

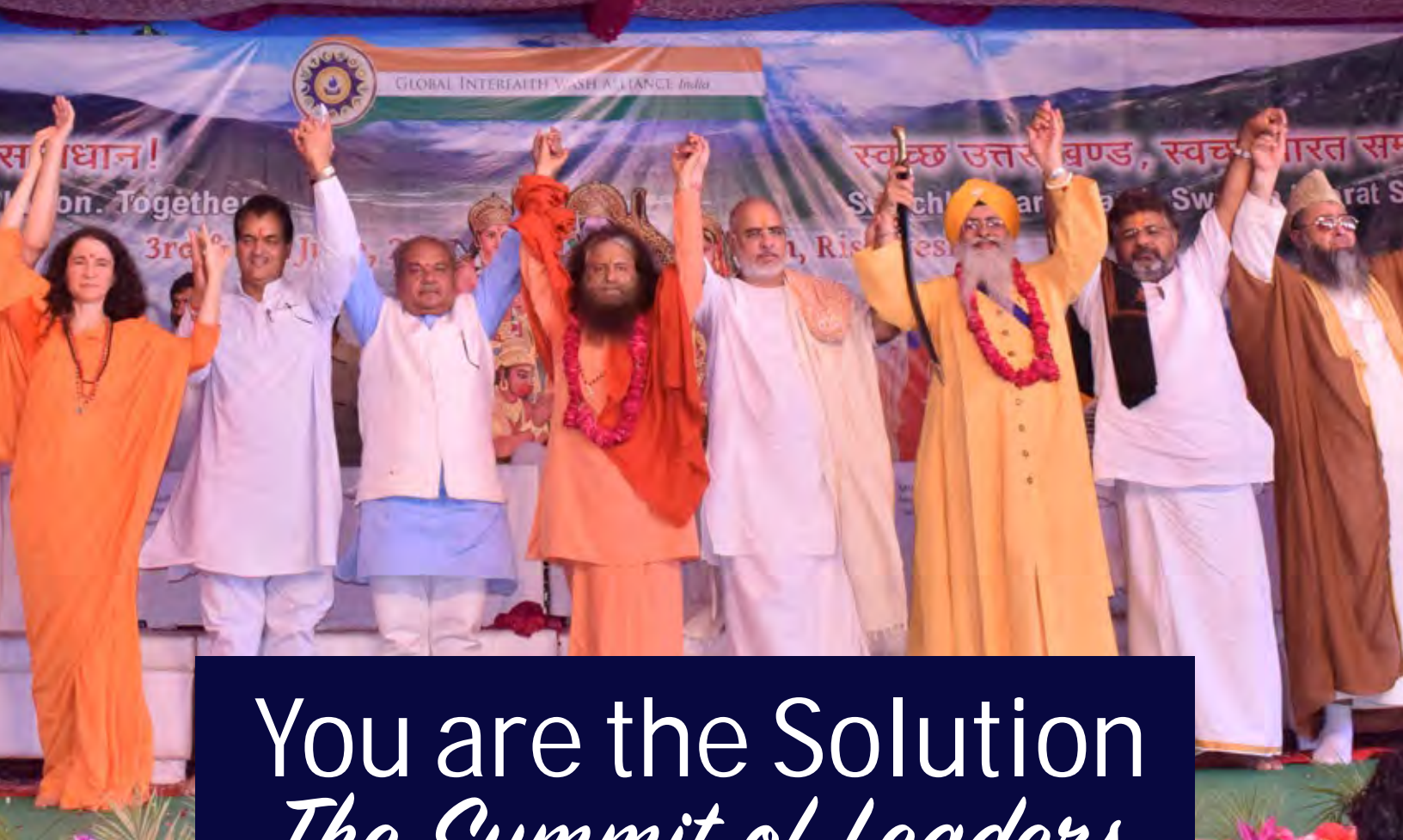
PARMARTH

You are the Solution Summit / June 2017 News Magazine



***"Now is the time for massive change.
If we are to have a water-secure and Swachh
future, we must be the change we want
to see in the world and take action."***

HH Pujya Swami Chidanand Saraswatiji, President, Parmarth Niketan,
Founder/Chair, Global Interfaith WASH Alliance India



You are the Solution *The Summit of Leaders*

Eminent faith leaders, captains of industry, entertainment stars, development experts, media luminaries, and representatives from global bodies including the United Nations converged at a Historic two-day Summit at Parmarth Niketan, Rishikesh for a Swachh and Water-Secure future for India. This incredible confluence coincided with Pujya Swamiji's 65th birthday and Ganga Dussehra.





स्वच्छ भारत

पेयजल एवं स्वच्छता मंत्रालय
Ministry of Drinking Water and Sanitation

हम हैं समाधान!

YOU ARE THE SOLUTION

The Summit of Leaders For Lasting Change
For a Swachh and Water-Secure Bharat

3rd & 4th June, 2017 at Parmarth Niketan, Rishikesh









पेयजल एवं स्वच्छता मंत्रालय
Ministry of Drinking Water and Sanitation

खुले में शौच मुक्त गाँव की घोषणा वीरपुर खुर्द आदर्श गंगा ग्राम







पेयजल एवं स्वच्छता मंत्रालय
Ministry of Drinking Water and Sanitation

स्वच्छ उत्तराखण्ड स्वच्छ भारत सम्मेलन

हम ही हैं समाधान

03-04 जून • परमार्थ निकेतन, ऋषिकेश



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to watch the
*You are the
Solution Summit
Highlights
Video!*



Swachh Uttarakhand- You Are the Solution Summit Inspired by GIWA Summit in Bihar with HE Governor Ram Nath Kovind

Swachh Uttarakhand- You Are the Solution Summit Inspired by GIWA Summit in Bihar came some months before the event, during GIWA's grand Sarva Dharma Swachhta Evam Sadbhavana Sankalp Summit in Bihar, which was held with the technical support of UNICEF.

