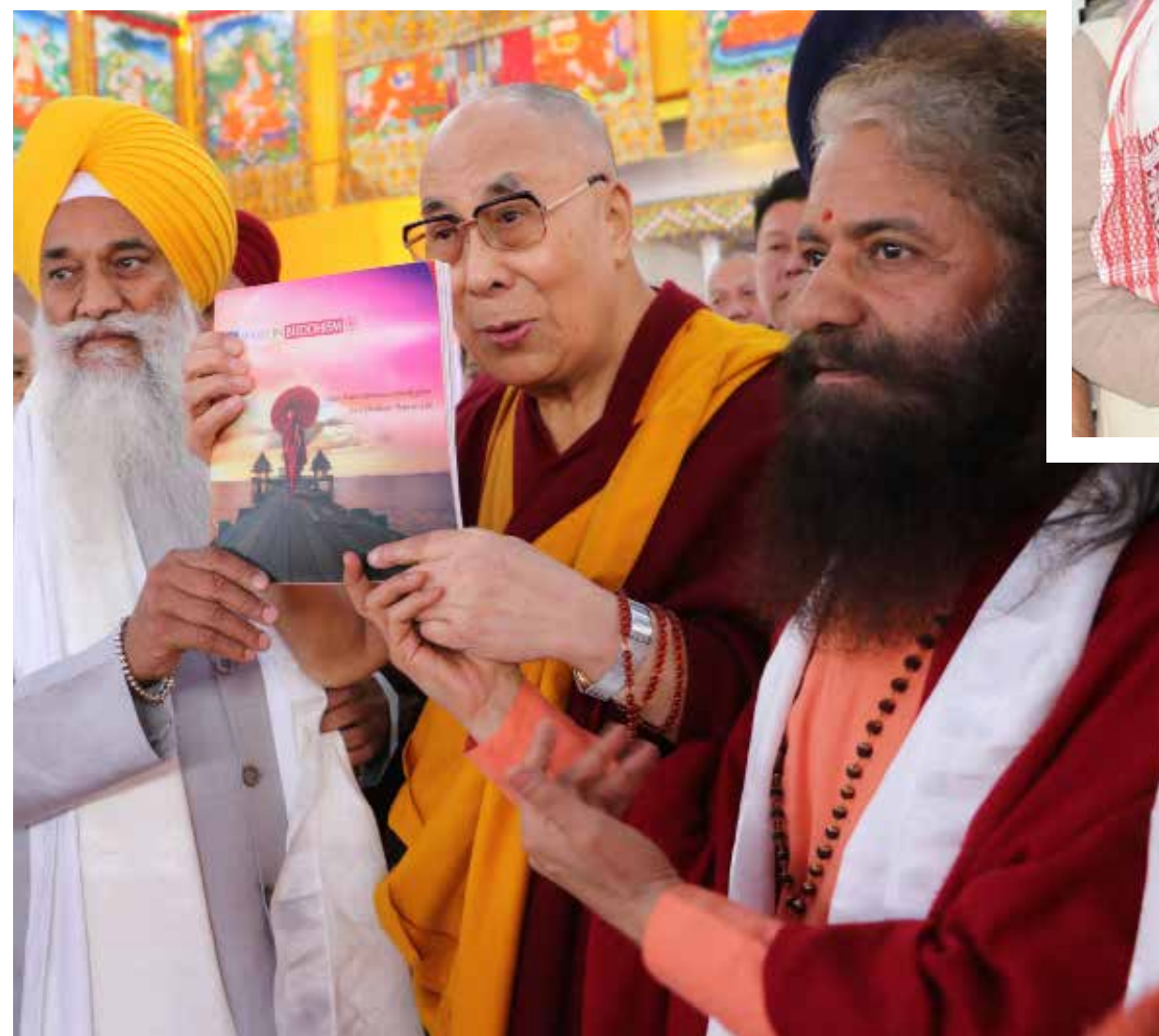
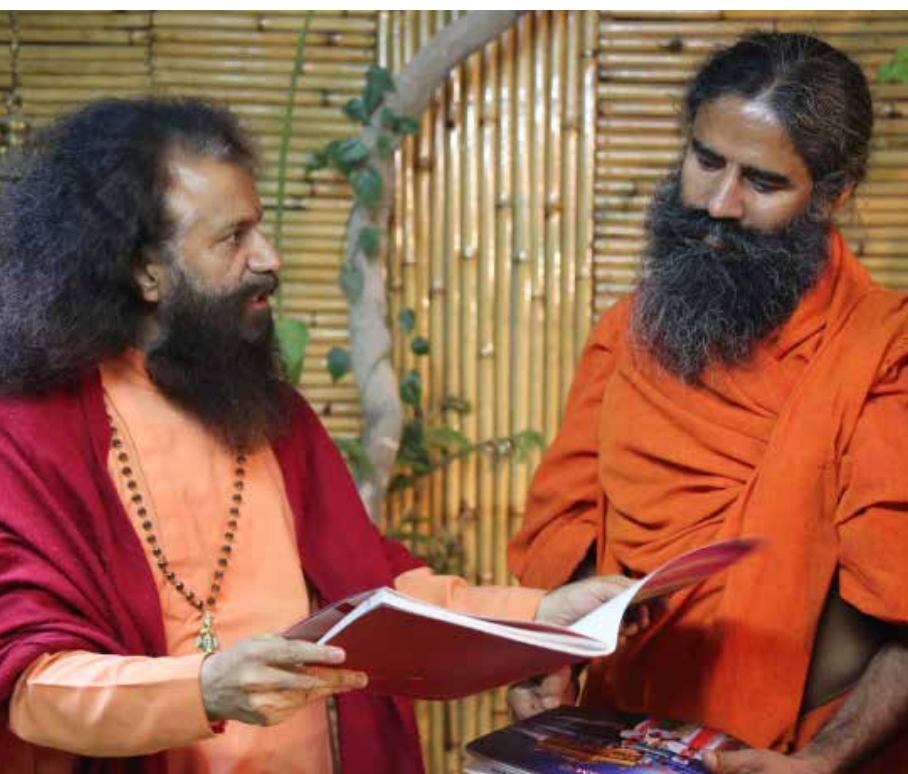
