

# The Indian Eye



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CANADA | USA | BRAZIL | INDIA

**SPECIAL FEATURE****A Celebration For The Ages**

» 32

**NATION**

**From Maximum City to Future City:**  
Modi pitches advantage of  
double-engine Govt » 6


**BIG  
STORY**  
» 4

## GOVT VS JUDICIARY GROWING TENSION?

*As the government pitches for the inclusion of government representatives in the Supreme Court and the Supreme Court Constitution Bench directs the restructuring of the collegium system, tensions grow on the issue of judicial independence*

**NA**  
NEWSLINE  
» 14

**Pramukh Swami Maharaj's Centennial Celebrations**

More than 12 Million Pay Tribute During Month-long  
Pramukh Swami Maharaj Centenary Celebrations

**SPORTS**  
» 30

**NEW ZEALAND IN INDIA**

India gets 12-run win over New Zealand as Gill  
emerges as star

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# A Celebration For The Ages

**100**  
**Pramukh Swami Maharaj**  
**Centennial Celebrations**



People of all faiths and backgrounds throughout the world joined BAPS Swaminarayan Sanstha in celebrating 100 years of inspiration provided by His Holiness Pramukh Swami Maharaj. From families celebrating together at home to large-scale events in cities across the globe, the millions that have found inspiration through him organized events to commemorate his life and

legacy. This includes individuals and communities surrounding the 100+ BAPS centers throughout North America that united in celebration with other centers in Europe, Africa, Australia, and India. The culmination of the global celebrations is the month-long festival from December 15, 2022, to January 15, 2023, in Ahmedabad, India. Organized by over 80,000 BAPS volunteers,



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# Pramukh Swami Maharaj Nagar

Near Ognaj Circle, S. P. Ring Road, Ahmedabad, Gujarat

The 600-acre Pramukh Swami Maharaj Nagar was a confluence of art, science and spirituality made possible by the service and dedication of over 80,000 volunteers and swamis. With its grand, artistic gates, inspirational exhibitions, giant replica of Akshardham Mandir, unique Bal Nagari (Children's Cultural Adventureland), vast assembly

arenas hosting a variety of cultural and spiritual programs, mesmerizing light and sound show, glow garden, and national and international academic and professional conferences, Pramukh Swami Maharaj Nagar transported visitors into a wondrous world of inspirations.

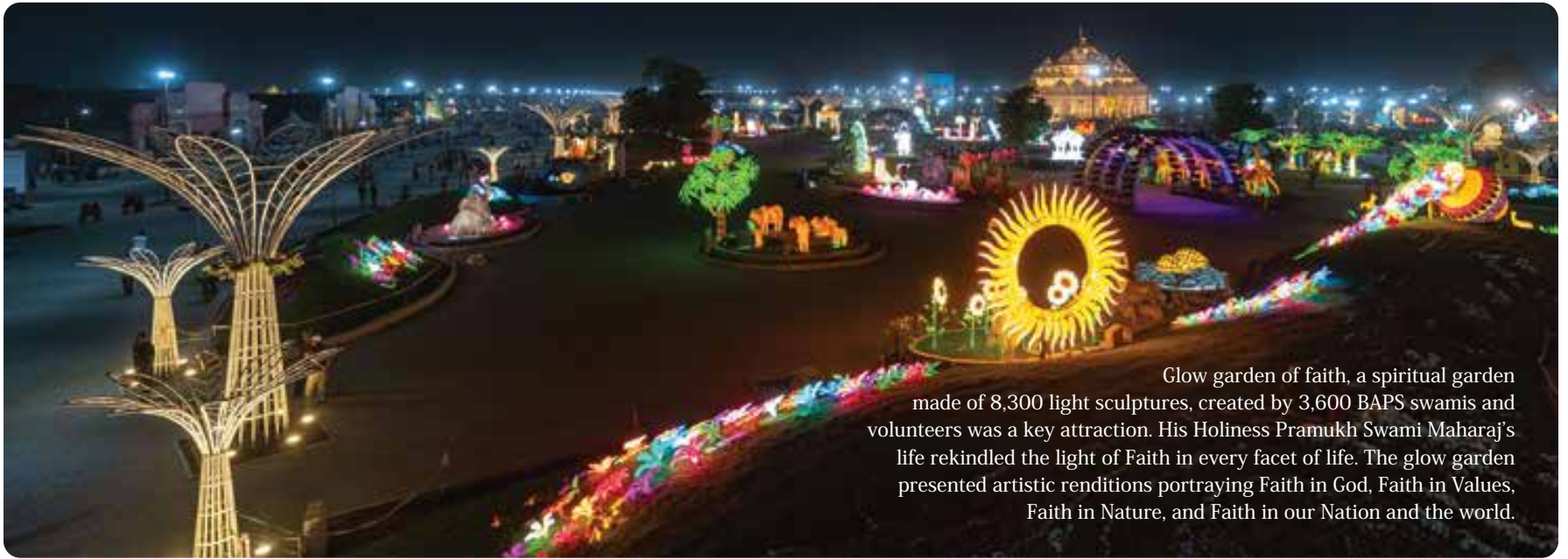
As a humble tribute to Pramukh Swami Maharaj's