During the summit, His Excellency, Governor Ram Nath Kovind of Bihar and over twenty prominent interfaith leaders of India's major faiths joined hands with other distinguished dignitaries to pledge for a Swachh Bharat and a Swachh Bihar. Together, they fostered inspiration towards taking actions to ensure safe,

sustainable and healthy water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) for all.

At the event, plans were also announced for the new GIWA Bihar State Chapter. The Chapter will add to the ongoing efforts in the state, and support acceleration of progress in achieving its WASH goals through programmes such as GIWA's World Toilet College and other outreach and capacity development initiatives.

Said HE Governor Ram Nath Kovind, "It is 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, and it is wonderful to see the faith traditions organized here, under the leadership of GIWA Founder, Pujya Swami Chidanand Saraswatiji, for the vital task of providing clean water, sanitation and hygiene for all."

Said HH Pujya Swami Chidanand Saraswatiji, Founder/Chair, Global Interfaith WASH Alliance India and President, Parmarth Niketan, Rishikesh: "Soon we will bring this concept that swachhta starts with oneself. Hence, the solution to the pollution starts with us and in our communities and states, because we are the solution."



HH Pujya Swami Chidanand Saraswatiji: the Journey from Temples to Toilets, From Meditation to Sanitation

Decades ago, as the sun rose beautifully over the Himalayas, HH Pujya Swami Chidanand Saraswatiji was enjoying a morning walk on the banks of Mother Ganga. As He gazed at Mother Ganga's waters, He noticed several pilgrims heeding the call of nature on Her holy banks instead of using toilets. The experience struck Pujya Swamiji deeply. The same river He and tens of millions of other people worshipped as a Divine Goddess was being defiled and polluted.

He pledged from that moment forth to change the situation. He started the construction of toilets inside each of the

rooms at Parmarth Niketan. He ensured that the entire ashram was fully-equipped with toilets while He simultaneously oversaw the construction of the beautiful Parmarth Ghat, to be a place where people could come and worship, perform Ganga Aarti, hold numerous, large-scale summits, workshops and meditate. He was certain that people would not defile the same space in which they worship.

Pujya Swamiji also envisioned that the barrier and boundaries faced by sanitation workers must be broken. No longer should casteism be an excuse that prevents us from treating all human beings as part of

the same divine and sacred creation.

Through the Global Interfaith WASH Alliance, which He co-founded, the World Toilet College opened its doors in India in 2016 and offers a diverse array of classes. Some of its many courses include: Sanitation Ambassador Training, Public Sanitation Policy, and Toilet Building 101. The World Toilet College trains sanitation workers and others who are aspiring for healthy new livelihoods with the upgraded vocational skills and tools needed to live dignified lives and make their vital contributions for a Swachh Bharat. It also affords them the possibility to make healthy incomes.

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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)



Launch of Ganga Gram by Hon'ble Union Cabinet Minister of Drinking Water and Sanitation, Pujya Swamiji & other Dignitaries

GIWA's Interventions Help Virpur Village Officially Become OD-Free



Pujya Swamiji welcomed the Hon'ble Union Cabinet Minister of Drinking Water and Sanitation, Shri Narendra Singh Tomarji to the Virpur Khurd village, a village where our Ganga Action Parivar (GAP), Global Interfaith WASH Alliance (GIWA), Parmarth Niketan and Divine Shakti Foundation (DSF) have been working for many years for sustainable rural development. During the ceremony with the Hon'ble Minister, the village was declared Open Defecation

Free (ODF) and plans were made to work together with the local community to make the village a Ganga Gram, with effective solid and liquid waste management as well as other provisions such as rainwater harvesting, eco-crematoriums, green plantations and so much more.

At the village, Global Interfaith WASH Alliance's interfaith delegation consisting of Chief Jathedar of the Golden Temple Giani Gurbachan Singh, Mufti Nasihur Rahman,



Venerable Lama Lobzang, Venerable Bhikkhu Sanghasena, and Kuldeep Singh Bhogal joined Pujya Swamiji and the Hon'ble Minister in planting the first of 65 trees in honour of Pujya Swamiji's 65th birthday. They also fed cows who are being taken care of by Parmarth Niketan (Rishikesh). Under Pujya Swamiji's leadership Parmarth brings these cows off the street into the cow shelter to graze freely and have healthy feed without ingesting tons of plastic strewn on the streets.

The leaders also inaugurated one of the many toilets that GIWA and GAP have helped make to ensure the village has safe and adequate sanitation. Many of the toilets made in the village were constructed by women, who are part of GIWA's innovative "Women for WASH" initiative, trained at GIWA's World Toilet College to be the torch bearers of a women-led development towards a Swachh Bharat (Clean India). Although there are many household

and community toilets constructed by GIWA, the particular one that was inaugurated is located inside the village's popular temple, symbolising the need for temples and places of worship to build and maintain safe and sufficient facilities for sanitation and hygiene. The inauguration also symbolised the confluence of Pujya Swamiji's vision to bring meditation together with sanitation and GIWA's efforts to bring the faiths together for improved WASH.



Swachh Uttarakhand, Swachh Bharat Summit

*Knowledge Sharing and Experience Learning Through
Interactive Sessions Brings Leaders from Uttarakhand together with
Swachh Bharat Leaders from All Across the Nation!*

A first of its kind Swachh Uttarakhand, Swachh Bharat Summit was held by the Global Interfaith WASH Alliance (GIWA), in association with the Ministry of Drinking Water & Sanitation and other partners. The Swachh Uttarakhand Summit brought together organizations, municipalities, panchayat representatives, community and faith leaders who have excelled in sanitation work and demonstrated as a model for others to interface with government officials and elected representatives of Uttarakhand, community leaders, faith leaders and NGOs towards the vision of Uttarakhand as India's first fully-Swachh state.

Recently, Uttarakhand was reported to

have 100% coverage in sanitation and will be the 4th open defecation free (ODF) state in the country. The Summit was a cross learning experience to help sustain Uttarakhand's ODF status as well as to help ensure toilet usage and community ownership of the toilets that have been built. Moreover, the issues related to proper disposal mechanisms for waste, as well as the threat of water scarcity were discussed.

