

# Happy 20th Birthday, Hinduism Today!

A family album of the major events we reported on

**I**N JANUARY 5, 1979, SATGURU SIVAYA SUBRAMUNIASWAMI, returning from a world tour, envisioned a way to unite millions of Hindus estranged by geography—by providing news of their common heritage, activities and concerns. The magazine you hold was founded that day. It started humbly, but today boasts a complex information network poised at the forefront of print technology. This month's Insight reviews key stories published over the years. But first, Indian intellectual architect Ram Swarup offers an overview.

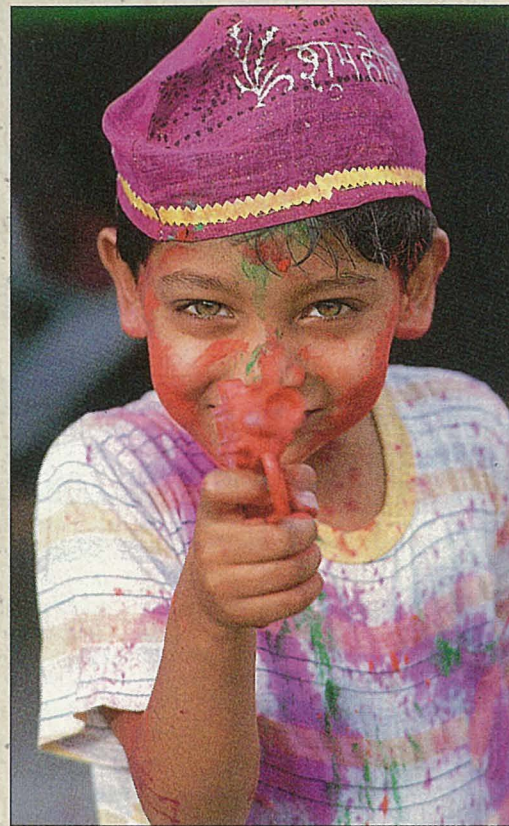
BY RAM SWARUP, NEW DELHI  
Hindu communities are found in many countries today, but with the exception of HINDUISM TODAY, there's no journal dealing with their problems and opportunities. In this respect, this journal is unique. It reveals the international face of Hinduism. Picking up a copy, one becomes aware of Hindus not only in India but also Fiji, Mauritius, Trinidad, South Africa, Southeast Asia and increasingly in Europe and North America. Its pages

bring them together so often under the same roof that they begin to feel and live together.

This face tended to be neglected by Hindus in India in the past. For centuries they were under great pressure and could not spare much thought for anything beyond the problem of survival. But things are changing now and there is awareness of a larger Hindu world, Hindu Vishva. The old resistances are still at work; however, and there is a strong tendency to make Hindus into purely an Indian phenomenon (though we know that not all Indians are Hindus). But HINDUISM TODAY (HT) makes us aware of Hindus beyond India and does it in its own way, not as NRIs, but as part of a family, as brothers and sisters united in a common spiritual perception and feeling.

HT tells us of Hindus and Hinduism abroad not only at present but also in the past. It finds Hinduism an old phenomenon, not a seventeenth-century construct as some would-be orientalist would have it, but an ancient and great civilization whose influence had travelled far and wide. But in succeeding centuries, India fell on evil days. The Hindu mind and psyche began to shrink and Hindus tended to forget this side of their history. HT is helping them revive those lost memories.