lifelong commitment to service, culture and spirituality, the festival site was an extraordinary expression of Indian culture and Hindu spirituality. The festival was made possible through the generous support of more than 250 farmers and builders who have generously offered their land for use as the festival site.





## Pramukh Glow Garden



Glow garden of faith, a spiritual garden made of 8,300 light sculptures, created by 3,600 BAPS swamis and volunteers was a key attraction. His Holiness Pramukh Swami Maharaj's life rekindled the light of Faith in every facet of life. The glow garden presented artistic renditions portraying Faith in God, Faith in Values, Faith in Nature, and Faith in our Nation and the world.





Cultural Gates



A total of seven large, artistic gateways welcomed and guided visitors across the various zones of the festival campus. The main gate, 'Sant Dwar', was 380 feet long and 52 feet high, and is visible from the SP Ring

Road. It held 28 statues of some of the great spiritual luminaries of India, such as Adi Shankaracharya, Sant Tulsidas, Bhagwan Shri Buddha, Shri Mahavira Swami, Swami Vivekanand, Shri Guru Nanakji and others.



Each of the other six gates were 116 feet long and 38 feet high, and will host inspiring depictions from the life and work of Pramukh Swami Maharaj.



## Opening Ceremonies



On December 14, 2022, Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Mahant Swami Maharaj commenced the auspicious inauguration ceremony amid the chanting of Vedic mantras and puja from the Sant Dwar, the majestic 380-foot-wide entrance gate honoring the great sages and saints of India. The Hon. Governor of Gujarat Acharya Devvrat, the Hon. Chief Minister of Gujarat Bhupendrabhai Patel, and senior swamis of BAPS Swaminarayan Sanstha (BAPS) also participated in the ceremony.

Upon entering the festival grounds, Mahant Swami Maharaj and the Prime Minister were greeted with a colorful welcome dance by hundreds of BAPS children and youths. The Prime Minister then offered his heartfelt tribute by placing flowers before the beautiful 30-foot sculpted image of Pramukh Swami Maharaj.

After the ceremonial opening, the Prime Minister was guided through the enchanting glow garden where artistic renditions of moral stories and inspiring values reflected Pramukh Swami Maharaj's efforts to illumine the lives of countless people globally. The Prime Minister

then observed the Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav display, which celebrates 75 years of India's independence through tributes to Indian heroes and inspirational figures.

Thereafter, Prime Minister Modi reached the stunning 67-foot-tall replica of New Delhi's Swaminarayan Akshardham Mandir.

The Prime Minister then arrived at the Bal Nagari, the children's cultural wonderland, where he was greeted by the BAPS children who created and produced the shows and exhibits. The Prime Minister viewed the three innovative musical shows in the Nagari.

Finally, the Prime Minister joined Mahant Swami Maharaj on the main assembly stage, where they were enthusiastically greeted by tens of thousands of devotees present while millions watched live around the world.

Speaking on the occasion, Prime Minister Narendra Modi said, "I want to congratulate Mahant Swami Maharaj for inspiring this magnificent Nagar and the swamis for conceptualizing and creating it. It is not only impressive;

it will be a source of inspiration for generations to come. This festival is great not just because of its scale and beauty, but because of the experience of divinity and grand vision behind it, where everyone can learn about our heritage, history, faith, and values."

"Pramukh Swami Maharaj taught me that the greatest goal in life is to serve others, and he inspired me to serve till my last breath."

"Pramukh Swami Maharaj did not give me great lectures but delivered profound truths through simple words and his example. He cared for me even when I was not in office, just a mother would for her child. His presence always gave me peace and reassurance."

