

Dakshinapatha Vaartha

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Dakshinapatha (Also known as Dakshināvarta) is Dakshin Bharat – Southern India; Dakshin is traditionally regarded as the land south of Vindhyas. Dakshinapatha varthavani Bulletin aims to capture, assemble and consolidate the rich political history, culture and traditions, the people and the inspirational icons, reflecting the society and it's changing times. In terms of political states of present day, Dakshinapatha covers Andhra Pradesh, Chattisgarh, Goa, Karnataka, Kerala, Maharashtra, Pondicherry, Tamilnadu and Telangana. It also covers parts of Madhya Pradesh, and Odisha. We are presenting information related to these states in this bulletin.

Narasimha Jayanti (April 30)

Vaishakha Shuddha Chaturdashi,
Narasimha Jayanti.



To kill Hiranyakashipu and to uphold the faith of his devotee Prahlada, Lord Srimannarayana incarnated in the form of Narasimha Swami on the day of Vaishakha Shuddha Chaturdashi.

Generally, Narasimha is said to mean half-man and half-lion. But when we go into the philosophical essence, the Narasimha principle is that which removes the identification of the self with the body (the notion "this body itself is me"). Narasimha Swami is a symbol of faith and immediate protection. Everyone calls Narasimha Swami fierce in form, but he is not fierce to all. He shows his fierce form only to the devotee who thinks "I am this body," in order to remove that notion.

Hiranyakashipu was a Vishu-dveshi (antagonizes Vishnu), performed penance to Brahma and asked for a boon that he should not die. When Brahma said that was not possible, and that everyone born must die, Hiranyakashipu asked that he should not die at the hands of a human, animal, or deity; that death should not occur during day or night; not inside the house nor outside; that no weapons should harm him; that he should not die in the sky nor on the earth; and in many such ways he sought protection through boons. Brahma agreed. Believing he would no longer die, Hiranyakashipu became arrogant and destroyed sacrificial rituals. Declaring himself as God, he ordered everyone everywhere to worship him alone.

In the form of half-man and half-lion; using his claws as weapons; at twilight, the junction between day and

night; neither inside nor outside the house, but on the threshold; neither on the ground nor in the sky, but placing him on his thighs—Narasimha killed Hiranyakashipu. This Puranic story tells us that if one is adharmic, death is imminent; no boons protect.

Devotees observe fasting on Narasimha Jayanti to get blessings of Lakshmi Narasimha Swami. Offering soaked lentils (vada pappu) and jaggery drink (panakam) to the Lord is considered auspicious. Even if one cannot do anything, offering just one heartfelt salutation is enough to receive the Lord's grace. Reciting Narasimha stotras is good; if one cannot, chanting "Om Nrisimhaya Namah" or "Om Narasimhaya Namah" is best. If even that cannot be read, at least chanting the name "Jaya Narasimha, Jaya Jaya Narasimha" yields the same result. Did we recite a hymn? Did we chant a mantra? Did we make an offering? God does not see these. He only sees whether we have meditated upon him in our heart with a pure mind. All these forms of worship are for the purification of our own mind; those who can may follow them.

By worshipping Narasimha Swami during the evening twilight, all auspiciousness is attained.

Jaya Narasimha, Jaya Jaya Narasimha!
Jaya Jaya Prahlada Varada Lakshmi Narasimha!

Ocean Day (April 5)

In the history of Bharat, sea power (Sea Power) has been an important part. From ancient times, Bharatiyas used to conduct trade through sea routes. However, during the medieval period, European powers occupied Bharat's maritime regions and established their dominance. In such circumstances,



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the great hero who recognized the importance of sea power in India and strengthened it was Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj. The work he did is key in understanding the spirit of India's Maritime Day.



Every year on April 5, National Maritime Day is celebrated in Bharat. This day commemorates the first sea voyage operated by Bharatiyas in 1919. On that day, the ship named SS Loyalty, belonging to the Scindia Steam Navigation Company, started its journey from Mumbai to London. This stood as India's response to British dominance in maritime trade.

The objectives of this day (National Maritime Day):

- To create awareness about the importance of maritime trade
- To honor the services of sailors
- To remember India's maritime history

However, the true inspiration of this day began much earlier, especially during the time of Shivaji Maharaj.

Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj (1630–1680) was not only the founder of the Maratha Empire but also the leader who laid the foundation for maritime defense in Bharat. During his time, European powers like the Portuguese, Dutch, and British completely controlled the seas. Bharatiya kingdoms mostly focused on land battles. But Shivaji Maharaj understood the importance of sea power much earlier. In his view, “Only those who protect the seas can protect the nation.”

Shivaji Maharaj built the first effective navy in Bharat. During his time, around 300–400 warships, including large ships like “Gurab” and “Galivat,” and a trained naval force were developed. His navy was used to attack enemy ships, protect sea routes, and safeguard merchant vessels.