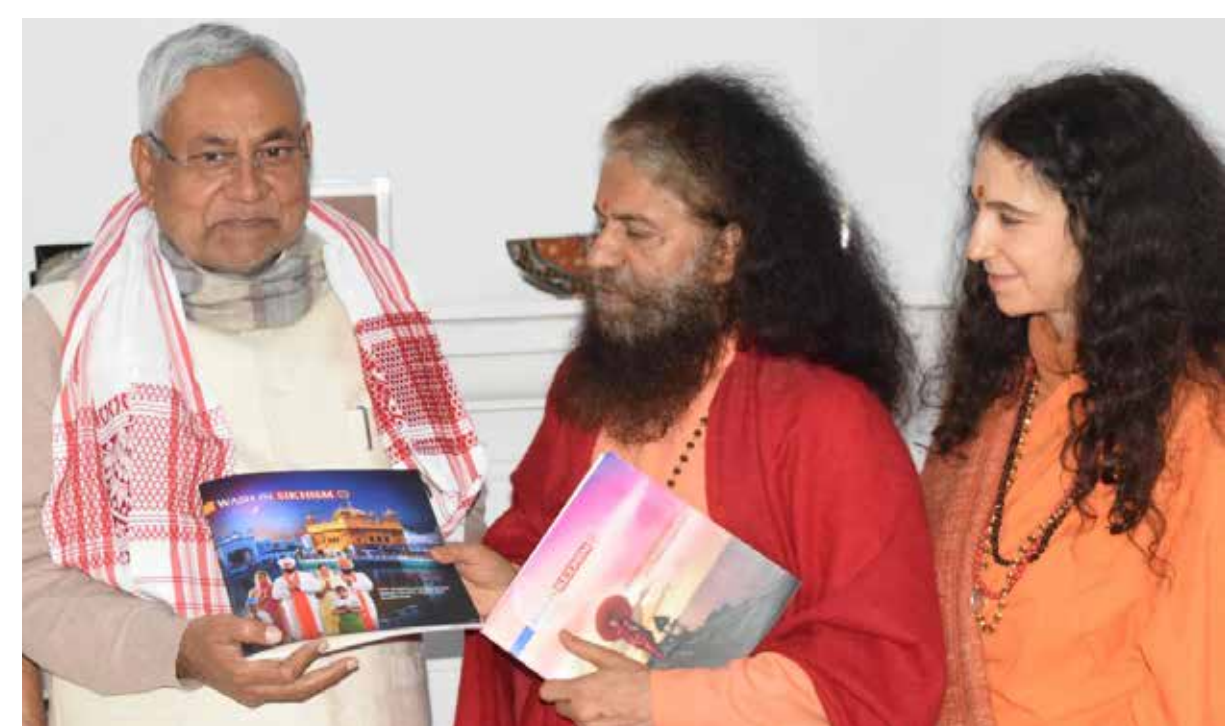
PARMARTH