"I dearly miss Pramukh Swami Maharaj. But today, I feel his love and spiritual energy through Mahant Swami Maharaj, who continues to inspire me to serve everyone in our country."

The colorful evening concluded with a maha-arti with tens of thousands of devotees as they paid tribute to their guru Pramukh Swami Maharaj, who personified his universal teaching, "In the joy of others lies our own."





## International Convention for Better Living

On December 15, 2022, the Home Minister of India Amit Shah inaugurated the month-long 'International Convention for Better Living' in the Pramukh Swami Maharaj Nagar in the presence of His Holiness Mahant Swami Maharaj and many leading industrialists of India. Speaking on the occasion, Shri Amit Shah said, "This amazing festival site should be a case study for students of management. This festival site not only gives one the experience of peace and divinity, but it provides the esoteric wisdom of the Vedas, Upanishads and Hindu culture in a way that the simplest folk can understand. The millions of people who visit it will experience peace, attain liberation, and learn to live a problem-free life. "In the many vicissitudes of my life, the first phone call of guidance and comfort I invariably received was from Pramukh Swami Maharaj. On countless occasions, I would go to Pramukh Swami Maharaj buffeted by

whirlwinds of problems and misery and come back buoyed with peace, energy and enthusiasm. Swamis imbue peace, proper direction and wisdom to people living in society. His entire life, Pramukh Swami Maharaj had done this silently, without any fanfare.

"Pramukh Swami Maharaj created hundreds of mandirs outside of India, creating spiritual centers for learning universal values and Hindu traditions for millions of people. Without any fanfare, he created massive mandirs in America on hundreds of acres. It's hard to imagine the extent of these massive activities done by a single person.

"On the occasion of his centenary celebration, we wish that the legacy he established may continue for not just India, but for the entire world for the benefit of all of humanity. Under the leadership of Mahant Swami Maharaj, BAPS is moving forward on the path laid by

Pramukh Swami Maharaj. I have faith that through the spiritual upliftment he has guided we will find the upliftment of our society and nation."

Each evening there were themed assembly focusing on the life, work, and messages of His Holiness Pramukh Swami Maharaj. During the afternoon, there were women's programs with various presentations and performances produced and planned by women volunteers. In the mornings, there were academic conferences where national and international academics gathered to present their research on topics ranging from temple architecture and Hindu literature to women's empowerment and Scheduled Caste upliftment. Conferences hosting various professional associations such as lawyers, doctors, and entrepreneurs were also organized.



**Sudhir Mehta**  
Chairman, Torrent Group

"Pramukh Swami Maharaj was a divine soul, rightly known as a personification of saintliness. As one of the greatest spiritual leaders, his life was dedicated to the service of spirituality and humanity. He inspired countless cultural, social, and spiritual initiatives of BAPS Swaminarayan Sanstha providing comfort and care to millions. Pramukh Swami Maharaj was truly a people's guru. Through his innate humility, universal wisdom, and striking simplicity, he transformed the lives of spiritual seekers, community leaders and global personalities. BAPS's humanitarian services and grassroots efforts play a significant role in the upliftment of society."



**Amit Shah**  
Home Minister of India

"This amazing festival site should be a case study for students of management. This festival site not only gives one the experience of peace and divinity, but it provides the esoteric wisdom of the Vedas, Upanishads and Hindu culture in a way that the simplest folk can understand."



**Pankaj Patel**  
Chairman, Zyventus Cadila

"Pramukh Swami Maharaj is the greatest university for all of us in which we must learn to imbibe the values of selfless sacrifice, love, and absolute faith in the guru. As a spiritual leader, he has enlightened millions of souls, yet throughout his personal life he remained forever simple and humble. As a spiritual leader, he propagated the message of equality regardless of caste, creed or religion. He was forever focused on uplifting the lowest members of society. Inspired by Pramukh Swami Maharaj, BAPS has created an institution which is focused on the upliftment of all."





## Interfaith Harmony Day

On December 20, 2022, leaders of various faiths gathered for interfaith dialogue honoring Pramukh Swami Maharaj's spiritually driven vision for human solidarity, world peace, and inter-faith harmony. The event was held in the presence of tens of thousands at Pramukh Swami Maharaj Nagar in Ahmedabad in celebration of United Nations International Human Solidarity Day.

Pramukh Swami Maharaj worked tirelessly to engage with people and leaders of all faiths, championing peace over conflict, dialogue over discord, love over hatred. He respected people of all religions and faiths. His address at the Millennium World Peace Summit at The United Nations in 2000 is a testament to this fact.