As it travels back in time, it finds no Aryan invasion of India but reports of Hindu presence in Europe and the Americas. From its scholarly special articles on Plotinus and



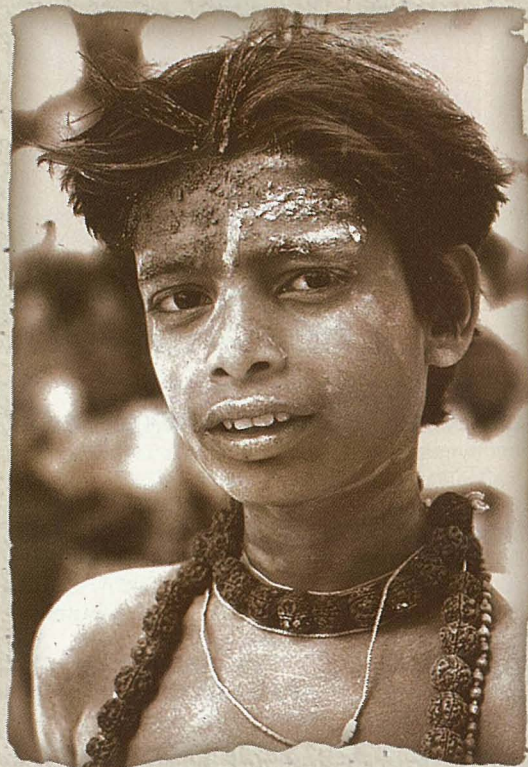
**Old and new:** Hinduism Today's growth parallels the dynamic changes among Hindus, as we move into the 21st century.

the Druids, we learn of intimate spiritual contact between India and Europe at an early date. Its recent article on old Inca and Mayan buildings reveals remarkable similarities with old Indian architecture, which points to an early, pre-Columbus contact between Hindus and the peoples of South and Central America.

The journal stands for peace among followers of all religious persuasions without being called upon to preach an artificial and indiscriminate ideology of "harmony of all religions." It avoids politics and politicians, in itself quite a relief. On the other hand, it reports what is happening in the Hindu religious world; it tells us of Hindu philosophy, doctrines, modes of worship, rites; it tells us of Hindu festivals, places of pilgrimage, of temples and educational centers that are being built by Hindu communities in different corners of the world; it tells us about the great Hindu personalities and about non-Hindu friends of Hinduism and it gives prominence to Hindu sannyasins.

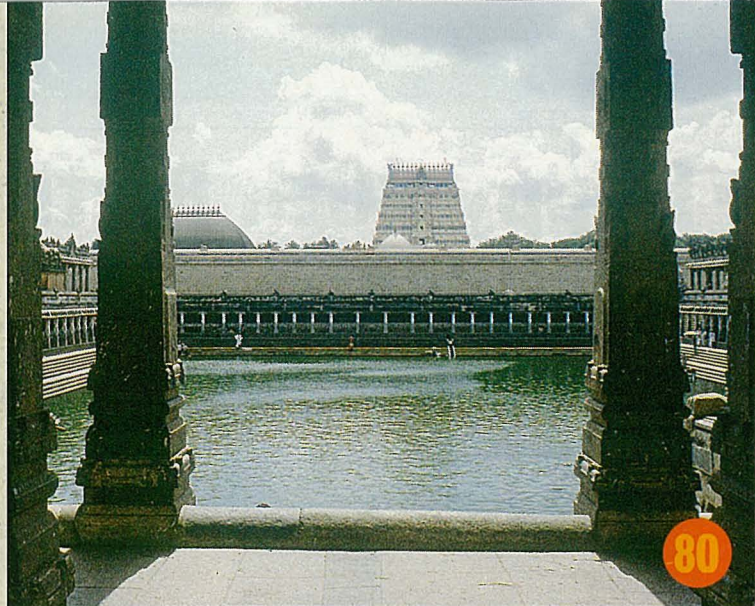
HT represents a new force. While consolidating Hindus, it also projects the great ideas and ideals of Sanatana Dharma. ▀

*Ram Swarup, New Delhi, is a leading thinker and writer, a spokesman for Indian spirituality. Find his works at: [www.hindu.org/publications/ramswarup/](http://www.hindu.org/publications/ramswarup/)*





