

### **Indian Railways To Run 750 Special Trains For Kumbha Mela 2013**

#### Source

MUMBAI, INDIA, December 27, 2012 ([travelbizmonitor.com](http://travelbizmonitor.com)): The Indian Railways is gearing up to facilitate the rush of passengers during the Maha Kumbha Mela at Allahabad in February next year and is expected to run around 750 special trains and make arrangements for additional 1,800 coaches to ensure seamless travel for devotees, as per a TOI report.

As Railways is expecting a rush of around 83 million people during the Kumbha Mela, the state transporter is working on enhancing the capacity of around 100 existing trains by adding more coaches to ferry passengers travelling to the holy city apart from running special trains. “We are pooling around 1,800 additional coaches from all 16 zones,” P Guha, Executive Director (Coaching), Railway Board, said.

According to estimates, around 30 million devotees are expected to visit Allahabad on Mauni Amawasya (February 10). Around 133 additional booking, enquiry and reservation counters will be opened in Allahabad, Naini, Sangam, Prayag and Vindhyachal. Considering the enormous task, a Mela Adhikari (officer) has been appointed by the Railways to coordinate with other agencies.

### **How the new BAPS Temple in California Ingratiated Itself**

#### Source

CHINO, CALIFORNIA, January 4, 2013 (India Abroad, by Arthur J. Pais): Even as hundreds of devotees gathered for the dedication of the Bochasanwasi Shri Akshar Purushottam Swaminarayan Mandir in Chino Hills, California, December 23, and thousands watched the Web cast as the murthis were installed inside the temple, for the local organizers, there was also a satisfaction of having convinced the city authorities to sanction the completion of the temple, keeping intact most of the original project.

Constructed from 35,000 pieces of hand-carved Italian Carrara marble and Indian pink sandstone, the temple encompasses five pinnacles, two large domes, four balconies, 122 pillars and 129 archways. Its 6,600 hand-carved motifs depict a mosaic of tales. Situated on a 20-acre site with a 91-foot lotus-shaped pond, it also has a cultural center, gymnasium and classrooms. At least 900 volunteers including many second-generation Indian-American students gave their services, according to the temple authorities. At least 1.3 million man hours of construction was used.

In a script that has been reverberating in the past four decades whenever a new temple has been proposed, the objections of the city zoning board — ranging from more traffic in the residential area around the temple to the size of the temple towers — was slowly challenged by the temple builders.

The temple builders approached the opposition in several ways. Even as permissions for the temple facilities were being cleared, they were also convincing the city officials and residents that the devotees and tourists who would be coming to the temple would bring revenue to the city.

The devotees also asserted — in private conversations and official discussions — that as Americans, they had equal right to their house of worship. They also built goodwill for the community and over 1,000 Hindu families around by holding walkathons, medical camps, blood drives and Thanksgiving dinners in Chino Hills on the same day when BAPS members in more than 40 American cities and towns were hosting similar events.

'Building a Better Community, One Step at a Time' was the theme of the walkathons and over \$5,000 was expected to go to local organizations, including the Chino Hills High School and the Wounded Heroes Foundation helping injured armed forces veterans.

BAPS doctors have conducted free medical checkups.

'It was amazing to see how willing the doctors were to help out the patients,' Ambika Rajyagor, a student volunteer from Chino Hills High School, was quoted as saying. 'Watching the doctors volunteer their time and effort gave me the incentive to help out more so that I can make the difference in the community.'

During numerous open houses, members also collected hundreds of letters of support from the community, including religious leaders,

the adjoining residential communities, and coaches from the National Junior Basketball program, who were allowed use of the gymnasium on the temple ground.

Chino Hills Mayor Peter Rogers found out about BAPS's outreach activities from calling many California mayors.

"He even called the mayor of Chicago and came to be convinced we were carrying out good work," said Lenin Joshi of BAPS. "His discovery played an important role in city council giving the final approvals." The members of the temple's governing board also felt vindicated when local dignitaries attended the inauguration event and joined devotees and spiritual leaders including Satguru Bodhinatha Veylanswami, the head of Kauai's Hindu Monastery, and publisher of Hinduism Today.

Mayor Rogers said at the inaugural event, 'The Mandir and cultural center will indeed be a place that Chino Hills can be proud of for so many, many generations.' The temple, Mayor Rogers added, 'is a beautiful testament to the hard work of your congregation who has spent several years to build this place of worship.' The inauguration was a culmination of four-day events that began with BAPS guru Pramukh Swami Maharaj's 92nd birthday celebrations December 20.

