

# GenNext takes over

## Samarjitsinh Gaekwad coronated as maharaja

The 45-yr-old Scion Of Royal Family Is A Sports Lover

Tushar Tere | TMN

The cultural capital of Gujarat got a new maharaja on Friday, when Samarjitsinh Gaekwad was coronated as the king at Laxmi Vilas Palace in the city. The 45-year-old scion of royal Gaekwad family was a natural descendant to the throne after his father Ranjitsinh Gaekwad passed away last month. The coronation ceremony was done in the presence of family members and some close associates in the Gaadi Hall amid chanting of mantras and dhrumbeats.

It was a momentous occasion for the family that is yet to overcome the loss of Ranjitsinh. Samarjitsinh, who got emotional after being coronated as maharaja, too seemed in somber mood. The ceremony began at 9.15 am when Samarjitsinh walked in the hall with his wife Radhikaraje followed by elder sister Alaukikaraje. Rajguru Dhruvdutt Vyas started the ritual when Pushya Nakshatra – an auspicious time – set in. Samarjitsinh performed Ganesh puja and Kalash puja with Radhikaraje sitting on his right.

After the puja, he sat on the 'bhadrassan' – a silver seat – following which the rituals for rajyabhishek began. Clad in cream coloured sherwani, Samarjitsinh donned the royal Gaekwadi red pagdi and sported three-string pearl necklace. "The rajyabhishek was done by representatives of four different 'varnas' including Brahmin, Kshatriya, Vaishya and Shudra. They all sprinkled holy water on Samarjitsinh. After this ceremony the king becomes responsible for protecting all the communities," said sources in the family.

At 9.50 am, Samarjitsinh sat on the royal gaadi following which Alaukikaraje dipped a gold 'mudra' (coin) of Baroda dynasty in 'kumkum' and applied the raj tilak on his forehead. "Though the royal Baroda state has ceased to exist, citizens still have the same respect and love for the royal Gaekwad family. Now, I feel an additional sense of responsibility and I will do whatever is good for people. I miss my father," said an emotional Samarjitsinh after the coronation.

The couple then visited Siddhivinayak Temple, their family deity Khandoba's Temple and Kirti Mandir – the royal cenotaph.



Pics: Bharat Pothak & Ashwin Rajput

### A first, women allowed inside Gaadi Hall

As the 17th maharaja of Gaekwad dynasty, Samarjitsinh Gaekwad, got coronated on Friday, it marked a change in the traditions. It is for the first time in the royal family's history that women were allowed to be present in the Gaadi Hall to watch the coronation ceremony. Alaukikaraje, Samarjitsinh's sister, said that earlier women used to watch the ceremony from behind the veil.



### Royal Women Speak

Subhanganiraje Gaekwad, wife of late Ranjitsinh Gaekwad, said, "It was very important day for us as Samarjitsinh got coronated as the maharaja. He will shoulder his responsibilities as the successor. He is respected by all the people."

Alaukikaraje, Samarjitsinh's elder sister said, "Our coronation ceremony and the royal gaadi are very simple. But, the one who sits on gaadi carries lot of responsibilities. We had invited just family members and relatives."