Participants in these deliberations included about 80 gram pradhans and representatives from nagar palika parishads as well as about 60 representatives from the Urban Development Directorate, Swajal Project, Jal Sansthan, SBM urban districts representing: Haridwar, Dehradun, Tehri,

Pauri, Uttarkashi, Rudraprayag, Chamoli and other districts.

The Ministry of Drinking Water & Sanitation, Government of India and Government of Uttarakhand Swachh Bharat and Namami Gange! programme helped GIWA reach out to these key leaders.

Findings of the Summit were presented by Shri Vinod Mishra, Country National Coordinator, India, WSSCC, on behalf of GIWA and all of the participants in the evening before dignitaries including the Union Cabinet Minister of Drinking Water and Sanitation, Shri Narendra Singh Tomar, at the closing ceremonies of the Swachh Uttarakhand Summit.



[Click Here to Read More
About the Meeting that Set the
Foundation for this Summit!](#)



[Click Here to see more!](#)

What the Participants Said

- "Community-led solutions are crucial."

- o Participants said a people's-led movement should be propelled forward for a sustainable Swachh-ta Kranti (Clean Revolution).
- o Emphasis should be placed on outreach and motivation to ensure that toilets are always used by all.

- "Plans are needed to ensure the proper disposal system of human waste, so it doesn't go into the Ganga and other drinking water sources."

- "For sustainable ODF, 100% of water supply is required for all districts of Uttarakhand including urban and rural areas."

- "Toilets are Needed for Tourists/Floating Populations."

- o Uttarakhand, being a major tourist and pilgrimage destination, receives a sizable floating population around the year. Now is time to ensure that all have access to clean and healthy sanitation.



Pujya Swami Ramdevji led a beautiful sankalp (pledge), getting everyone to rise up on their feet with their hands raised to take this opportunity to pledge and commit to at least one action they would take to lead cleaner and greener lives. All of the eminent speakers shared their messages over the course of two sessions.

You Are the Solution Summit of Leaders Inaugurated

Faith, Political, Business, Entertainment and Development Leaders Assembled for Two Day Summit to Ignite Historic People's Movement for Swachh (Clean) and Water Secure Bharat (India).

Eminent faith leaders, captains of industry, entertainment stars, development experts, media luminaries, and representatives from global bodies including the United Nations assembled at Parmarth Niketan for the “You Are the Solution Summit of Leaders”, to help inspire and ensure a Swachh and Water-Secure future for India.

With the technical support of UNICEF

and other partners, the two-day long Summit was organised by the Global Interfaith WASH Alliance (GIWA). Its International Secretariat is located at Parmarth Niketan, Rishikesh. GIWA is the world's first initiative that is engaging the planet's many faiths as allies in efforts to create a world where every human being has access to safe and healthy water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH).

The fruitful discussions laid out during the course of the two day summit urged that in addition to individual actions being the solution, collective actions are also a vital part of a more sustainable solution. Hence participants joined together to declare that the Summit should not only be called “You Are the Solution Summit of Leaders,” but rather “We Are the Solution Summit of Leaders.”



Hon'ble Shri Narendra Singh Tomarji, Minister, MDWS gave an inspiring speech saying, *"Pujya Swamiji's tireless efforts are truly a testament of Faith in Action and when faith comes into action then there can be nothing but solutions. Pujya Swamiji's example of working to find solutions to the many challenges that this nation faces, shows us the unparalleled power of faith leaders to inspire and catalyze the change. Because even though the government can build the infrastructure we still need to catalyse the effective behaviour change to utilise and maintain them. Hence, on behalf of Hon'ble Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modiji and the Government of India, I wish Him a very happy birthday. I am certain that with Pujya Swamiji's blessings, under Shri Trivendra Singh Rawatji's able leadership, the state of Uttarakhand can truly be a Swachh, Sundar and Swasth Uttarakhand (Clean, Beautiful and Healthy Uttarakhand)."*



Said renowned Bollywood actress, dancer and Member of Parliament, Smt. Hema Malini, *"Because I am an artist I pledge to use my art and my talent to spread this message of environmental preservation! I look forward to working together with Pujya Swamiji to clean and green both the River Ganga and River Yamuna."*