Shivaji Maharaj constructed strong forts for maritime security. The major forts he built include Sindhudurg and Vijaydurg. The special features of these forts are: construction in the middle of the sea, difficulty for enemies to reach them, and the presence of secret entryways. These became strong defense centers for the Maratha navy.

The strategies followed by Shivaji Maharaj were very modern. He mostly used small and fast ships. Following guerrilla warfare methods, he carried out surprise attacks even at sea—this was a unique feature of Shivaji Maharaj. Strong coastal control was also part of his maritime defense strategy.

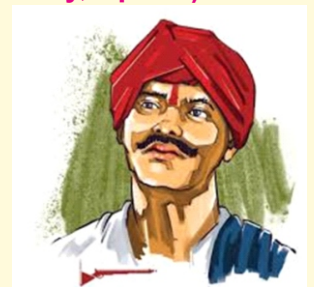
With such extraordinary naval tactics, he not only challenged European powers but also strengthened the Maratha Empire and increased confidence of Bharatiyas in naval warfare.

Although today's Maritime Day began in modern times, its spirit lies in the efforts of Shivaji Maharaj. This is because he laid the foundation of the Indian navy, built a naval force, gave priority to maritime security and trade protection, and showed a new path for national defense. Even today, the Indian Navy takes him as an inspiration. In 2022, flag of Navy was redesigned with Rajmudra (seal) of Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj.

India's Maritime Day stands as a great occasion to remember our maritime history. On this occasion, the contribution of Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj is invaluable. Therefore, Shivaji Maharaj remains immortal in the maritime history of India.

Ramji Gond (Death Anniversary, April 9)

Nirmal town, adorned with fort bastions, 13 chain-linked tanks, and lush green forests amidst the Sahyadri mountain ranges, is today also known worldwide for its wooden toys. But not just fort bastions and wooden toys—this very Nirmal town also contributed a thousand tribal warriors who participated in the First War of Independence, a chapter written in golden letters in Bharat's freedom struggle history.



The leader of these tribal warriors was Ramji Gond.

The “Thousand Gallows Banyan Tree” stands as direct evidence of the fact that even those living in hills, mounds, and forests rebelled for the freedom of the motherland and sacrificed their lives.

Nearly two hundred years ago, the hero who taught the people here the lessons of struggle was Ramji Gond. During the First War of Independence that began in Uttar Bharat (North India) in 1857, it was this Gond warrior Ramji Gond who led the movement in this region. Under his leadership, the struggle continued simultaneously against both the British and the local Nizam rulers. Gathering the scattered tribal people of the then Adilabad region, who lived separately in forests, he chose Nirmal town—the residence area of the British Collector—as his battlefield. The tribal warriors who worked under his leadership were called Rohillas. However, historians have not given proper place to this historic Rohilla struggle.

Among the many tribal communities living in the regions of present-day Maharashtra, Odisha, Madhya Pradesh, and Andhra Pradesh in Madhya Bharat (central India), the Gondwana kingdom had already been established before the arrival of the British. The Gond rule lasted for about five centuries, from around 1240 to 1750 CE. Among the nine Gond kings, the last ruler Neelkanth Shah (1735–1749 CE) was captured by the Marathas, who occupied Chandrapur. Thus,

the Gondwana region came under Maratha control, and later, as they submitted to the British, Gondwana was handed over to them. This marked the end of Gond rule and the beginning of British and Nizam domination, against which tribal rebellions began.

Ramji Gond of Adilabad district, around 1860, became the first tribal warrior to strongly resist British forces, making Jangam (Asifabad) his center. After Rani Lakshmi Bai of Jhansi attained martyrdom fighting the British, leaders like Nana Saheb, Tantia Tope, and Rao Saheb dispersed with their forces. The Rohilla soldiers, followers of Tantia Tope, entered regions like Aurangabad, Bidar, Parbhani, and Adilabad. They made places like Ajanta, Basmat, Latur, Makhtal, and Nirmal their centers of resistance. Rangarao, who declared himself their leader, aimed to overthrow the Nizam government and drive away the British, but he was captured by British forces while mobilizing people and died in 1860 in the Andaman jail while serving a life sentence. After that, the struggle intensified under Ramji's leadership.

The Rohilla struggle mainly took place in Nirmal, then part of Asifabad Taluk, a region largely inhabited by Gond, Kolam, and Koya tribes. Under Ramji Gond's leadership, the rebellion intensified. The final crucial phase of this uprising occurred in March–April 1860. The British rulers and their subordinate Nizam could not tolerate the Gond tribals, who were living lives of bondage, demanding wages for their forced labor. The Adilabad agency areas became turbulent due to British atrocities. Under Ramji's leadership, about a thousand Rohillas and Gonds, operating from nearby hills of Nirmal, severely troubled the British rulers. Under the supervision of the Nirmal Collector, Nizam forces launched attacks on them. Unable to withstand modern weapons and British cunning strategies, the tribal fighters were overpowered. Even as they fought bravely, they were mercilessly shot from behind.