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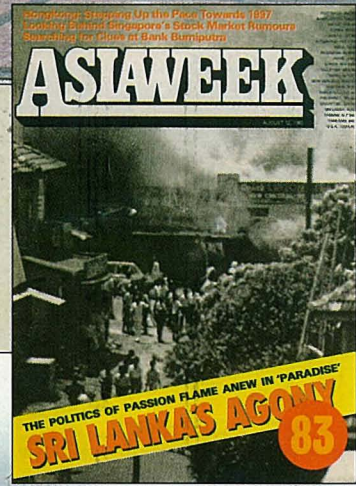


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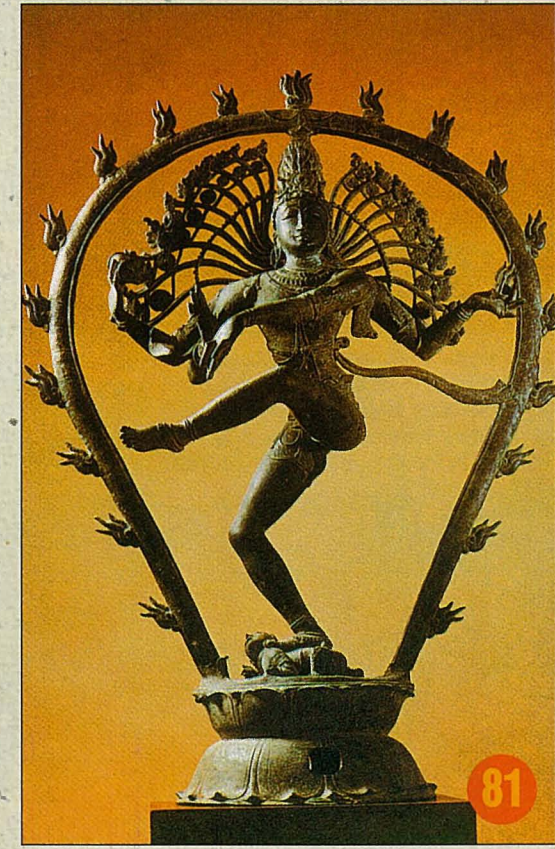
(Clockwise from above) 1979: Land for the Meenakshi temple in Houston, Texas, is purchased. 1980: A renovated entryway tower at Chidambaram temple. 1981: Siva Nataraja, the primary icon of the Manifestations of Siva US museum exhibition. 1982: Bali's Eka Dasa Rudra festivities at the Pura Besakih temple. 1983: The world press covers the beginning of the Sri Lankan civil war after riots erupt in Colombo.