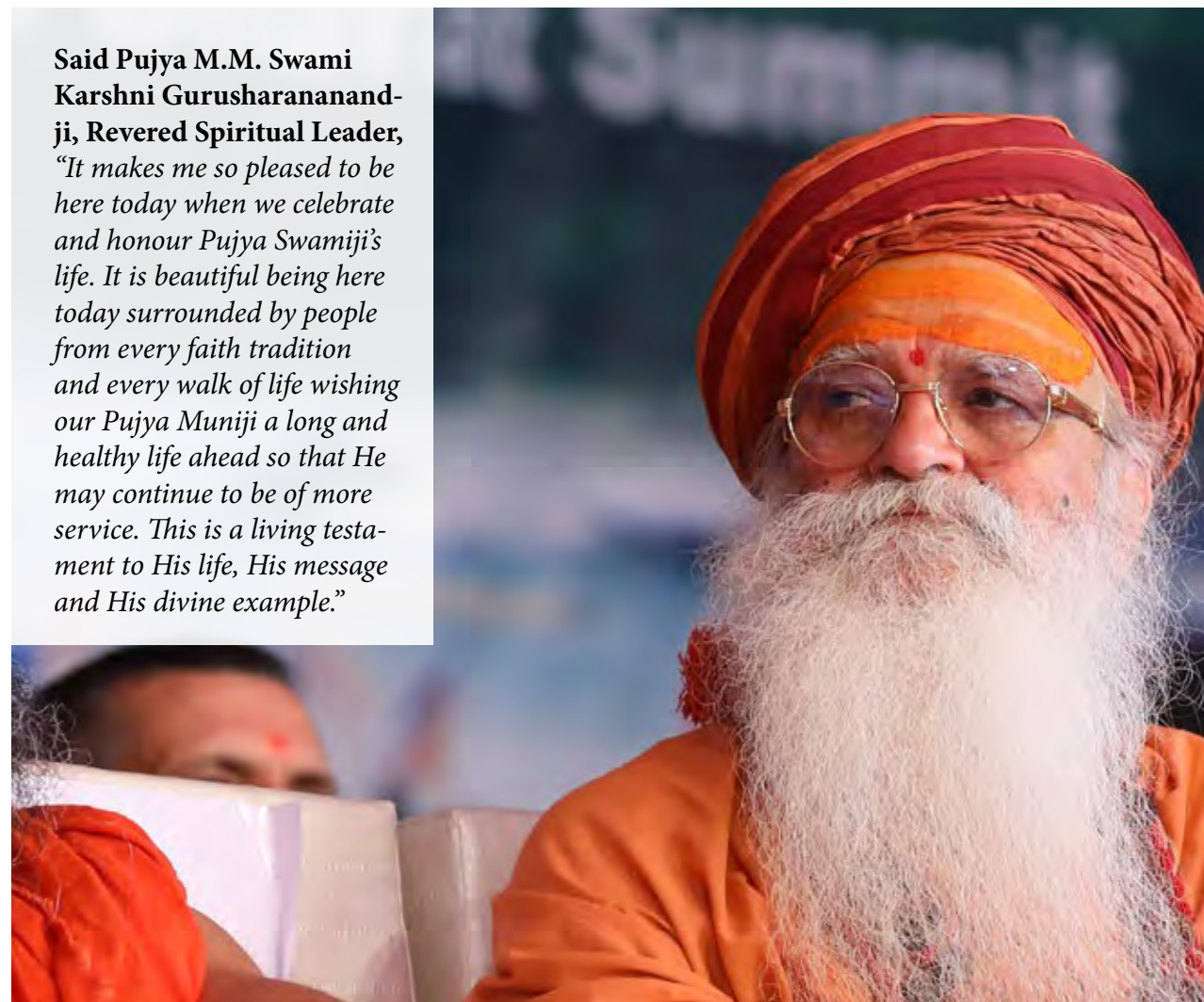
Said Pujya Swami Chidanand Saraswatiji, President of Parmarth Niketan and Founder/Chair, Global Interfaith WASH Alliance India, *"India's urgent water and sanitation crisis can only be addressed if all come together and ignite a great wave for change. No longer can we wait for the solution to be handed to us. Instead, all must realize that we ourselves are the solution. We have witnessed aanshan for too long. Now it is time for action! Let us shift our focus from aanshan to action!"*



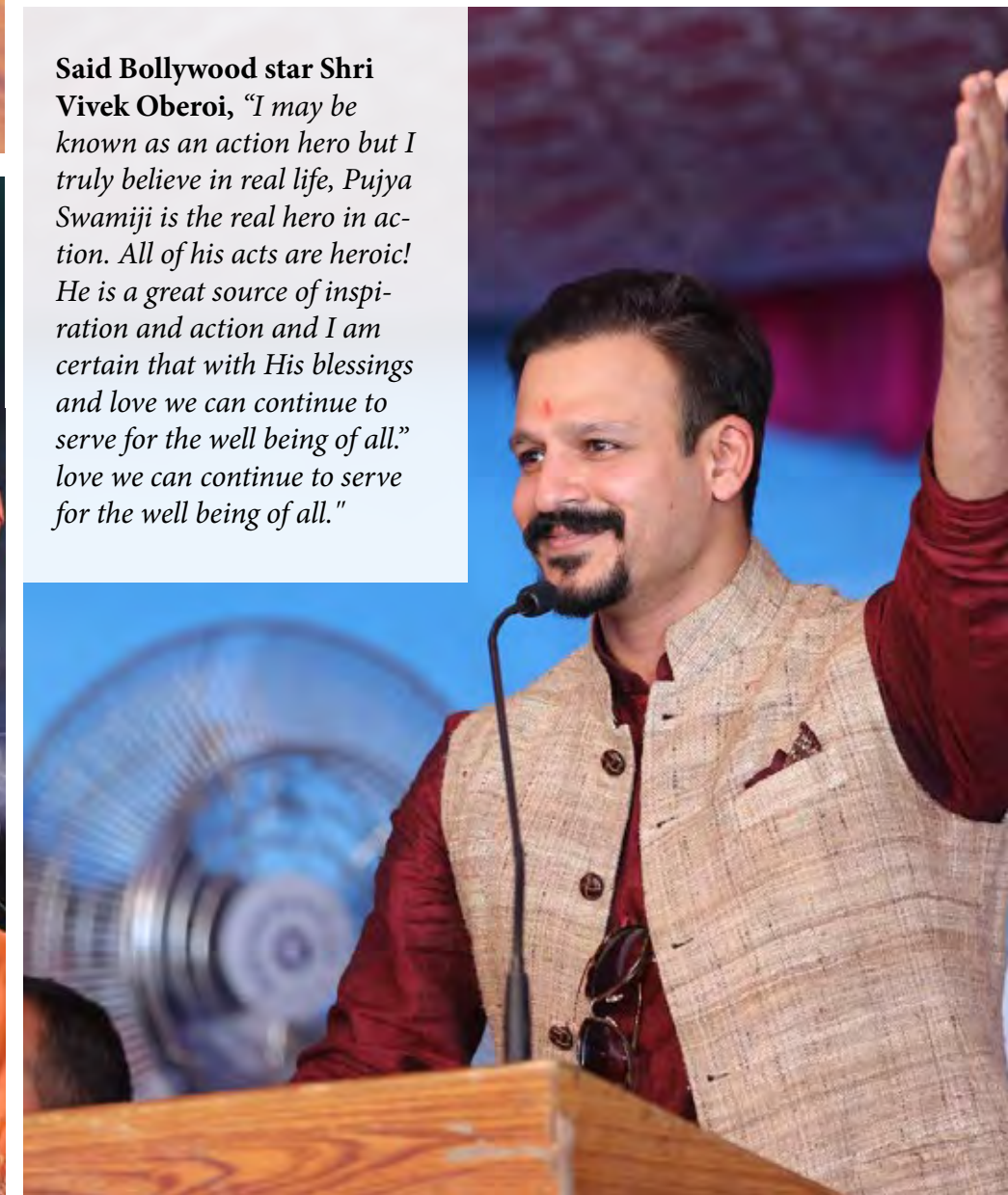
Said Pujya Sant Shri Ramesh Bhai Ozaji (Bhaishri), *"Often we are the problem, we create the pollution, hence the time has come to be the solution. The solution starts with us and it starts now! Pujya Swamiji's life, His teachings and His example show us how we each can be the solution, serving tirelessly for the welfare of all."*