Continuing Pramukh Swami Maharaj's legacy, BAPS is an active participant in global inter-faith initiatives. Recently, BAPS participated in the G20 Religion Forum, also known as R20, hosted in Indonesia on 2-3 November 2022. Earlier this year, 1,000 representatives

of different faiths gathered at a recent conference in the US, marking an important step in inter-faith dialogue within North America. In May 2022, 90 religious leaders from 35 countries, including representatives from BAPS, convened in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia.

Today's inter-faith program commemorates Pramukh Swami Maharaj's lifelong efforts to create a harmonious world in which all faiths can peacefully coexist.

Elaborating on Pramukh Swami Maharaj's message of inter-faith harmony, Brahmaviharidas Swami, a BAPS swami said, "The most important need of the hour is harmony. As we celebrate this day of solidarity, the place of this gathering is apt since this place celebrating Pramukh Swami Maharaj, the greatest Saint of the century who bridged minds and hearts across the world, has been created by 80,000 volunteers working together.

"The idea of harmony is bigger than all of us. We believe that 'the whole world is one family' and 'the whole

world is one nest.' Bhagwan Swaminarayan revealed the idea of universal harmony by creating a society that transcended caste, creed, and religion. Pramukh Swami Maharaj not only believed in harmony, he lived it and inspired others to live it.

"Mahant Swami speaks little but his energies touch everybody. God believes in harmony on this earth whether we do or not. Very often Mahant Swami says our choice is whether to flourish in harmony or perish in disarray. If you abuse religion, it is the greatest problem. If you use religion, it is the greatest solution. Everyone should use religion to increase peace on our planet."

On this special day, many religious leaders from different parts of the world came together to pay homage to Pramukh Swami Maharaj, who was to them the epitome of saintliness. They reflected on his tireless efforts for inter-faith harmony and world peace.



**Puja Sri Satguru Uday Singh Ji Maharaj**  
Namdhari Sikh Head

"Pramukh Swami Maharaj served everyone and showered his blessings on everyone, no matter their class, caste, gender, race, religion. His teachings should be taught to all children, so that they can grow into good humans, and can tolerate the pain and suffering of this world. Without compassion, there is no religion. Where there is arrogance, there God is not. So, we should not insult anyone, but respect everyone."



**Bawa Jain**  
Secretary General, World Council of Religious Leaders, USA

"In the three days I have been at Pramukh Swami Maharaj Nagar, half a million people have visited, but I have not seen a single incident of disharmony. All the big CEOs of the world should bring their teams to learn about harmonious management. This Nagar is a work of architectural genius. In my opinion, Pramukh Swami Maharaj is the modern-day Vishwakarma."



**Saadiqul-eidiz-zahabi Bhaisaheb Jamaluddin**  
Dawoodi Bohra Community

"My Daudi Bohra brothers and I went around the Nagar for two hours with awe and admiration, celebrating Pramukh Swami Maharaj, who spent his life serving and motivating others to serve. Respected Mahant Swami Maharaj, you continue this legacy and guide thousands similarly. As diverse as we may be in our customs, traditions, and faiths, we are united in the belief that to uplift yourself you must uplift others. This is in the essence of celebrating international human solidarity day."

Other religious representatives/leaders in attendance included:

- Puja Parmatmanandji, Founder Acharya, Arsha Vidya Mandir
- Mahamandaleswar Puja Swami Avdheshanand Giri Ji Maharaj, Acharya Juna Peethadhishwar
- Venerable Bhikkhu Sanghasena, Ladakh, Founder President, Mahabodhi International Meditation Center
- Acharya Dr. Lokesh Muni Ji, Jain Muni, Founder President, Ahimsa Vishwa Bharati
- Param Gurudev Puja Namramuni Maharaj Sahab Ji, Jain Muni, Founder, Parasdham

- Archbishop Thomas Ignatius Macwan, of the Gandhinagar Archdiocese
- Professor Chirapat Prapandvidya, Representative of Rajguru (Royal Court Priest) of Thailand, Founder of Sanskrit Studies Centre at Silpakorn University, Bangkok
- Padma Shri Agus Indra Udayana, Gandhi Puri Ashram, Indonesia
- Rabbi Ezekiel Isaac Malekar, Head, Jewish Community
- HE Abdul Rahman Bu Ali, Thought Leader of Bahrain





## Swamis & Volunteers: The Backbone of the Nagar



**Over 80,000 volunteers**



The backbone of the Pramukh Swami Maharaj Nagar were its dedicated force of over 80,000 volunteers and hundreds of swamis. These volunteers and swamis formed a diverse group of professionals and skilled workers who come from different geographical,

academic, and social backgrounds, resulting in an effective mosaic of leaders and workers. Out of the thousands of volunteers serving in this Nagar, many have professional careers and businesses, while others have left such positions to serve full-time by admirably

balancing their personal, family, social, professional, and volunteer duties. These volunteers have been overseeing physical service, planning, management, and implementation in almost 45 departments in the Nagar.