GIWA Bihar Summit / January 2017 News Magazine



GIWA Bihar Summit

Special Edition that Highlights GIWA's Sarva Dharma Swachhata Evam Sadbhavana Samvaad and Sankalp with the Hon'ble Governor of Bihar, Shri Ram Nath Kovindji and GIWA's Interfaith Leaders, led by HH Pujya Swami Chidanand Saraswatiji, during the Prakash Parv Mahostav in Patna, Bihar and a special interfaith pledge with HH the Dalai Lama during Kalchakra Initiation Ceremony in Bodh Gaya.

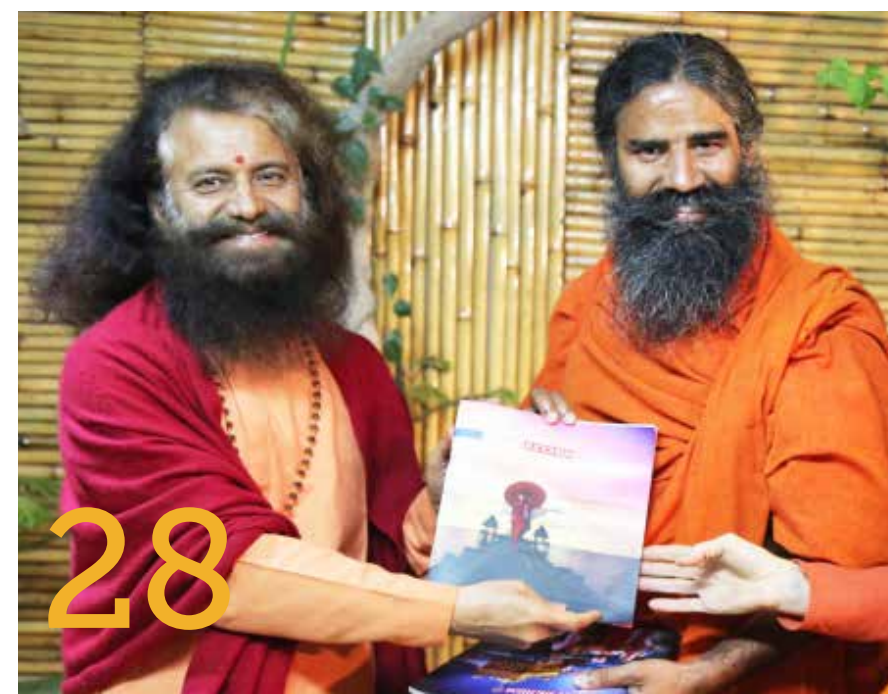


CONTENTS

- 06** GIWA Bihar Summit: Sarva Dharma Swachhta Sadbhavana Sankalp.
- 10** Interfaith Harmony and Clean India Pledge with HH the Dalai Lama.
- 16** WASH in Faith Books Presented to Hon'ble President of India.
- 18** Green Meeting with Chief Minister of Bihar for Ganga.
- 20** Visit to Patna Saheb: Green Faith Leaders Give Green Message.
- 28** Yoga Guru Pujya Swami Ramdevji Shares His Support for the WASH in Faith Books.
- 30** Meetings to Transform the WASH Pledge into Action.
- 32** Faith Leaders Arrive to Patna Prakash Ustav and Start Divine Service.
- 34** Pujya Swamiji Honoured at the Delhi Bangla Saheb Gurudwara.

VISIT OUR WEBSITES

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





GIWA Bihar Summit: Sarva Dharma Swachhta Sadbhavana Sankalp

Over twenty prominent interfaith leaders of India's major faiths joined together with HE the Governor of Bihar and other dignitaries to pledge together for a Swachh Bharat and a Swachh Bihar at a special Summit organized by GIWA, with the technical support of UNICEF.

