

MAHASHIVARATRI 2023 REPORT

Mahashivaratri celebrations at Swami Dayananda Ashram, Rishikesh were elaborately conducted this year. Sannyasa diksha was given by Swami Sakshatkrtananda Saraswati to four students - Swamini Tattvamayananda Saraswati (Brni Tilaka, Nagpur Gurukulam), Swamini Atmarupananda Saraswati (Arul Mani, Chennai), Swami Narayanananda Saraswati (Sri Sowmya Narayan, Madhurai), and Swamini Chidekarasananda Saraswati (Brni Nandana Chaitanya).

The purvanga rituals were conducted on the previous day (17th February) and were done by the son of the regular Pandit, since the regular pandit passed away last year, having done these rituals since 1982 (see pic on the side).



As usual, Sri Swami Jagatatmananda Saraswati brought 21 Vedic priests from the south, headed by Sri Ravi Shastri, in order to perform the Rudra japa and homa on Mahashivaratri day. At 12 noon, abhishekam to Sri Swami Dayanandeshvara was done with the kalasha waters.

The continuous Om Namah Shivaya chanting started at 9am on Shivaratri morning and ended with Pujya Swamiji's chanting for 3 minutes at 4pm on the same day. All students and devotees participated with enthusiasm and dedication in the chanting.

On Shivaratri day, the Bhandara was given by the Baluja family from Delhi, in memory of their mother, Shanta Baluja, and also Sri VS Saravanan from Chennai on the occasion of Rudra japa and homa. The menu for the bhandara was in keeping with upavasa, fasting rules.



The main function of elaborate puja for Lord Sri Gangadareshvara started at 5pm in the evening and ended at 11.45pm at night. A hundred and twenty five litres of milk was offered during the abhishekam. Sri Rudram was chanted 11 times during the period of abhishekam of 11 dravyas, materials.

Following the abhishekam, an elaborate, very beautiful alankara was done.



Smt Revati Ramachandran of Kalakshetra, Chennai, performed Nritya Upacara on the song Bho Shambo of Pujya Swamiji.



On the whole, the entire Mahashivaratri function was jampacked with activities and will remain in the hearts of devotees for a long time to come!

- Report by Swamini Chidekarasananda

Photo on cover page #2