**Narendra Modi**  
Prime Minister of India

"As I was walking through the grounds of the nagar, I was shown the audience and told that these are our volunteers who are greeting the Prime Minister. I said that you have forgotten that even I am a volunteer. We are all waving to each other. Add one more to the 80,000!"



**Gautam Adani**  
Chairman of the Adani Group

"As many of you know the Adani Group has built some of the largest infrastructure projects in the nation, yet it is humbling for me to see the power of volunteerism here spread over 600 acres of festival grounds of breath-taking color and beauty, acres and acres of massive glowing gardens, the towering statue of Pramukh Swami Maharaj, all built by 80,000 selfless volunteers, completed in less than six months. This is unmatchedable and there is so much here for even the best global corporations to learn."



**PRAMUKH SWAMI MAHARAJ'S CENTENNIAL CELEBRATIONS**

# More than 12 Million Pay Tribute During Month-long Pramukh Swami Maharaj Centenary Celebrations

*The festival of inspiration, transformation, service, and sacrifice concludes with a spectacular grand finale.*

**OUR BUREAU**

Ahmedabad, India

**O**n January 15, 2023, His Holiness Pramukh Swami Maharaj was given a grand devotional tribute in the closing ceremony of the Pramukh Swami Maharaj Centenary Celebrations in the divine presence of His Holiness Mahant Swami Maharaj.

In the month-long festival, over 12.1 million people visited the exhibitions and attractions at Pramukh Swami Maharaj Nagar and were inspired to live better lives. The Nagar hosted a variety of exhibitions, attractions, seminars, films, and shows, each imparting a unique lesson from the inspiring life of Pramukh Swami Maharaj. Millions watched the evening assemblies held every day for the past month live, whether at the Nagar or over webcast and learned about Pramukh Swami Maharaj's life and work from speeches given by senior swamis and dignitaries from around the world. Thousands gained inspiration from Pramukh Swami Maharaj's life through professional and academic conferences held at Pramukh Swami Maharaj Nagar.

A blood donation drive was also organized over the month-long festival, during which over 5.6 million cc of blood was donated. Hundreds of thousands of people were impressed and humbled by the ornate main gate, Pramukh Swami Maharaj's 30-foot sculpted image, the replica of Swaminarayan Akshardham, the enchanting glow garden, the light and sound show, the Women's Empowerment Pavilion and other exhibitions. After visiting the exhibitions, many were inspired to



**The Grand Finale Ceremony of Pramukh Swami Maharaj's Centenary Celebrations, titled, 'We Will Not Forget You' commenced with the grand entry of His Holiness Mahant Swami Maharaj on a decorated chariot.**

give up addictions and strive for family harmony. After watching the shows at the Bal Nagari, 250,000 children resolved to respect their parents, study sincerely, and become ideal citizens of the world. All who visited were in awe of the 45 departments and 80,000 volunteers inspired by Mahant Swami Maharaj who made Pramukh Swami Maharaj Nagar possible.

The Grand Finale Ceremony of Pramukh Swami Maharaj's Centenary Celebrations, titled, 'We Will Not Forget You' commenced at 5.00 pm

IST. As hundreds of thousands of devotees from around the world assembled, BAPS bands played to welcome them. The assembly began with the singing of devotional hymns followed by the grand entrance of His Holiness Mahant Swami Maharaj on a decorated chariot. Youths danced on stage to welcome Mahant Swami Maharaj.

The first part of the assembly explained how people will not be able to forget Pramukh Swami Maharaj. Selected devotees shared their personal experiences with Pramukh Swami Ma-

haraj and how they will never be able to forget him for what he has done for them and their families. Each reiterated the point that Pramukh Swami Maharaj is always with them.