The Summit, called the Sarva Dharma, Swachhta Evam Sadbhavna, was organized with the aim of ushering in a Swachhta Kranti (clean revolution) through the coming together of prominent faith leaders, policy-makers, corporate leaders, civil society and media. Together the dignitaries gen-

erated inspiration towards taking actions to ensure safe, sustainable and healthy water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) for all.

Nearly 600 million people in India are not using toilets, and in Bihar, only 0.79 per cent of the state's villages are open-defecation free. At the same time, Bihar's coverage under the National Rural Drinking Water Programme is at 46.64 per cent, which is much lower than the national average. This leads to countless instances of stunted growth, poor health and untimely deaths, with children being impacted the most. Every 40 seconds, a child perishes because of the diseases spread by the lack of toilets.

The faith leaders and dignitaries came together in support of the Government of India's Swachh Bharat Mission and the state's Har Ghar Nalka Jal (Every Home Should Have Clean Tap Water) and Gharka Samman – Shauchalaya Nirman (Honour your Home, Build A Toilet) programmes. In expressing their unified pledge, they sent a loving message that all people everywhere must now come together to realize a clean and green Bihar.

They also announced plans for a new GIWA Chapter for the State of Bihar. The Chapter will add to the ongoing efforts in the state, and support acceleration of progress in achieving the water and sanitation goals in the state through programmes such as its World Toilet College and other outreach initiatives.



GOVERNOR RAM NATH KOVIND OF BIHAR

“It’s a blessing that I have the good opportunity to serve in Bihar during the auspicious occasion of the 350th Prakash Parv of Shri Guru Gobind Singhji. It is particularly a blessing to be here for the Sarva Dharma Swachhta Evam Sadbhavana Sankalp. I strongly believe that interfaith harmony is the essence of Indian spiritual-cultural heritage. Hence, its so beautiful to see the faith traditions organized here, under the leadership of GIWA India’s Founder, Pujya Swami Chidanand Saraswatiji, bringing everyone together for the vital task of providing clean water, safe and sufficient sanitation and hygiene for all.”



SANT GIANI IQBAL SINGHJI, JATHEDAR OF TAKHT PATNA SAHEB

“Cleaniness is the need of this country. Our scriptures have always spoke about keeping our water clean. I appreciate the efforts of GIWA, under Pujya Swami Chidanand Saraswatiji’s leadership, toward this cause. I look forward to contnual support to these efforts in Patna, Bihar.”



ASADUR RAHMAN, CHIEF FIELD OFFICER, UNICEF BIHAR

“Government of Bihar is practicing exceptional leadership for improving WASH but still more has to be done: 70% rural population practice open defecation. Hence, I strongly believe that in order to achieve SDG 6 we need to make WASH everybody’s business, religiously. Collective power of faith leaders, govt, corporate, media can support the sanitation movement in Bihar for a fair start for every child.”



LAMA LOBSANGJI, SECRETARY GENERAL, INTERNATIONAL BUD-DHIST CONFEDERATION, PRESIDENT, ASOKA MISSION, INDIA

“Good hygiene is very important for good health and India needs better hygiene.”



SANT GIANI GURUBACHAN SINGHJI, CHIEF JATHEDAR OF AKAL TAKHT (THE GOLDEN TEMPLE).

“Clean water, sanitation and environment important for everyone. Our scriptures have always given the great importance to cleaniness but time has come that we take and apply these messages into every aspect of our lives.”



JAIN LEADER ACHARYA LOKESH MUNIJI

shared that ahimsa (non-violence) and sanitation must be seen as going hand-in-hand. “Unclean choices are causing the deaths of countless children every day. This suffering must end. It is up to all of us to be the change. I personally is ”



HH PUJYA SWAMI CHIDANAND SARASWATIJI, FOUNDER/CHAIR, GLOBAL INTERFAITH WASH ALLIANCE INDIA AND PRESIDENT, PARMARTH NIKETAN, RISHIKESH.

“Today time has come to make our festivals, clean and green festivals. No longer can we allow 1600 children perish every day because of poor water, sanitation and hygiene. However, there could not be a more powerful message of oneness and our commitment to this vital cause then all faith leaders coming together, with our Most Respected Chief Jathedarji of Akal Takht and Patna Saheb Jathedarji, coming together to bless this cause. I am sure together we can change the state of Bihar to truly reflect the gem of spirituality and culture that it is, making possible a clean and green Bihar for all.”