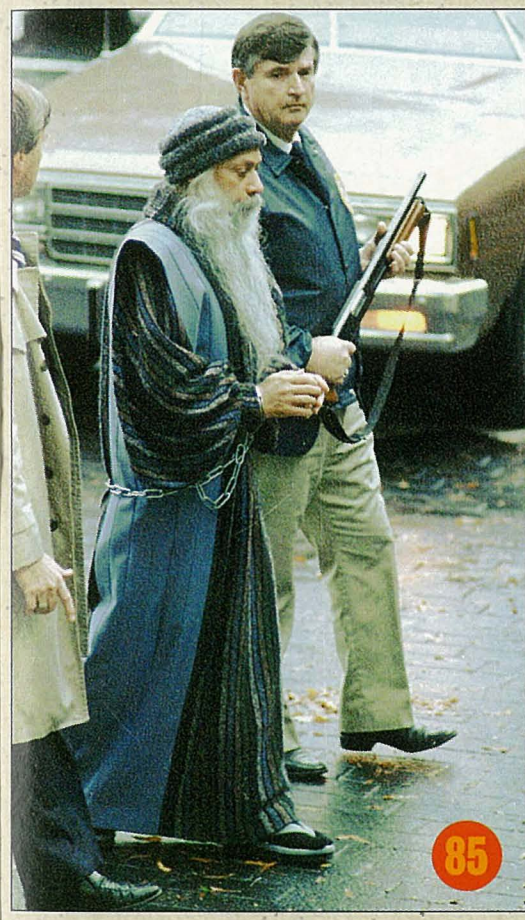
THE POLITICS OF PASSION FLAME ANEW IN 'PARADISE' SRI LANKA'S AGONY 83



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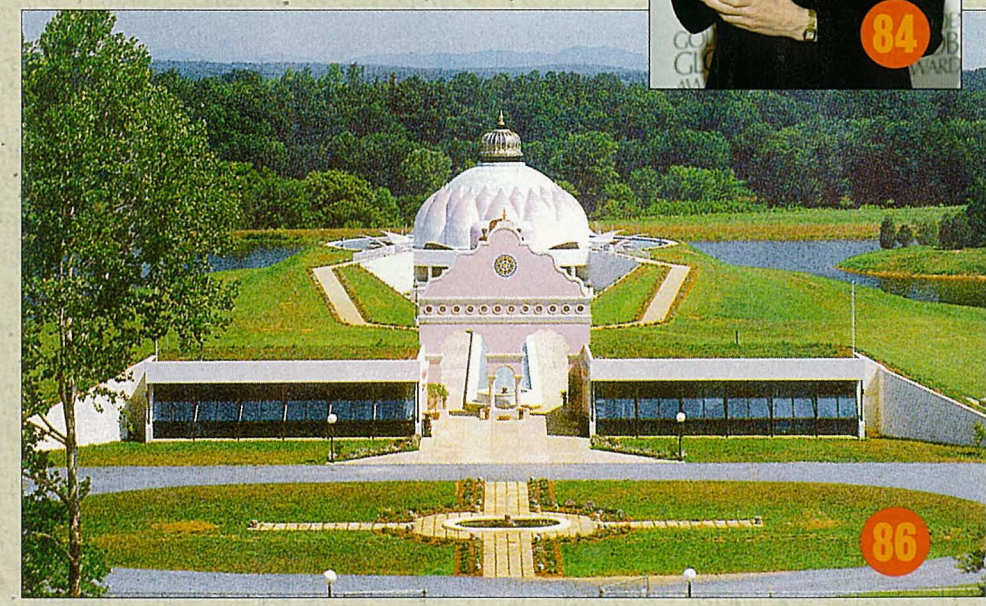


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(Clockwise from above) 1988: The Ganesha Visarjana festival is celebrated in California, its first significant public observance outside of India. 1984: Shirley MacLain, popular award winning actress, publicly reveals her beliefs in karma, reincarnation and Hindu metaphysics. 1986: The LOTUS Temple at Swami Satchidananda's Integral Yoga Institute, Virginia, is inaugurated. 1985, Ex-Jain cult guru Bhagwan Shree Rajneesh (also known as Osho) is arrested by the FBI on charges of immigration fraud while trying to escape the US. 1987: Mata Amritananda gains world recognition as a modern Hindu renaissance leader through a rigorous series of around-the-world tours.



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## Two Decades in Review

**1979:** HINDUISM TODAY is founded in Hawaii as "a bridge between East and West." **The First English** translation of the Hindu scripture, *Tirumantiram*, is published in the US by Saiva Siddhanta Church. **US Hindu communities** in Houston, Texas, and Malibu, California,

purchase the properties for the Meenakshi and Venkateswara temples, which by 1998 rank among the most successful traditional temples outside India. **1980:** **Sri la Sri Arunagirinatha** Sri Gnanasambanda Desikar is inaugurated as the successor and spiritual head of South In-

dia's Madurai Aadheenam. **India's Chidambaram** temple begins comprehensive, US\$35-million, 10-year renovation project. **Swami Satchidananda's LOTUS** temple is begun in Virginia. **1981:** HINDUISM TODAY adopts newspaper size. **Manifestations of Siva** exhibition, a stunning collection of Siva art and iconography, attracts hundreds of thousands during its US mu-

seum tour. **The Sri Ganapathy Temple** of London is consecrated in Wimbledon. **1982:** **Bali celebrates** the Eka Dasa Rudra festival, held only once each century. **Mauritius elects** the honorable Anerood Jugnauth, a Hindu, as Prime Minister. **1983:** **Riots in Colombo** flare, heralding the beginning of the still active Sri Lankan civil war.

