

Vivekananda International Foundation was inaugurated on 1st Dec. 2009

☒ A grand ceremony which marked the inauguration of **Vivekananda International Foundation** was held in its premises at 4.30 pm on 1st December 09. The revered **Mata Amritanandamayi** showering her benedictions on the Ftion was the main feature of the inauguration ceremony. Justice **M.N Venkatachaliah**, the former Chief Justice of India, delivered key-note address. Smt Vani Jairam, the famous classical singer was also present in the inauguration ceremony.

☒ The ceremony started with welcome by Shri Mukul Kanitkar, the Secretary of the Vivekananda International Foundation. He gave a brief profile of both the esteemed chief guests, Mata Amritanandamayi and Justice M.N Venkatachaliah. It was followed by the melodious chanting of the **holy invocations, by Smt Vani Jairam.**

Shri Ajit Doval, the honorary Director of Vivekananda International Foundation gave a brief but profound introduction of the Foundation and its objectives. He explained how the foundation would encourage young, talented research scholars to probe the depths of research in various genre of topics which are very vital to the national interests and thereby streamline the scattered potential of the efficient human resources available in the nation, so as to elevate India to her right place in the world, as envisaged by Swami Vivekananda. The research would encapsulate various topics like international relations, changing power equations in the world, our foreign policy, the insurgencies, left wing extremism etc. This will bring the intellectual community in consonance with the spirit of nationalism and will intensify it.

☒ Mata Amritanandamayi in her mellifluous speech rendered in Malayalam, which was simultaneously translated on wireless headphones in English and Hindi, touched upon a entire spectrum of topics, ranging from the lofty humanistic views of Swami Vivekananda to the problems being faced in the modern society. She explained how the impact of the materialistic civilization was effecting disastrous changes in the society by causing an attrition in our human values like compassion, love, cooperation and augmenting negative tendencies like selfishness, intolerance etc. She explained that although the modern generation is much better informed about the world, yet they are confused as they lack in the ability of judgment. She added that the best way of worshipping God was to exorcise all our hatred and prejudice and shower our love on all, regarding them as the tangible manifestations of the supreme spirit. She emphasized on rectifying the defective system of education as it was not in conformity with the ideals of Dharma which are imperative to enhance our humanism and make this world a better place for our children. Lastly she emphasized on the intense patriotism of Swami Vivekananda and generously showered her blessings on the Foundation.

Mananeeya P Parmeswaranji, the President of Vivekananda Kendra, in his erudite style explained how nationalism which was being regarded as outdated by the modern generation, is one of the most pressing exigencies of the time and was the inseparable precursor to internationalism. He expounded how Swami Vivekananda, who was a real international icon, having shaken the world with his clarion speech at the Chicago, was imbued with boundless patriotism. He explained that in the modern, global context when bigotry has vitiated our visions, creating tendencies of conflict, mutual reconciliation through dialogue was the only panacea available to us. Hence for fructifying Swami Vivekananda's concept of worship of God being tantamount to worship of man, it was imperative to have dialogue between different communities, nations, ethnic and religious groups, for eliminating the mutual hatred and virulence looming large on their psyche.

Chief Justice Venkatachaliah in the keynote address in his scholarly style recapitulated the factors which led to the decline of spiritualism in India in the past and explained how the advent of Sri Ramakrishna and Swami Vivekananda were cosmic events which not only protected the Sanatana Dharma from getting extinct but also proved the veracity of the spiritual truths enshrined in our epics. He extolled Vivekananda Kendra as an organization endeavouring to implement the noble ideas of Swami Vivekananda, without exhibiting any bias against anybody.

The ceremony concluded with the chanting of the Shanti Mantra rendered by Mananeeya Aparna Didi, Sujata Didi and Indraprakash Bhaiya.

☒ The ceremony was attended by nearly 600 people. A number of Swamijis from the Ashram of Mata Amritanandamayi graced the occasion with their holy presence. The presence of the Vivekananda Kendra karakartas of the topmost hierarchy like the Vice-Presidents, Mananeeya Balkrishnanji, and Mananeeya Nivedita Didi, the General Secretary- Mananeeya Bhanudasji, President of Vivekananda Kendra Vedic Vision Foundation- Mananeeya Lakshmi Didi , Joint General Secretaries Mananeeya Pravinji, Mananeeya Kishorji and Mananeeya Rekha Didi, Dakshinanchal Pramukh ? Mananeeya Satish Chowkulkarji was the outstanding feature of the inauguration ceremony. A large number of retired IAS, IPS, IFS officers along with top ranking officers of the armed forces like Air Chief Marshal (Retd) Krishnaswami, Air Chief Marshal (Retd) S P Tyagi, Admiral K K Nayyar, Admiral Raman Puri, Lt General Rawi Sawhaney, Lt General G.D Bakshi, Shri Kanwal Sibal, the former foreign secretary, Ambasadddor Rajiv Sikri, Ambassador T C A Rangachari and host of others were in the audience.

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