

# Pramukh Swami Maharaj

December 19, 2022

**In news**— The month-long Pramukh Swami Maharaj Centenary event, to celebrate the spiritual leader of the Bochasanwasi Akshar Purushottam Swaminarayan Sanstha (BAPS), was inaugurated by the Prime Minister recently.

## Who was Pramukh Swami?

- Pramukh Swami, **the fifth spiritual successor in line of the Swaminarayan gurus**, was born on December 7, 1921 to a family of farmers in Chansad village of Vadodara.
- He passed away at Sarangpur in Botad district of Gujarat on August 13, 2016, at the age of 95.
- He was the guru and Pramukh, or president, of the **Bochasanwasi Akshar Purushottam Swaminarayan** Sanstha (BAPS), a major branch of the Swaminarayan Sampradaya, a Hindu denomination.
- BAPS regards him as the fifth spiritual successor of Swaminarayan, following Gunatitanand Swami, Bhagatji Maharaj, Shastriji Maharaj, and Yogiji Maharaj.
- He was believed by his followers to be in constant communion with Swaminarayan, and ontologically, the manifestation of Akshar, the eternal abode of Swaminarayan.
- He received initiation as a Hindu Swami in 1940 from Shastriji Maharaj, the founder of BAPS, who later appointed him as President of BAPS in 1950. Yogiji Maharaj declared Pramukh Swami Maharaj to be his spiritual successor and guru of BAPS, a role he commenced in 1971.
- As president of BAPS, he had overseen the growth of BAPS from an organization centered in Gujarat, India, to one spread around the world, maintaining many Hindu mandirs and centers outside of India.
- He **built** more than 1,100 Hindu temples, including the **Swaminarayan Akshardham temples in New Delhi and**

## **Gandhinagar, Gujarat.**

- He had also spearheaded the efforts of BAPS Charities, which is the charitable service organization affiliated with BAPS.
- He was succeeded as the guru and president of the BAPS Swaminarayan Sanstha by Mahant Swami Maharaj.

## **Akshardham temple-**

- 'Akshardham' means the **divine abode of God**. It is hailed as an eternal place of devotion, purity and peace.
- Swaminarayan Akshardham at New Delhi is a Mandir – an abode of God, a Hindu house of worship, and a spiritual and cultural campus dedicated to devotion, learning and harmony.
- Timeless Hindu spiritual messages, vibrant devotional traditions and ancient architecture all are echoed in its art and architecture.
- The mandir is a humble **tribute to Bhagwan Swaminarayan** (1781- 1830), the avatars, devas and great sages of Hinduism.
- The traditionally-styled complex was inaugurated on 6 November 2005 with the blessings of HH Pramukh Swami Maharaj and through the devoted efforts of skilled artisans and volunteers.
- The Akshardham mandir has over two hundred murtis, representing many of the spiritual stalwarts over many millennia.