IN HIS CONCLUDING REMARKS, PUJYA SWAMI CHIDANAND SARASWATIJI

“I am so proud of the efforts of our Hon’ble Chief Minister, Shri Nitesh Kumar, and I am certain that his tenacious efforts during the Prakash Parv will bring the light of a cleaner and greener Bihar for all.”

Interfaith Harmony and Clean India Pledge with HH the Dalai Lama

The Global Interfaith WASH Alliance delegation, led by Pujya Swami ChidanandSaraswatiji, met with HH the Dalai Lamaji at Bodh Gaya on 6 January2017, during the ongoing Kalachakra Initiation and Puja.

The interfaith leaders spoke about the importance of faith and the power it has towards catalyzing sustainable behaviour change. They emphasized the crucial need for cleanliness both within our hearts and minds as well as externally in our communities and villages.

They also spoke about the great need to work together to protect and preserve our environment, as well as provide for improved WASH (water, sanitation and hygiene) for all. A water blessing ceremony followed that included prayers for all people of all religions and cultures to have access to life sustaining water.

GIWA's WASH in Buddhism book was shared and previewed with His Holiness.His contributing a foreward and his blessings were also requested. Plans for a grand inauguration ceremony forthe book were made. The interfaith delegation gifted His Holiness a special Bodhi tree, as a symbol of the ever green leader that he is. They inspired thousands in the audience to pledge to plant at least one tree in the memory of their sacred pilgrimage to Bodh Gaya.





GIWA's delegation included:

Pujya Swami Chidanand Saraswatiji,
Founder/Chair, Global Interfaith WASH Alliance
India, Founder, Ganga Action Parivar and President,
Parmarth Niketan, Rishikesh,

Giani Gurbachan Singhji, Chief Jathedar Akal
Takht (Golden Temple),

Acharya Lokesh Muniji, President-Founder
of the Ahimsa Vishwa Bharti,

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

Kiranjot Kaurji, Member SGPC, Golden
Temple Amritsar,

Maulana Anisur Rahman Qasmiji, Secretary,
Imrat Shariah (Bihar),

Sardar Paramjit Singh Chandhokji, Delhi Sikh
Gurudwara Committee,

Sardar Kuldeep Singh Bhogalji, President,
Sai Miya Meer International Foundation,

Dr. Binny Sareenji, Brahma Kumaris Global Hos-
pital & Research Centre, Mount Abu,

Swamini Adityananda Saraswatiji, Director of
Programmes, Policy and Development, Global In-
terfaith WASH Alliance and Ganga Action Parivar,

Asadur Rahman, Chief Field Officer, UNICEF
Bihar,

Stephanie Joy Raison, Communications Head,
UNICEF India,

Nandini Tripathi, Director of Programme Imple-
mentation, Global Interfaith WASH
Alliance and Ganga Action Parivar.

And others...





WASH in Faith Books Presented to Hon'ble President of India

Hon'ble President of India, Shri Pranab Mukherjeeji was presented the GIWA's first edition of "WASH in Sikhism" and "WASH in Buddhism" books recently by GIWA's Co-Founder, **Pujya Swami Chidanand Saraswatiji**, and GIWA's interfaith leaders and representatives, including:

Imam Umer Ahmed Ilyasiji, President, All India Organization of Imams of Mosques,

Venerable Lama Lobzangji, Secretary General, International Buddhist Confederation, President, Asoka Mission, India,

Acharya Dr. Lokesh Muniji, President-Founder of the Ahimsa Vishwa Bharti,

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

Sardar Paramjit Singh Chandhokji, Delhi Sikh Gurdwara Committee,

Sardar Kuldeep Singh Bhogalji, President, Sai Miya Meer International,

Swamini Adityananda Saraswatiji, Director of Programmes, Policy and Development, Global Interfaith WASH Alliance and Ganga Action Parivar,

Nandini Tripathi, Director of Programme Implementation, GIWA and GAP.