**1984:** **Actress Shirley MacLain** publicly professes her beliefs in karma, reincarnation and Hindu metaphysics, giving added credence to the New Age movement. **Nepal's King Birendra** visits the US, meets president Ronald Reagan. **1985:** HT adds spot color and starts publishing every two months. **Indira Gandhi assassinated** in India, Hindu-Sikh ten-

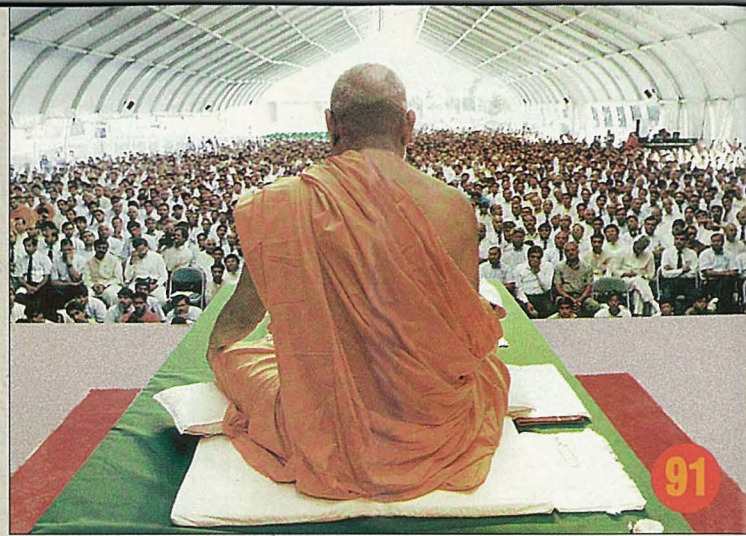
sions flare. **Ex-Jain cult guru** Bhagawan Shree Rajneesh is arrested on US immigration fraud charges and deported. **Nine-hundred Hindu leaders** meet in Udupi to discuss the future of the religion and current events. **1986:** HT goes digital with Macintosh computers. **The LOTUS Temple** at Swami Satchidananda's Integral Yoga Institute, Virginia, is inaugurated. **Controversy**

**sy rocks** the Siddha Yoga Dham movement as co-successor Swami Nityananda abdicates. **1987:** HT publishes monthly, adds new features, more color. **A New Jersey Hindu** man is murdered by prejudiced "Dot Busters," causing deep reflection within Hindu communities abroad. **Andhra Pradesh** passes a bill ending hereditary rights of Tirupati's temple priests, a

10-year court struggle begins. **1988:** Nine just-invented Mac IIs enhance HINDUISM TODAY's publishing network. **Oxford hosts** the first Global Forum on Human Survival with strong Hindu participation. **Bangladesh** declares Islam the state religion. **Thousands attend** the largest Ganesha Visarjana festival outside India, in San Francisco, California.