Said Pujya M.M. Swami Karshni Gurusharananandji, Revered Spiritual Leader, *"It makes me so pleased to be here today when we celebrate and honour Pujya Swamiji's life. It is beautiful being here today surrounded by people from every faith tradition and every walk of life wishing our Pujya Muniji a long and healthy life ahead so that He may continue to be of more service. This is a living testament to His life, His message and His divine example."*



Said Bollywood star Shri Vivek Oberoi, *"I may be known as an action hero but I truly believe in real life, Pujya Swamiji is the real hero in action. All of his acts are heroic! He is a great source of inspiration and action and I am certain that with His blessings and love we can continue to serve for the well being of all." love we can continue to serve for the well being of all."*





Said Pujya Swami Ramdevji, *“Pujya Swamiji’s heart is filled with love and compassion and hence He sees only one Creator in all of creation. He sees only oneness, co-existence, cleanliness, love, harmony and compassion in every particle of existence. Pujya Swamiji’s birthday is really an opportunity to reaffirm our lives for environmental preservation and to lead a life in the service of all.”*



A plethora of diverse and revered faith leaders spoke eloquently and with great love during the event sharing their deep appreciation and respect for Pujya Swamiji’s divine vision and leadership. They showered flowers upon Pujya Swamiji with prayers that He may continue to blossom and thrive and touch all of humanity, and also as a symbol of the fact that His life is like a flower – giving and giving to all with no discrimination, no hesitation, no expectation and no vacation.



Said Sadhvi Bhagawati Saraswatiji, Secretary General of the Global Interfaith WASH Alliance, *“There has never been a Summit like this, where every-day men and women (aam admi) are being celebrated for their achievements alongside India’s foremost leaders, where knowledge is being shared and a people’s-led movement has been ignited. This Summit is truly a Make India Summit, as it is focused on empowering the people to be the change!”*

Said Imam Umer Ilyasiji, President, All-India Organization of Imams of Mosques, *“Pujya Swamiji’s life and efforts are a symbol of interfaith harmony, love and brotherhood. His efforts inspire everyone to break barriers and boundaries of caste, creed, colour, religion and region and to come together for a clean and green Ganga and a clean and green world.”*



[Click Here to see more!](#)

The mega event concluded with a massive Ganga Aarti, bringing everyone together in divine chanting, singing and dancing, as one global family, united by the bond of love and oneness.

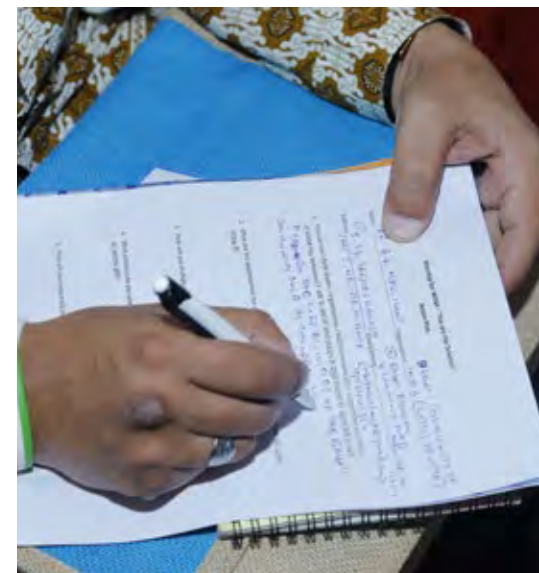
You are the Solution: The Summit of Leaders Day Two

*Leaders from Across India Converge towards Saving India's
Water and Ensuring a Swachh Bharat*



The second day of the “You are the Solution Summit of Leaders,” continued in the International Conference Hall near the World Toilet College at Parmarth Niketan (Rishikesh). The Special Guest Speaker was the Minister of Drinking Water and Sanitation, Government of Uttarakhand, Shri Prakash Pant. Speakers from the government, corporate, media and civil society shared their success stories on how they have been agents of change in reviving, restoring and cleaning their local water bodies.

Global Interfaith WASH Alliance’s (GIWA) interfaith delegation shared their commitments and suggestions with Hon’ble Shri Prakash Pantji, from the work they have done on the ground to inspire behavior change. The delegation led by GIWA’s Founder Pujya Swamiji, consisted of revered leaders such as the Chief Jathedar Akal Takht, Giani Gurbachan Singh, Jathedar Patna Saheb, Giani Iqbal Singh, Swami Maheshwarananda, Sadhvi Bhagawati Saraswatiji, Mufti Nasihur Rahman



Qasimi, Respected Father Paul V. Moonjely, Asst. Executive Director, Caritas International, Venerable Lama Lobzang, Ven Bhikkhu Sanghasena, along with well known Bollywood Actor Vivek Oberoi and Sandeep Gupta, Executive President of Dainik Jagran. They also held a closed door session with just the faith leaders to share with them key tips and techniques on inspiring social behavior change communication (SBCC) to improve WASH.