Temple authorities also claimed it is the first earthquake-proof temple in the world; the upper structure of the complex is protected from earthquake damage by separating it from the base with a series of 40 base isolator units. It uses a solar power system. The temple complex reportedly cost \$15

million, including the land. It could have cost nearly double, but for hours of volunteer work and fees of experts, temple authorities say.

'If one word could sum up the construction of this mandir, it would be sacrifice,' Rakesh Patel, the director of construction, was quoted as saying. 'It was, indeed, the dedication, service, effort and sacrifice of hundreds of volunteers from doctors to lawyers to engineers to architects who completed this mandir. Whether it was raining or sweltering outside, volunteers did everything from heavy duty labor to planning and execution of the smallest thing for making this mandir.'

---

## **Sri la Sri Balangadharanatha Swamiji Attains Mahasamadhi**

### Source

BENGALURU, INDIA, January 13, 2013 (Deccan Herald): Balangadharanatha Swamiji, the pontiff of the Adichunchanagiri Mutt in Nagamangala of Mandya district, died on Sunday evening at BGS Global Hospital, Kengeri. Chief Minister Jagadish Shettar and Dr K N Venkataramana, vice-chairman of the hospital, announced his sad demise on the hospital premises on behalf of the mutt on Sunday night.

The body of the seer was later brought to the Vijayanagar branch of the mutt around 10 pm and the public were allowed to pay their last respects. Devotees who thronged the hospital were seen moving towards

Vijaynagar with the body. Many devotees were also at the Vijayanagar mutt by the time the body was brought there and continued to fill the grounds next to the mutt to pay their last respects. The seer's body was kept for public darshan all through the night. Home Minister R. Ashoka said that the body would be kept at the Vijaynagar Mutt till 9 am on Monday and then would be taken to the mutt at Adichunchanagiri, Nagamangala in procession and the last rites would be conducted there in the evening with full state honors. Chandrashekara Swamiji, of the Vishwa Okkaliga Samsthana, told media that the community leaders, including former prime minister H. D. Deve Gowda, had suggested to finish the last rites of the swamiji on Monday itself as it was Makara Sankranti, an auspicious occasion. Gowda said that the Swamiji was a great man and his samadhi would be constructed according to all the rituals.

Balangadharanatha Swamiji, 69, was the 71st pontiff of the Adichunchanagiri Mutt. He had been suffering from multiple ailments, including complete renal failure and coronary heart disease, for the last four years. Sources said he was admitted to hospital on Saturday morning after he complained of chest pain and low blood pressure. With reports emerging that the condition of the seer was critical, many VIPs and political leaders including Gowda, Shettar, Ashoka and Central Minister Veerappa Moily rushed to the mutt. As news spread of his ill health, devotees started to converge on the hospital.

Being the main pontiff of Vokkaligas, the second most dominant community in the State, the swamiji enjoyed immense popularity among political leaders.

The mutt witnessed a revolutionary progress under his leadership with several of his flagship projects in education, religion and social service. The seer focused on providing humanitarian services including providing basic necessities like food, education and health for lakhs of people during the last four decades.

Ashoka and Dr Venkataramana briefed the media around 6 pm and said that his condition was stable. However within minutes after the briefing, the seer's condition deteriorated and he suffered a massive cardiac arrest. All efforts of the doctors to revive him failed and he breathed his last at 7 pm.

---

## **Sri Balagangadharanatha Swami: a Visionary Educationist**

### Source

BENGALURU, INDIA, January 14, 2013 (Deccan Herald): Balagangadharanatha Swami, pontiff of Adichunchanagiri mutt, was born as Gangadharayya on January 25, 1945, in a Subedar family at Banandur in Bidadi hobli of Ramanagar district.

One of the six children of Chikkalingegowda and Boramma, Gangadharayya completed his primary education at his birthplace. After completing SSLC with a first class in 1963, he joined the Government Arts and Science College in Bangalore to pursue science.

His spiritual inclination drew him to pontiffs of various mutts during his student life and it prepared him for the role he played well

after taking charge of Adichunchanagiri mutt at Nagamangala taluk in Mandya district.

He was given diksha by Ramananda Swamy, the then pontiff of Adichunchanagiri mutt, on February 12, 1968 and was renamed as Balagangadharanatha.

After he was anointed as the pontiff of the mutt on September 24, 1974, Balagangadhara went to Kailasashrama in Bangalore and Sri Jayachamarajendra Government Sanskrit School for obtaining scholarship in scriptures.

The mutt witnessed a revolutionary progress under his leadership with several of his flagship projects in education, religion and social service. Hundreds of thousands of children from rural areas are studying in more than 400 schools and colleges run by the Adichunchanagiri Education Trust.

The children of the less privileged are provided with accommodation, food and education, starting from pre- school to MBBS and Engineering. Besides, the students irrespective of their caste and creed, can study Sanskrit and Agama at Kalabhairaveshwara Samskrita Agama Pathashale on the mutt premises at Adichunchanagiri.