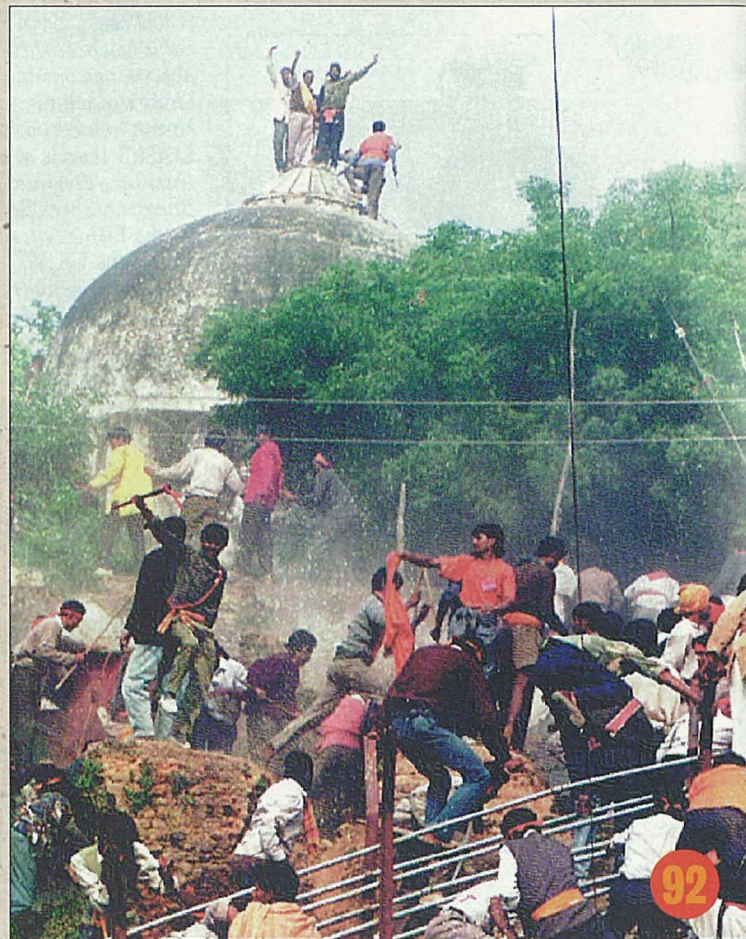
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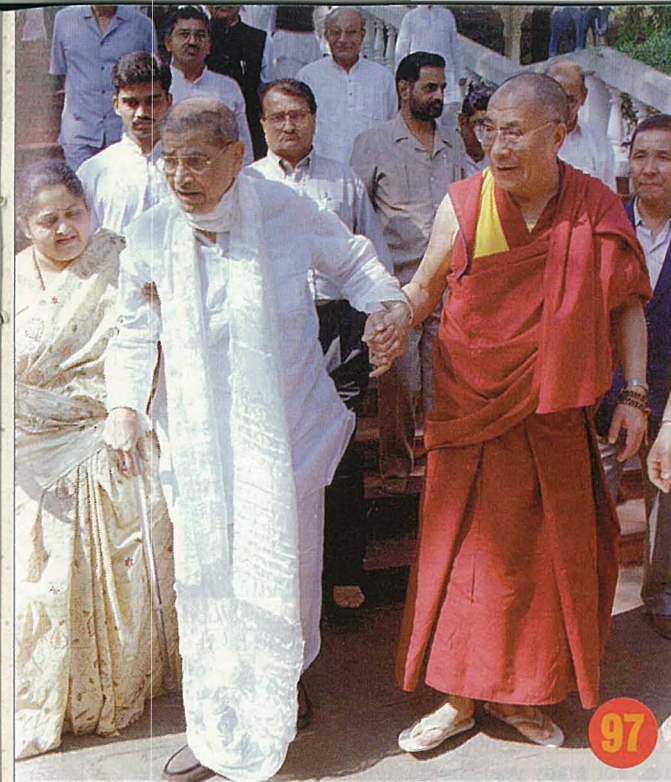
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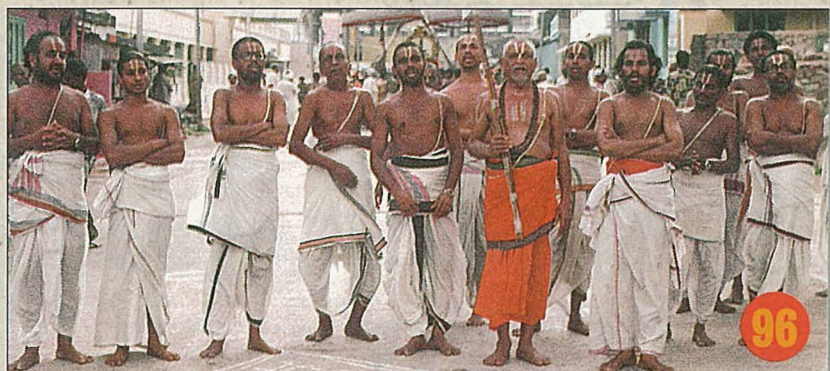
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(Clockwise from above) 1989: The Bharat Hindu Sammelan is the largest Hindu event ever in the UK. 1990: Karan Singh addresses the second Global Forum on Human Survival in Moscow. 1991: Pramukh Swami Maharaj speaks at the Festival of India in Edison, New Jersey. 1992: Hindu militant fanatics storm and raze the Babri Masjid in Ayodhya, causing widespread riots throughout India which leave thousands dead. 1993: Hindu, Sikh and Jain spiritual leaders actively participate in the centenary Parliament of the World's Religions in Chicago.