Said Pujya Swamiji, *“As reflections of divinity, we hold great power in our hands to make enormous and lasting change. Nothing is out of bounds if the will is strong enough. Now is the time for remembering... Now is the time for action! Now is the time to realize that each one of us holds the key to create the world of our dreams... for indeed, we are the solution!”*



Hon'ble Shri Prakash Pantji, Drinking Water & Sanitation Minister, Government of Uttarakhand, *“It's neither “neta” or “nara” nor “niti” (neither leaders, nor slogans or policies) that will work or change but its people and their coming together that must bring lasting and sustainable change, creating a truly Swachh Bharat.”*



Said Chief Jathedar of Akal Takht (Golden Temple), Giani Gurbachan Singhji, *“If we imagine that each time we spit or pollute our environment we are actually polluting and spitting on our own self. When we see it like this then automatically we will stop polluting our Mother Nature and sacred River Ganga.”*



Said respected Buddhist Leader, Venerable Lama Lobzangji, *“In Buddhist temples & monasteries, cleanliness is the first thing to be done in the morning. With that attitude to cleanliness, it is natural that we give great importance on Ma Ganga and its clean water to bring life line to everyone.”*



Said Father Paul V. Moonjely, Asst. Executive Director, Caritas International, *“We have started a worldwide initiative called “carbon fasting”. So Catholics across the world, fast to highlight and thank God for giving all the resources and to keep these resources protected. It is also believed in my faith that everyone and everything is created by the Divine in this nature, hence its sanctity and dignity must be maintained.”*



Said Jathedar of Patna, Giani Iqbal Singhji, *“Everyone knows that water is life but it's beautiful to be connected to this movement that Pujya Swamiji has started to protect and preserve the sacred water bodies. I strongly believe that we are connected by this common religion of doing good for everyone.”*



[Click Here to see more!](#)

Some of the main leaders speaking in these sessions included Dr. PB Salim, Secretary, Ministry of Minority Affairs, Government of West Bengal, Manish Wasuja, UNICEF India, Ravi Bhatnagar, Reckitt Benckiser, Dr. Veena Khanduri, Executive Secretary, Global Water Partnership and Country Coordinator, GSP India, Nirankar Saxena, Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce & Industry (FICCI), Joe Madiath, Gram Vikas, Swamini Adityananda Saraswati,

Director, Programmes Policy and Development, GIWA, Savita Saxena, Respected Member of the GIWA Board of Directors and others.

The fruitful discussions laid out action plans and reaffirmed individual pledges to be the change. In addition, participants urged that in addition to individual actions being the solution, collective actions are also part of the solution, hence they joined together to declare that “We Are the Solution.”



Concluding Ceremony of You Are the Solution Summit of Leaders

*Hon'ble Governor of Uttarakhand, Dr Krishna Kant Paulji joins
GIWA's Interfaith Leaders to inspire a pledge for improved WASH for all*

The Hon'ble Governor of Uttarakhand, Dr Krishna Kant Paulji was welcomed to Parmarth Niketan (Rishikesh) for the valedictory session of the Summit, in which he was joined on stage by the Global Interfaith WASH Alliance delegation led by Pujya Swami

Chidanand Saraswatiji - Muniji, Sadhvi Bhagawati Saraswatiji, Acharya Roopchandra Muniji, from Jain faith, Jathedar Patna Saheb Giani Iqbal Singhji, Kiranjot Kaurji, from the Sikh faith, Mufti Nasihur Rahman Qasimiji, from the Muslim faith and many others in an inspiring concluding ceremony.



Said Dr. KK Paulji, Governor of Uttarakhand, "The efforts being made by Parmarth Niketan for the conservation and cleaning of the Ganga were appreciable. If each person understands his or her responsibility to check pollution, Ganga would become cleaner and flow smoothly. This initiative will definitely encourage the masses to participate in the cleaning and conservation of the venerated river."



Said Acharya Roopchandra Muniji, "Ganga is beautiful and pure, that is how the Divine made her, but it's become ugly and polluted due to us. Hence, it is only each one of us who must now work to return her back to the condition that the Divine created her. I laud Pujya Swamiji and wish him a long and healthy life so that he may continue to serve towards this cause."



Said Mufti Nasihur Rahmanji, "A few weeks ago I was at a village function which ended up going late. I stayed the night and realised next morning that everyone had to go outside in the open to defecate. This idea repulsed me, so I decided to make a toilet for myself. I got a shovel & with help from a local mason made a make-shift toilet. When I visited the village months later, I was glad to see that the village had actually constructed toilets in almost 80% of the households & was on its way to becoming ODF. This is the way that change starts - with each one of us."



Said Kiranjot Kaurji, "The River Ganga flows for everyone. Even the Sikh faith has a very special place for the River Ganga. Because many years ago Guru Nanakji came to Haridwar and was here on the banks of Mother Ganga. Even Guru Gobind Singhji was born in Patna, along the banks of Mother Ganga. Hence, the River Ganga holds a special place in my heart. But water, faith and purification is something that is common amongst all religions."



[Click Here to see more!](#)



More of the special Ganga Awards were presented to Mufti Nasihur Rahmanji, Shri Sankar Kumar Sanyalji, President of Harijan Seva Sangh, Shri Anil Kakkarji of Rotary for spreading the message of Swachhta and WASH amongst their communities and congregations.

The event concluded with a divine Ganga Aarti ceremony in which a special premier of the GIWA film, highlighting all of the inspiring work GIWA has been committed to doing was shown. Special video

messages by Maulana Wahiduddin Khan, Founder-President, Centre for Peace and Spirituality International, and Bhaisahib Mohinder Singhji, Nishkam Seva Jatha were played and an incredible film on the urgent and vital need to protect Mother Ganga was shown as thousands of pilgrims watched with rapt attention. Thereafter a massive pledge was led by the faith leaders to encourage them to take these messages into their everyday lives and work to be the solution, creating a cleaner and greener world for all.

Hon'ble Union Cabinet Minister of Law and Justice, Shri Ravi Shankar Prasadji, Lauds Pujya Swamiji's Leadership and Vision

Shri Ravi Shankar Prasadji, Hon'ble Minister of Law & Justice and Information Technology (IT) came home to Parmarth Niketan (Rishikesh), and was welcomed by Pujya Swamiji and Sadhvi Bhagawatiiji.

Unable to attend the two day Summit on the 3rd and 4th June, the Hon'ble Minister came to Parmarth a couple of days in advance and shared his inspiring message during the month-long "Shri Rama Katha," which was, with Pujya Swamiji's inspiration and vision, dedicated to the preservation of the environment and Mother Ganga.

