



*Inspirer & Creator of Swaminarayan Akshardham
Spiritual Head of BAPS Swaminarayan Sanstha*

India is a subcontinent with a number of different cultural and social groups, celebrating numerous holy festivals to rejoice about life and allows a medium to express one's devotion and inner sentiments. Traditionally celebrated in all Swaminarayan Mandirs worldwide through the inspiration of HH Paramukh Swami Maharaj, these festivals create connectivity with the ancient traditions and religious practices and showcase the rich mosaics of vibrant colours, music, dance and culinary craft of India.



Diwali Celebration - 13 Nov. 2012

Diwali – one of the most auspicious festivals in the Hindu calendar – was celebrated with great devotion and splendour at Swaminarayan Akshardham in New Delhi on Tuesday 13 November 2012.

Spirit of Diwali - Sentiments & Traditions

It is traditionally the day when business owners close existing account books and open new ones in preparation for the year ahead. The ceremony – called Sharada Pujan or Chopda Pujan – is also a time to take account of one's spiritual relationship with God. Diwali also signifies a time when charity, goodwill, family values and the love of God are celebrated and reinforced.

Celebration of Lights & Devotion at Swaminarayan Akshardham

Devotees and well-wishers gathered in the BAPS Swaminarayan Mandir for the Chopda Pujan ceremony, which commenced at 5:30pm. Hundreds of new account books – in a variety of paper and electronic forms – were blessed through the showering of flowers petals and rice grains amid the chanting of Vedic hymns and prayers.

Through the sincere effort of young boys and girls, an enormous rangoli of vibrant colours and patterns in front of the mandir welcomed all visitors with energy and affection.

The highlight of the evening for both young and the elderly was the spectacular fireworks display behind a vibrantly and colourfully illuminated mandir. Thousands of spectators, including families, local residents and volunteers were enthralled by the colourful 30-minute display that illuminated the November night skies.

Annakut Celebration – 14 Nov. 2012 | Offering of More Than 1,300 Vegetarian Food Items

Annakut – the day following Diwali is the beginning of the Hindu New Year in North and West India – was celebrated with great devotion and festivities at Swaminarayan Akshardham in New Delhi on Wednesday 14 November 2012.

Spirit of Annakut - Sentiments & Traditions

The New Year's festival in North and West India is celebrated on the very first day of Kartik month and is marked with an offering of Annakut. The Annkut offering is of hundreds of different vegetarian food items to thank God for his providence over the past year and to seek his blessings for the year ahead.

An offering and an expression of one's devotion, 'Anna' means food and 'kut' means mountain. Arranged in tiers to form a mountain, Annakut is a unique celebration of thanksgiving for one and all cherish.

This day is also in continuation of when Bhagwan Krishna urged the people of Gokul to offer thanksgiving to nature (in the form of Mount Govardhan) for all its gracious bounty.

Annakut is thus one of the most auspicious days of the Hindu year and celebrated fervently with gifts, feasting and merriment.

Celebration of Offerings and Devotion at Swaminarayan Akshardham

As traditionally celebrated in all Swaminarayan Mandirs worldwide, Annakut was celebrated at Swaminarayan Akshardham Mandir in New Delhi with an offering of more than 1,300 vegetarian food items. After the celebration, the Annakut was shared as prasad with visitors, guests, devotees and volunteers.

Hundreds of dishes of sweets, cakes, savouries, curries, pickles, salads, desserts, soups, juices, and various other items representing cuisine from around the world were lovingly and artistically arranged before the deities. The Annakut celebration Swaminarayan Akshardham in New Delhi has been recognised as one of the largest of its kind in the North India.

From the early morning mangla aarti at 5:30am to the morning maha puja, devotees were all enchanted in a devotional atmosphere. Param Pujya Pramukh Swami Maharaj prayed for everyone's health and well-being, and for the light of spirituality to dispel inner darkness and guide us through difficult times

After performing the Gorvardan Puja, the main ceremonial Rajbhog Arti (ritual offering) was performed at noon. Thousands of devotees and visitors came to for darshan of the Annakut and to offer their prayers for peace and prosperity. A labour of love, months of meticulous planning and preparations by the hundreds of sadhus and devotees of Akshardham went into the remarkable Annakut offering.