Being the main pontiff of Vokkaligas, the second most dominant community in the State, Swami enjoyed immense political following. Political leaders, cutting across party lines and especially from the Vokkaliga community, called on him regularly seeking his guidance. Many political leaders would call on him before launching the election campaign or political conventions.

With the association of State government and different religious leaders, Balangadharanath Swami launched “Karnataka Vanasamvardhana Trust,” to improve the forest wealth by planting five crore saplings. he mutt volunteers under his guidance took up desilting of water tanks as a part of Jalasamvardhana scheme to increase the storage capacity of tanks and improve ground water level.

He also rendered yeoman service in the health sector, opening hospitals that provided free accommodations, treatment and food.

Under a health programme, trained healthcare volunteers visit villages every day, educate, guide the patients and bring suffering patients to the hospital, get them treated and send them back to their places. He also introduced mass marriage system to reduce the burden on the economically deprived sections of society.

Today, the mutt has its branches spread across the State, including Bangalore, Kumbalagod, Archakarahalli, Mayasandra, Mysore, Mandya, Melkote, Hemagiri, Hassan, Shimoga, Chitradurga, Sringeri, Chikkaballapur, Dasarighatta and Kanakapura.

Condolences Offered:

”Balangadharanatha Swamiji’s contribution to the fields of religion, education and social service are unparalleled. During the last three decades, he had built hundreds of educational institutions which have been providing quality education from primary to post-graduate level. His contribution to the field of environment through several afforestation

programmes and services in reviving folklore and other rural art forms has been immense.”

Jagadish Shettar, Chief Minister

”Balangadharanatha Swamiji not only built the Adichunchanagiri mutt but also unified the unorganised Vokkaliga community. Through his hard work, dedication and spiritual power, he brought international recognition to the mutt. He never restricted the mutt to any one community. He believed in oneness and helped all sections of society.”  
H. D. Kumaraswamy, JD(S) State President

”His yeoman service for the betterment of the community and education sector is unparalleled.”

Deve Gowda, JD(S) national president

”He hailed from a poor family and dedicated himself to the service of the poor and downtrodden. He was totally committed to provide free education and struggled hard over the last four decades for overall development of the State. I used to meet him whenever I was going through a crisis and he guided me suitably.”

B. S. Yeddyurappa, KJP president

---

## **Nirmalanandanatha Swami To Head Adichunchanagiri Math**

Source

KARNATAKA, INDIA, January 15, 2013 (The Hindu): Nirmalanandanatha Swami took over as the 72nd Mathadhipathi of the Adichunchanagiri Mahasamsthana Math on



Monday, as willed by his predecessor Balagangadharanatha Swami. Balagangadharanatha Swami passed away at a private hospital on Sunday after a long illness and was laid to rest on Monday.

The new Mathadhipathi is a native of Chirnahalli in Gubbi taluk, Tumkur district. Born as Nagaraja on July 20, 1969 to Narasegowda and Nanjamma, Nirmalanandanatha Swami had a humble upbringing. His parents had six children and the family sustained itself by cultivating its two acres. After finishing his graduation in engineering from Mysore, he went on to earn an M.Tech from the Indian Institute of Technology, Madras

---

## Karnataka Plans To Monitor Astrologers

### Source

BANGALORE:, INDIA, January 14, 2013 (India Times): Soon, astrologers in Karnataka may have to register with the government. In an effort to check black magic, voodoo and witchcraft, the muzrai department is mulling over a policy in this regard. There

is no law now to govern astrology, which is a huge business in the state.

”A committee comprising well-known astrologers, bureaucrats and experts will be constituted to find out ways to eliminate black magic. The committee will submit a report whether astrologers need to register with the government. The final decision will be subject to the committee’s recommendations,” muzrai minister Kota Srinivas Poojary told TOI.

The minister said they need to monitor those who exploit people in the name of astrology, witchcraft and rituals. “We have been hearing of reports that the services of black magic practitioners and sorcerers are enlisted even to cure fever. All these should end,” he said.

The proposal for registering hasn’t gone down well with the astrologers and rationalists. Noted astrologer Daivajna KN Somayaji, though, welcomed the objective, saying he wanted to know the criteria for registration. “Which organization will fix qualification for us? Anyone can register and hang a board stating he is a government-recognized astrologer. This will lead to commercialization of the profession,” he said.

*Life is nothing but a series of decisions. You have to make decisions in life all the time. And those decisions have to come from a clear mind, not from a confused mind. Therefore, you have to be prayerful so that clear decisions will come to you.*

**Pujya Swamiji**