During the event, Pujya Swamiji shared a copy of the National Ganga Rights Act with the Hon'ble Minister. Shri Ravi Shankar Prasadji accepted the copy of the Act appreciatively and said: "The time has come for law and love to come together for protecting our National River Ganga. Today a comprehensive Ganga Rights Act must be implemented to protect the sacred lifeline of the more than 500 million people who live on Ganga's banks and directly depend upon her water not only for moksha but for their very lives and livelihoods."

The Hon'ble Minister further shared, "It is a great honour and joy to come home to Parmarth Niketan and seek the divine blessings of Pujya Swamiji. Pujya Swamiji and I have a relationship that goes back many years. His great vision and service to spread the message of Sanatan Dharma, to protect our environment and Mother Ganga is truly extraordinary. I pray that He, by God's Grace, continues to guide and bless us for at least another 65 years."

Shri Ravi Shankar Prasadji also spoke effusively and enthusiastically about the 11-volume "Encyclopedia of Hinduism" project, conceived and led by Pujya Swamiji, and he praised Sadhvi Bhagawatiiji's great dedication and pivotal role in the completion of the momentous project which involved more than 1000 scholars from around the world and was completed and presented to the Hon'ble President of India in June 2013. He also mentioned how Pujya Swamiji's tireless dedication to cleaning up the River Ganga and towards a Clean India must have been the divine seed that has brought forth the great mission of these initiatives under Hon'ble Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi's leadership.



[Click Here to see more!](#)





WATCH her heart-felt & moving speech [HERE!](#)

Hon'ble Union Cabinet Minister of Water Resources and Ganga Rejuvenation, Sadhvi Uma Bhartiji, Leads Green Pledge with GIWA, and Inspires at Parmarth Niketan

Sadhvi Uma Bhartiji was warmly welcomed by Pujya Swamiji and Sadhvi Bhagawatiji to her Himalayan home, at Parmarth Niketan (Rishikesh). She mentioned that she had wanted to join for the historic “You Are the Solution Summit of Leaders” but was unable to make it.

She gave a beautiful and heartfelt speech about her special connection with Pujya Swamiji, Sadhvi Bhagawatiji and Parmarth. She shared how Pujya

Swamiji has been pivotal in shaping her political career, inspiring her to serve the nation and Maa Ganga. She also shared how Sadhvi Bhagawatiji had helped her in a time of deep introspection to find the true purpose and meaning in her life and redirect it to serving Mother Ganga. She offered her gratitude during the symbolic conclusion of the month long Rama Katha and led everyone in a pledge to work for restoring an aviral (free-flowing) and nirmal (unpolluted) River Ganga.



WATCH pledge video!



[Click Here to see more!](#)

Pujya Swamiji's Divine & Green Birthday Brings the Faiths Together

Revered and respected faith leaders come together in celebration and blessings

HH Pujya Swami Chidanand Saraswatiji's (Pujya Swamiji) Green Birthday celebrations started with sacred Vedic chanting filling the morning air as the Ekasa Rudra Homa was performed on the holy banks of Mother Ganga by 22 divine rishikanyas (female Gurukul students).

Pujya Sant Shri Ramesh Bhai Ozaji (Bhaishriji), Pujya Swami

Maheshwaranandaji, Jathedar Patna Saheb Giani Iqbal Singhji, Pujya Swami Vedvigyanandji, Sadhvi Bhagawati Saraswatiji, Venerable Bhikkhu Sanghasenaji, Bhaktvastal Swamiji of the Swaminarayan Sampraday, Dr. AK Merchant of the Bahai Faith and so many other revered saints and dignitaries joined Pujya Swamiji to wish Him a blessed and divine green birthday. A beautiful interfaith breakfast followed.

As Pujya Swami Chidanand Saraswatiji explains:

"I am so pleased that the Ganga and Yamuna Rivers have been given rights equivalent to a person by a landmark decision of the Uttarakhand High Court. This means hope for millions of people dependent on the Holy River Ganga, but there is still much to be done. As our Ganga's—and our nation's— waters decline and suffering increases, we know it's time to do more than talk. Our Summit was held to bring about greater understanding and implementation of the actions now required from each of us in light of this great decision and India's growing water and sanitation crisis."

Watch this beautiful film of Pujya Swamiji's Divine Life and His message to the world.

[Click Here to Watch!](#)



By God's Grace: Pujya Swamiji's life & teachings.

By Sadhvi Bhagawati Saraswatiji & foreword by HH the Dalai Lama. [Click Here to Read!](#)



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Special Ganga Dussehra Puja

Special celebrations emphasise the need to protect and preserve the Divine Mother Goddess in the form of a free-flowing and unpolluted river.

The auspicious occasion of Ganga Dussehra -- a celebration of the time Mother Goddess Ganga came down to Earth in the form of the river to liberate the souls of King Sagar's sons -- coincided with GIWA's historic two day "You Are the Solution Summit of Leaders."

In honour of the special occasion, the morning began by divine chanting of the Ganga Sahasra Naam, 1008 names to describe the Mother Goddess in all Her glory. With each divine name, one beautiful lotus flower was offered to the

Divine River Goddess, symbolised by a sacred and beautiful murti. The puja was blessed by Pujya Swami Chidanand Saraswatiji and performed by 22 rishikanya (female Gurukul students).

Hundreds of devotees offered their love and devotion to the Mother Goddess by offering a sacred lotus at Her feet. During the course of the ceremony, faith leaders emphasized that the true gift or offering to the Divine Mother was to keep her sacred waters free-flowing and unpolluted.