GIWA's interfaith leaders shared with Hon'ble Shri Pranab Mukherjee that this special meeting concluded a five day tour in which GIWA's faith leaders spent the first three days in Patna, Bihar, during the auspicious occasion of the PrakashParv, the 350th Birth Anniversary of Sri Guru GobinSinghji. There they presented the preview of WASH in Sikhism to Chief Jathedar Giani Gurbachan Singhji of Akal Thakt (Golden Temple) and to Jathedar Giani Iqbal Singhji of Patna Saheb, both blessed and offered their support to the vital initiative.

On the 4th of January, they presented both editions of the WASH in Sikhism and WASH in Buddhism to the Hon'ble Governor of Bihar, Shri Ram NathKovindji, during a beautiful Sarva Dharma Swachhta Evam Sadbhavana Sankalp.

On the 5th of January, they also met with the Hon'ble Chief Minister of Bihar, Shri Nitish Kumar and shared

both editions of the book with him. They also discussed ways to make Bihar completely open defecation free and ensure a clean and free-flowing River Ganga in Bihar.

On the 6th of January, they presented the preview edition of WASH in Buddhism in a large public programme with His Holiness the Dalai Lama, during the ongoing Kalachakra Puja and Initiation ceremony in Bodh Gaya, Bihar. They also spoke about the importance of interfaith harmony to promote a Swachh and Swasth Bharat (Clean and Healthy India).

GIWA's faith leaders shared about the World Toilet College and the various activities being undertaken by GIWA to improve WASH for all. The President of India was very supportive and pleased to hear about the initiatives being taken towards a Swachh, Sundar and Swasth Bharat.



Green Meeting with Chief Minister of Bihar for Ganga

On the final evening of the Sarva Dharma Swachhta Sankalp in Patna, respected interfaith leaders of GIWA, led by Pujya Swamiji, met with the Hon'ble Chief Minister of Bihar Shri Nitish Kumar to discuss the importance of keeping the River Ganga clean, green and free-flowing.

Pujya Swamiji shared the work that GIWA and Ganga Action Parivar is committed to. They also discussed training and capacity building regarding how to build and maintain toilets, improve sanitation and end open defecation in Bihar, especially for the districts along the River Ganga. It was shared that under the able and dedicated leadership of Shri Nitish Kumar, the Hon'ble CM, and Shri Krishannandan Prasad Verma, the Hon'ble Public Health and Engineering Department (PHED) Minister, and the Government of Bihar, this vital work for an open defecation free Bihar and the clean River Ganga could gain great momentum.

The respected interfaith leaders who were part of the GIWA delegation included: Acharya Dr. Lokesh Muniji, Sadhvi Bhagawati Saraswatiji, Sardar Paramjit Singh Chandhokji, Sardar Kuldeep Singh Bhogalji, Swamini Adityananda Saraswatii Dr. Binny Sareenji, as well as Mr Asadur Rahman, Chief Field Officer UNICEF Bihar, Stephanie Raison, UNICEF India Communications Head, Nandini Tripathi Director of Programme Implementation, GIWA and many others.

Visit to Patna Saheb: Green Faith Leaders Give Green Message

On the first day of the three day GIWA Bihar visit, on the occasion of 350th birth anniversary of the birth of Sri Guru Gobind Singhji, Pujya Swami Chidanand Saraswatiji - Muniji and GIWA's faith leaders began their day with darshan and visit to the Patna Takht Sahib.

GIWA's respected faith leaders, Acharya Dr. Lokesh Muniji, Imam Umer Ahmed Ilyasiji, Paramjit Singh Chandhokji, Kuldeep Singh Bhogalji, Bhai Sahib Satpal Singhji, Swamini Adityananda Saraswatiji as well as UNICEF India and UNICEF Bihar's team, led by Asadur Rahman, participated. Respected faith leaders shared their inspiring messages of protecting and preserving our environment and improving water, sanitation and hygiene for all.

Pujya Swamiji spoke of the life and teachings of the Most Respected Sri Guru Gobind Singhji that he taught us how to lead our lives in harmony with one another and in harmony with nature. Today, as our water resources, the air, our soil and our environment are over-exploited and polluted, it is vital for us to remember and apply these timeless teachings. He also reminded everyone that on this auspicious time of his 350th birthday, at the start of the New Year, for everyone to take a new pledge to Be Green, ensuring our communities are clean and green.

The respected faith leaders presented a copy of the WASH in Sikhism book to the Takht Sahib and the Respected Jathedar of Patna Saheb, Giani Iqbal Singhji.





