

India yogi who claimed to live without food or water dies aged 90

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An Indian yogi whose claims he spent decades without food or water earned him a band of devotees and the scepticism of doctors died Tuesday, his neighbour told AFP.

The long-haired and bearded Prahlad Jani—who dressed in red and wore a nose ring in the fashion of Hindu goddesses—hailed from Charada village in the western state of Gujarat, where he spent his life in a routine of yoga and mediation.

He was 90 based on his claim that he was born in August 1929.

"He died early Tuesday morning at his residence due to old age," Sheetal Chaudhary, who lived next door to Jani, told AFP.

"He was rushed to hospital after midnight, but was declared dead on arrival by the doctors there."

Jani's body was taken to Ambaji, a town renowned for its temples and where he had built a small ashram and was known as "Mataji" (goddess).

"The body will be kept at the ashram for the next two days for people to pay their last respects," Chaudhary said, adding that Jani would be cremated on Thursday.

Jani's tale that he was blessed by a goddess when he was a child which enabled him to survive without sustenance won him a small group of

followers—despite the doubts of medical professionals.

He told AFP in 2003 he got the "elixir of life from the hole in my palate, which enables me to go without food and water".

There was no way of verifying Jani's claims, but doctors have said a person cannot go for long periods without food or water without [organ damage](#) and the body breaking down.

Nevertheless, Jani's claims attracted the interest of India's [medical community](#).

In 2010 a team of military doctors studied him for two weeks at a hospital in Ahmedabad, Gujarat's biggest city.

Jani was watched with cameras and closed circuit television. Doctors took scans of his organs, brain and [blood vessels](#), and conducted tests on his heart, lungs and memory capacity.

They said he did not eat, drink or go to the toilet, and his only contact with fluid was during gargling and bathing periodically.

"We still do not know how he survives," neurologist Sudhir Shah told reporters then.

"It is still a mystery what kind of phenomenon this is."

The results of the study, initiated by India's Defence Research and Development Organisation, were never published or submitted for peer review.

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