1989: England hosts the Bharat Hindu Sammelan, the largest-ever Hindu gathering outside of India, 100,000 visit. Hindus flee Bangladesh claiming persecution by Muslim fundamentalists. The Kumbha Mela festival held at Haridwar is recorded as the largest single assembly of humanity ever, at 45 million. 1990: Hindus flee Kashmir, giving up hope of an end to vio-

lence in their homeland. Moscow hosts the second Global Forum on Human Survival. Swami Paramananda Bharati leads all participants in chanting "Om" together in the Kremlin. Nepal becomes a democracy and remains the world's only Hindu nation. 1991: Germany celebrates a year-long Festival of India, and the BAPS Swaminarayan

Sanstha holds a Festival of India in Edison, New Jersey, which introduces Hinduism to hundreds of thousands. US Restaurant Association urges members to offer vegetarian menus. 1992: Full color explodes on the HINDUISM TODAY desktop. Militant Hindu fanatics storm and raze the Babri Masjid in Ayodhya, causing widespread riots throughout India which leave

thousands dead. Brazil hosts the Parliamentary Earth Summit in Rio. Hindus offer Vedic insights into the environment. 1993: Hindu, Sikh and Jain spiritual leaders are a prevalent force at the centenary Parliament of the World's Religions in Chicago. The VHP of America presents the Global Vision 2000 conference in honor of Swami Vivekananda; 10,000 attend.

1994: HT (and the Vedas) published electronically on the Web. Nelson Mandela becomes president of South Africa. He publicly hails Mahatma Gandhi's nonviolent example. Fiji Hindus inaugurate their largest new Agamic temple in Nadi. Sankaracharya of Kanchi, Sri Chandrasekharendra Saraswati, attains his mahasamadhi, at 99. 1995: HT acquires blazing-fast

(they were then) 9500 Macintoshes. Lord Ganesha drinks milk around the world in the most miraculous religious event of the century. India's Supreme Court declares the Ramakrishna Mission officially and legally "Hindu" after nearly 15 years of effort by the RK mission to gain non-Hindu status. 1996: Newspaper transforms into HINDUISM TODAY interna-

tional magazine. New journalists and photographers come forward. India's Supreme Court concludes its 10-year case and terminates Tirupati temple's hereditary priests. 1997: Pandurang Shastri Athavale wins the US\$1.21-million Templeton Prize for Progress in Religion. Tragic fire tears through festive kumbhabhishekam rites at the Tanjavur

temple in South India; over 39 die and hundreds are injured. 1998: HT pioneers direct computer-to-plate printing process. Network upgrades to Power Macintosh G3 computers. The Kumbha Mela in Haridwar draws 25 million faithful. Severe methods of child discipline within Hindu households and public schools worldwide are revealed. Children speak out.