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Amma's 60th birthday celebrations to begin with three-day prayer

by [Fwire](#) Sep 22, 2013

Kollam (Kerala), Sep 21 (IANS) The 60th birthday celebrations of “hugging saint” Mata Amritanandamayi will begin here Sunday with a three-day prayer for world peace.

Amritapuri – an ashram complex with an adjacent university lining a green coastal stretch in this south Kerala district – will witness the convergence of half a million devotees till the conclusion of the Amritavarsham60 celebrations Sep 27, according to the Mata Amritanandamayi Math (MAM) which is organising the event.

Swami Amritaswarupananda Puri, the vice chairman of MAM's board of trustees, said Saturday that the core part of the celebrations would span three days starting Sep 25, witnessing the presence of experts from several fields, besides political leaders and performing artistes from India and abroad.

“People from all over the world have already started arriving at Amritapuri to seek blessings from Amma,” he said.

“Many have taken this as an opportunity to show their gratitude to Amma for her 60 years of love, compassion and selflessness and to rededicate themselves to serving humanity.”

The dignitaries will include former Indian president A.P.J. Abdul Kalam (on Sep 25), Kerala Chief Minister Oommen Chandy, Gujarat Chief Minister [Narendra Modi](#) (Sep 26) and Uttarakhand Chief Minister Vijay Bahuguna (Sep 27), besides governors and ministers from the central and Kerala governments.

The main project would be an MAM programme to adopt 101 villages across India with the intention of making them self-reliant role model villages. It would be launched on Sep 27.

“On Sep 26, Modi will unveil a number of new scientific advancements and prototypes made by Amrita University that we are offering to society,” said Swami Amritaswarupananda.

“These include a wireless ECG-monitoring system called ‘Amrita Spandanam’ and a personal safety alert system for women in distress that has more than 15 features,” he said.

In the evening of the same day, Chandy will inaugurate a set of new charitable ventures of Amma's ashram.

On the concluding day, the participants will include Governors K. Sankaranarayanan (Maharashtra), B.L. Joshi (Uttar Pradesh), K. Rosaiah (Tamil Nadu) and Aziz Qureshi (Uttarakhand). Union ministers Vayalar Ravi, Oscar Fernandes and Harish Rawat are also expected.

The other MAM announcements will include developments in cancer research by the Amrita Centre for

Nanosciences and Molecular Medicine, a new tablet-based learning programme for literacy called Amrita RITE and a clutch of online innovations for the benefit of society.

Besides the ambitious 101 village-adoption programme, MAM will launch a Rs 50-crore relief and rehabilitation package for calamity-struck Uttarakhand where the Math would rebuild 500 houses destroyed in the June floods.

For the devotees of Amma, the events include Sri Guru Padapuja and Amma's birthday address on Sep 27 as well as opportunities to hear her sing bhajans and to have her darshan.

A decade ago, Amma had, on her 50th birthday, embraced thousands of people nonstop for 24 hours.

Amma's bhajans will not be the only musical highlight. Artistes from across the world will perform on all three days from afternoon till past midnight.

"This is not a mere birthday celebration. At its heart, it is a prayer for world peace and harmony. We are conducting a massive Sri Chandika Yagam for World Peace from Sep 21 through the morning of Sep 25.

"People from all nations will be participating, transcending their differences and coming together in the universal culture of the heart and re-dedicating themselves to try to follow in Amma's holy footsteps," said Swami Amritaswarupananda.