Senior BAPS swami Viveksagar-das Swami then spoke about Pramukh Swami Maharaj's life and the physical and mental sacrifices he made for everyone in society. Pramukh Swami Maharaj gave everyone knowledge, peace and stability. His travels were for the joy and betterment of others.

*Continued at next page... >>*



Thereafter, testimonials of visitors to Pramukh Swami Maharaj Nagar were shown who spoke about their unforgettable memories of Pramukh Swami Maharaj.

The next part of the assembly focused on how society will not be able to forget Pramukh Swami Maharaj and his work. Abu Dhabi Mandir project head Brahmaviharidas Swami spoke about Pramukh Swami Maharaj's construction of temples and their global footprint. After a video about the significance of BAPS temples, senior BAPS swami and mahant of Gandhinagar Akshardham Anandswarupdas Swami explained how Pramukh Swami Maharaj changed society's landscape through festivals. He motivated thousands of selfless volunteers, encouraged skill development, and inspired positive change, transforming society through celebrations. A video introduced the festivals Pramukh Swami Maharaj inspired and especially the impact of Pramukh Swami Maharaj Nagar on society.

The final part of the grand finale program focused on how even the future will not be able to forget Pramukh Swami Maharaj. His spirituality was beyond the boundaries of time. Each senior swami of the BAPS Swaminarayan Sanstha then spoke about a quality of Pramukh Swami Maharaj. Ghanshyamcharandas Swami began with a prayer, after which Tyagvalabhdas Swami spoke about Pramukh Swami Maharaj's devotion to Bhagwan Swaminarayan and his gurus. Bhaktipriyadas Swami described Pramukh Swami Maharaj's saintliness, while Swayamprakashdas Swami (Doctor Swami) illustrated how Pramukh Swami Maharaj saw everyone equally. Ishwarcharandas Swami then spoke about Pramukh Swami Maharaj's endearing humility.

Children then gathered on stage to discuss how, despite never meeting Pramukh Swami Maharaj, they found Pramukh Swami Maharaj in Mahant Swami Maharaj. After a powerful video introducing Mahant Swami Maharaj through testimonials, Mahant Swami Maharaj blessed the gathered assembly. He said, "We saw in today's assembly that Pramukh Swami Maharaj had cared for everyone. Thus, everyone felt that he is mine. That is why none can ever forget him, not today and not thousands of years hence."

Pramukh Swami Maharaj's centennial celebrations were officially concluded with a mass maha-arti, a colorful dance by youths and fireworks.



His Holiness Mahant Swami Maharaj blesses the gathered assembly. He said, "We saw in today's assembly that Pramukh Swami Maharaj had cared for everyone. Thus, everyone felt that he is mine. That is why none can ever forget him, not today and not thousands of years hence."



Devotees share their personal experiences with Pramukh Swami Maharaj and how they will never be able to forget him for what he has done for them and their families. Each reiterated the point that Pramukh Swami Maharaj is always with them.



His Holiness Mahant Swami Maharaj during the grand finale. The month-long celebration was His Holiness Mahant Swami Maharaj's vision to provide inspiration from the life, efforts, teachings, actions, and contributions of Pramukh Swami Maharaj.



The month-long celebration was His Holiness Mahant Swami Maharaj's vision to provide inspiration from the life, efforts, teachings, actions, and contributions of Pramukh Swami Maharaj.

The BAPS Swaminarayan Sanstha (BAPS) is a spiritual, volunteer-driven organization dedicated to improving society through individual growth by fostering the Hindu ideals of faith, unity, and selfless service. Its worldwide network of 3,800 centers

supports these character-building activities. Under the guidance and leadership of His Holiness Mahant Swami Maharaj, BAPS aspires to build a community that is free of addictions as well as morally, ethically, and spiritually pure. For more details, please visit [www.baps.org](http://www.baps.org).

Pramukh Swami Maharaj was the fifth spiritual successor of Bhagwan Swaminarayan. Under his leadership, BAPS grew into an international spiritual and humanitarian organization

with over 3,300 centers worldwide. He dedicated his life to the well-being of others, traveling throughout the world to foster love, peace, harmony, righteousness, faith in God, and service to humanity. With genuine care and compassion, he reached out to all members of society irrespective of class, color, or age. Recognized and respected as one of India's greatest spiritual teachers, he lived by and promoted the principle: "In the joy of others, lies our own."



**Pramukh Swami Maharaj Centennial Celebration, the festival of inspiration, transformation, service, and sacrifice, officially concluded with a mass maha-arti, a colorful dance by youths, and fireworks.**

