

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

17th February, 2013

First international Hindu Environment Week

For the first time in history, Hindus worldwide are coming together for a week-long celebration of the environment. Hindu Environment Week, taking place from 17th-23rd February, will see Hindu leaders, communities, temples and organisations raising awareness about the importance of caring the planet.

Launched in Varanasi in October 2013, Hindu Environment Week will see a variety of Hindus taking part in a number of events.

Some of the highlights of the Week include:

- A conference on the importance of water and the River Ganges will be held at the Parmarth Niketan ashram in Rishikesh.
- The holy town of Vrindavan will see school children taking to the streets to raise awareness about environmental problems facing the town
- The famous Jagannath temple in Puri will be organising a number of events, including tree planting in the areas surrounding the temple
- In Varanasi, students from Benaras Hindu University will be conducting a week of events including the cleaning of temple grounds
- 50 students will help clean the main temple in Dwarka before a special lecture on the importance of caring for the environment will be delivered by temple leaders to over 300 pilgrims
- Students at both Oxford University in England, and Princeton University in America, will hold special discussions to learn and share what young people can do to help the environment

The Week is being organised by The Bhumi Project - a joint initiative between the Oxford Centre for Hindu Studies and the Alliance of Religions and Conservation. Launched in 2009 at Windsor Castle with HRH Prince Philip and HE Ban Ki-moon, Secretary-General of the UN, the Project works with Hindu groups across the world to address environmental concerns.

Gopal Patel, Project Manager for the Bhumi Project commented, "Hindu traditions have much to say about good environmental care. We hope through this Week those messages are shared with as many people as possible and people begin to make practical changes in their lives to take better care of the environment."

NOTES FOR EDITORS

With Hindus forming 80.5% of India's population, they are the largest religious group in the sub-continent.

Key Hindu texts such as Atharva Veda discuss the environment, and its importance to human and animal life in great detail. Compassion for all life is therefore considered to be a key tenet of Hinduism.

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