Videos from the speakers



Puja Swami ji
President, Parmarth
Niketan, Founder/Chair,
Global Interfaith WASH
Alliance India



Puja Swami Ramdev ji
Yoga and Spiritual Guru



**Shri Narendra
Singh Tomar ji**
Minister of Drinking
Water and Sanitation



**Shri Trivendra
Singh Rawat ji**
Chief Minister of
Uttarakhand



Shri KK Paul ji
Governor of Uttarakhand



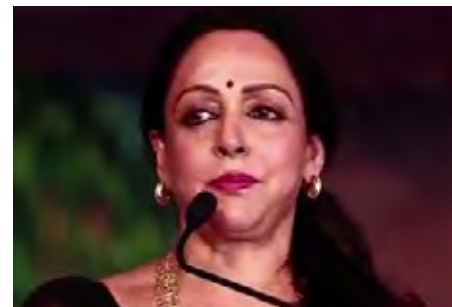
Giani Gurbachan Singhji
Chief Jathedar of Akal
Takht (Golden Temple)



**Puja Sant Shri Ramesh
Bhai Oza ji (Bhaishri)**
Spiritual Leader



Sadhvi Bhagawati ji
Secretary- General of
GIWA & President of
Divine Shakti Foundation



Smt. Hema Malini
Bollywood actress,
dancer and now Member
of Parliament



**Venerable Lama
Lobzang Ji**
Buddhist Faith Leader



Shri Prakash Pant Ji
Water & Sanitation
Minister, Government
of Uttarakhand



**Puja Acharya Roop
Chandra Muni Ji**
Jain Spiritual Leader



Father Paul V Moonjely Ji
Asst. Executive Director,
Caritas International



Mufti Nasihur Rahman ji
Muslim Spiritual Leader



Shri Vivek Oberoi
Bollywood star

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Inspiring Media Coverage



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Waging Sanitation Revolution, Village Women Turn Entrepreneurs In Uttarakhand



With bricks and masonry tools in their hands, 25 women from Haridwar in Uttarakhand are waging a silent sanitation revolution in their villages. They are building and selling toilets and ensuring women in their village get access to toilets and clean water.

In Haridwar's Mithi Beri gram panchayat, daily wagers Rajeshwari Devi and Beena Devi, who toil in agricultural fields all day, have now turned into small-time entrepreneurs. The game changer in their lives was a sanitation initiative 'Women For WASH' (Water, Sanitation and Hygiene for All) that taught them to build toilets.

"We do not have toilet at home and face many issues. When they approached us for a project, we immediately said yes," said Beena, adding that people opposed their decision to step out of the house. "We belong to a conservative society," she said.

Rajeshwari said that the hurdles they faced did not demoralize them and with the training received at the World Toilet College at Parmarth Niketan, they are now looking forward to build toilets in nearby villages too.

"Now we can build twin pit pour flush toilets on our own. We have just built toilets in Veerpur village in Rishikesh which has been commissioned as Ganga gram now," Rajeshwari was quoted as saying by news agency Press Trust of India.

Two villages on the bank of river Ganga — Veerpur Khurd in Dehradun and Mala in Pauri Garhwal — were adopted by the Union Drinking Water and Sanitation Ministry to turn them into Ganga villages, in collaboration with Global Interfaith WASH Alliance (GIWA).

"They can work only during the non-agriculture season and some villages are in remote areas where it is difficult to reach during monsoon. These are some hurdles but the women are determined to overcome these and be self-employed," said Samuel Herbert, the field officer associated with the project.

The women will now learn about bio digester toilets. They will also have their own brochures soon for getting employment in other villages or states.

Chidanand Saraswati, co-founder and co-chairman of Global Interfaith WASH Alliance said that these women are a role model for others. They will now learn to build bio-digester toilets which are a simple, low-cost technology for treating human waste and can aid in putting an end to open defecation and manual scavenging in the country.

OFFERING GRATITUDE TO OUR PARTNERS

The Global Interfaith WASH Alliance offers its gratitude to the Ministry of Drinking Water & Sanitation as well as the state Swachh Bharat Mission and the Namami Gange! Mission Departments for their support in making this summit a great success. GIWA is also deeply thankful for UNICEF and WaterAid's technical support as well as the over 20 organisations that participated, including our corporate and media partners who participated and shared this message and call for "You Are the Solution" far and wide.



Over **30** Eminent Faith Leaders actively participated with their words of inspiration & their pledges.



7 Major Faith Traditions took part in this summit, including Buddhist, Bahai, Christian, Hindu, Jain, Islam and Sikh



80 Gram Pradhans and Rural Leaders and 30 Urban Leaders from all across Uttarakhand Participated



First ever Ganga Awards given to **11** inspiring recipients for their work towards Swachh Bharat and water conservation



65 trees planted and more than **6500** trees to be planted during the monsoon



7/13 districts in Uttarakhand represented



Best practices from more than **15** states shared, including Assam, Bihar, Delhi, Madhya Pradesh, Punjab, Uttarakhand, Uttar Pradesh, West Bengal and others



Messages reached more than **3,000** people during the mass events and Ganga Aarti



Hundreds of thousands reached across many countries through LIVE telecast



[Click Here to see more of this article by NDTV](#)



**HH PUJYA SWAMI
SHUKDEVANAND
SARASWATIJI**

*Founder of
Swami Shukdevanand Trust*



**H.H. PUJYA
MM SWAMI
ASANGANANDJI**

*Managing Trustee of
Swami Shukdevanand Trust*



**HH PUJYA SWAMI
CHIDANAND
SARASWATIJI**

*President of
Parmarth Niketan (Rishikesh)*



To learn more: www.parmarth.org

Our Inspired Initiatives



GLOBAL INTERFAITH WASH ALLIANCE

is the world's first initiative to bring together the faiths as allies in ensuring everyone, everywhere has access to safe, life-giving Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH).

www.WashAlliance.org



DIVINE SHAKTI FOUNDATION

is dedicated to the holistic well being of women, their children, and orphaned/ abandoned children, and to all of Mother Nature.

www.DivineShaktiFoundation.org



GANGA ACTION PARIVAR

is a global family dedicated to the preservation of the River Ganga and Her tributaries in their free-flowing and pristine state.

www.GangaAction.org



INDIA HERITAGE RESEARCH FOUNDATION

Committed to education, healthcare, interfaith harmony, the upliftment of women as well as to the preservation to Indian heritage and culture.

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You are the
Solution Summit
Highlights
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