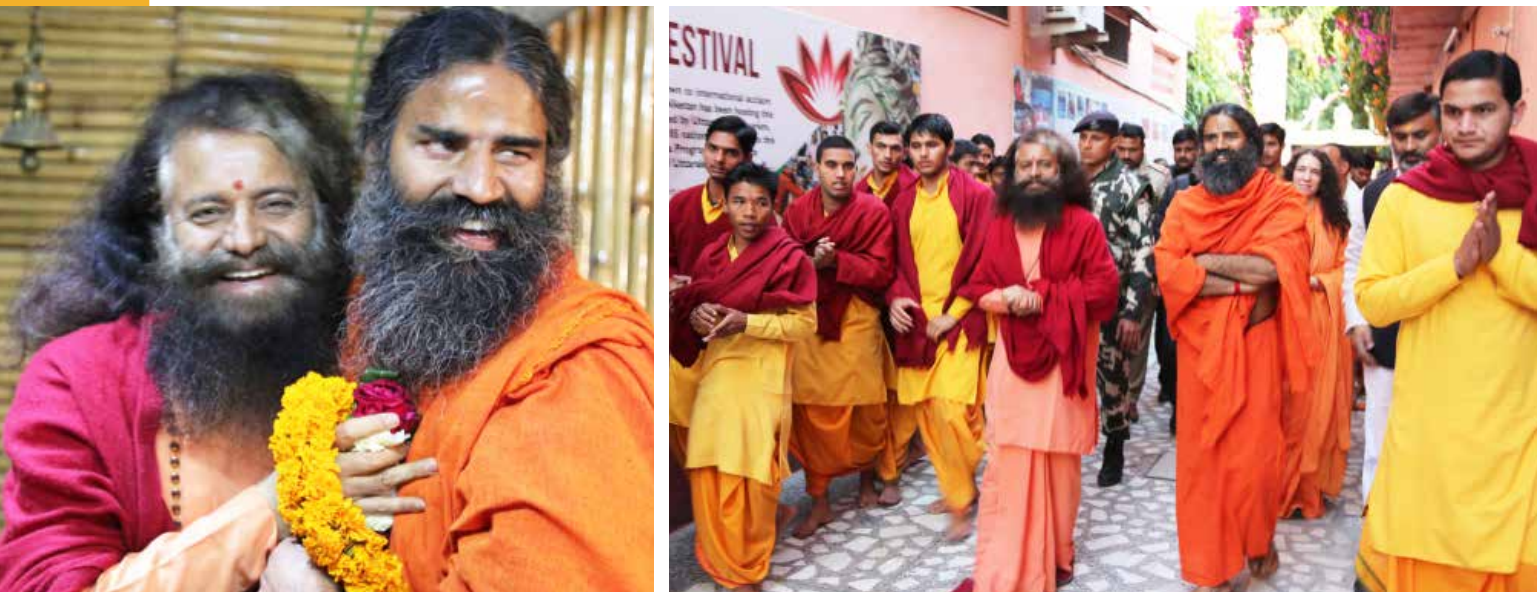


Pictures: Courtesy Bihar Department Tourism Department





Yoga Guru Pujya Swami Ramdevji Shares His Support for the WASH in Faith Books



Yoga Guru Pujya Baba Ramdevji of Patanjali Yogpeeth was warmly welcomed home to Parmarth Niketan (Rishikesh) by Pujya Swamiji and Sadhvi Bhagawatij.

They discussed on various topics including creating and sustaining a Swachh, Swasth and Samridh Bharat.

On the occasion, Pujya Swamiji shared about the Global Interfaith WASH Alliance's recent yatra to Patna, Bodh Gaya and Delhi. He also shared the first edition of the "WASH in Sikhism" and "WASH in Buddhism" books. He explained that a "WASH in Hinduism" publication was underway and requested a blessing and foreword from Pujya Baba Ramdevji. These books are designed to be implemented as nation wide curriculum to provide a faith based perspective to understanding the crucial importance and significance of protecting and preserving water as well as providing and maintaining adequate sanitation and hygiene.

They also discussed the importance of implementing human value education that encouraged children to be spiritually grounded and work for the welfare of all.

They also discussed the importance of implementing human value education that encouraged children to be spiritually grounded and work for the welfare of all. Pujya Baba Ramdevji graciously addressed Parmarth's special evening satsang, sharing that a true master or guru is crucial to help us reach the ultimate goal of life, which is understanding the divinity, wholeness and completeness of one's self. Everyone was so deeply touched to have his darshan.

Meetings to Transform WASH Pledge into Action

Meetings with Shri Krishannandan Prasad Verma, the Hon'ble Public Health and Engineering Department (PHED) Minister as well as the Secretary of the Rural Development Shri Arvind Chaudhary and Director of Jeevika Programme Shri Balamurugan took place during GIWA's three day visit to Patna, Bihar. The meeting discussed how GIWA could better support the Government of Bihar in their efforts and help them scale capacity. Future collaboration between GIWA's World Toilet College was also discussed.

It was decided that the first batch of women from Bihar's villages, selected by the Rural Development Ministry, would come to Parmarth Niketan (Rishikesh) for two weeks to get trained and empowered as community sanitation ambassadors.





Faith Leaders Arrive to Patna Prakash Ustav and Start Divine Service

Pujya Swami Chidanand Saraswatiji - Muniji, Acharya Dr. Lokesh Muniji, Imam Umer Ahmed Ilyasiji, Sadhvi Bhagawati Saraswatiji, Bhai Sahib Satpal Singhji, Paramjit Singh Chandhokji, Kuldeep Singh Bhogalji, Swamini Adityananda Saraswatiji and many other Global Interfaith WASH Alliance's delegates arrived to Patna, Bihar for the 350th Prakash Parv of the Most Respected Shri Guru Gobind Singh's Birth Anniversary grand celebrations, and were warmly welcomed by the people of Bihar. They also greeted and interacted with devotees and pilgrims along their yatra and deeply appreciated the tenacious efforts of the Hon'ble Chief Minister Shri Nitesh Kumar.

Just upon their arrival, they inaugurated a beautiful service booth providing free chai and snacks to all pilgrims and yatriis near the Gandhi Maidan. The fed and distributed warm tea to children and all yatriis and shared with everyone along the way their message of interfaith harmony and inspired people to join the mission for improving water, sanitation and hygiene for all.





Pujya Swamiji Honoured at the Delhi Bangla Saheb Gurudwara

Pujya Swamiji was invited to the Delhi Bangla Sahib Gurudwara where He was especially honoured and felicitated by President of the Bangla Sahib Gurudwara as well as Sardar Paramjit Singh Chandhokji, Sardar Kuldeep Singh Bhogalji, Bhaisahib Bhai Sahib Satpal Singh Khalsaji and many other prominent leaders of the Sikh leadership for sharing the beautiful vision and mission of making the upcoming 350th Prakash Parv, which is dedicated to respected and revered Sikh Guru Shri Guru Gobind Singhji, a clean and green festival.

Pujya Swamiji shared that the message of all of our respected Sikh Gurus have been one of preserving and protecting our environment. He said, “Today in Delhi you have the call and the urgent need to bring the message and teaching of our Gurus into action. In Delhi, the world is aware how poisonous and polluted the air is. Hence, let us pledge together to make the upcoming and highly anticipated 350th Prakash Parv, the Parv for Paryavaran (environment) and Pledge for Pradushan Mukti (freedom from pollution). The Sikh religion has always kept the aspects of cleanliness, sanitation and hygiene as vital and fundamental to reach the gateway of the Divine. It is time that these same principles and teachings be brought into our homes and our communities and the Sikh masters can lead the way.”

Pujya Swamiji’s visit was a precursor to a larger event and presence of the Global Interfaith WASH Alliance in the upcoming celebrations in Patna, Bihar. There are plans for a special “Green Message from Green Gurus,” a clean, green faith based procession and a Sarva Dharma Swachhta Sankalp that will take place in a series of events being planned from the 3-5th January, 2017.

Inspiring Media Coverage



Kalachakra Preliminary Teachings Continue - Bodhgaya, Bihar, India - January 6, 2017



Kalachakra Preliminary Teachings Continue - Bodhgaya, Bihar, India - January 6, 2017





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

Our Inspired Initiatives



GLOBAL INTERFAITH WASH ALLIANCE

brings together the world's faith
as allies in ensuring everyone,
everywhere has access to safe,
life-giving **Water, Sanitation and**
Hygiene (WASH).

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