Ramji Gond, who fought till the end, along with a thousand others, was captured and hanged on April 9, 1860, to a banyan tree on the Nirmal–Ellapelli route. That tree became famous as the “Thousand Gallows Banyan Tree.” Such a historical event had never occurred before in the country's history—where a thousand people were hanged at once to a single tree. Even though such an event is scarcely recorded in history, the spirit of those heroes who embraced the gallows with smiles for the sake of the motherland inspired later generations of freedom fighters.

The banyan tree that stood as a symbol of British atrocities later fell during a heavy hailstorm in 1995. Afterwards, under the leadership of BJP leader Sri C. H. Vidyasagar Rao, a sapling was planted at the same place, but some encroachers removed it claiming the land. Later, a memorial pillar was erected nearby on the road. Similarly, a statue of Ramji Gond was installed at the Golusula Darwaza area in Nirmal town.

The heroic struggle led by Ramji Gond has been

neglected by historians. At a time when Telangana is rediscovering and reconstructing its own history, Ramji's story must be brought to light. The struggle and sacrifices of Ramji Gond must be passed on to future generations. That alone will be a true tribute to this great hero.

— Courtesy: VSK Telangana

Vedātri Narasimha Swamy Temple

A reference to the greatness of the Vedātri Kshetra is found in Kāśī Khaṇḍam written by Srinatha. Vedātri is one of the most powerful sacred places where Lord Narasimha manifested. Since this hill region is believed to have contained the Vedas within it, the place came to be known as Vedātri. Situated on the banks of the Krishna River, this divine Kshetra grants spiritual merit and adds glory to Krishna district while winning the hearts of devotees.



According to the Sthala Purana, a demon named Somakasura stole the Vedas from Brahma and hid them in the depths of the ocean. At that time, Mahavishnu took the Matsya incarnation, killed Somakasura, and rescued the Vedas. The Vedas then prayed for the fortune of remaining in the Lord's presence. The Lord promised that their wish would be fulfilled after he took the Narasimha incarnation and killed Hiranyakashipu. He also told them that the river Krishna (Krishnaveni), which desired to perform his abhishekam, would hold them in the form of Salagrama stones until his arrival.

After killing Hiranyakashipu, the Lord manifested there in five forms: Jwala Narasimha, Salagrama Narasimha, Veera Narasimha, Yogananda Narasimha, and Lakshmi Narasimha. Among these, Yogananda Narasimha is worshipped as the main deity with special power.

At the beginning of Kali Yuga, Vyasa declared that humans need not perform severe penance, and that chanting the divine name is sufficient. Sages then began traveling while chanting divine names. During that time, they heard the sound of the Vedas coming from a hill on the banks of the Krishna River. Realizing that Lord Vishnu had manifested there as Narasimha along with the Vedas, they visited and attained salvation.

Devotees who visit this place take a holy dip in the Krishna River and have darshan of the Lord. They perform circumambulation around the temple and offer “Irumudi” to fulfill their vows. Every year, on Vaishakha Pournami, the celestial wedding of the Lord is celebrated grandly. The main idol of Yogananda Narasimha Swamy is uniquely beautiful, made of Salagrama stone, and was consecrated in Treta Yuga by Rishyashringa.

Errapragada and Narayana Tirtha also visited this Kshetra. Vishweshwara acts as the guardian deity of this place. Devotees believe that visiting this Kshetra grants all spiritual merits. On special festival days, the temple becomes vibrant with large gatherings of devotees.

On the hill near the sacred Krishna River, Jwala Narasimha Swamy is present as a self-manifested deity. At the foot of the hill is the temple of Yogananda Narasimha. In the Krishna River opposite the temple lies a Narasimha Salagrama. Daily worship and Brahmotsavams during Vaishakha Shuddha Ekadashi are conducted here. Devotees from various South Indian states visit during these celebrations. Visiting this Kshetra provides relief from chronic illnesses, mental distress, and family problems.

National Panchayati Raj Day (April 24)

Bharat is called a country of villages. For thousands of years, villages have been the foundation of Bharatiya society. In the administration of these villages, the Panchayati system has played a crucial role. It is not merely a governance system but also a symbol of social justice, cooperation, and self-rule.



The Panchayati system in Bharat has a history of thousands of years. The word “Panchayat” comes from “Pancha” (meaning five people). Respected and knowledgeable elders in the village would come together to resolve issues. In Vedic times, villages were governed by institutions called Sabha and Samiti, where people had the freedom to express their opinions and local issues were resolved at the village level.

Key features of Panchayats:

- Self-governance
- Social justice
- Quick decision-making
- Public participation

In the medieval period too, the Panchayati system continued. During the time of Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj, importance was given to village administration and Panchayats. Village heads called Patil and Kulkarni handled administration, including tax collection and justice delivery. This system promoted local self-regulation and reduced the burden on central governance.

During British rule, however, the Panchayati system weakened due to centralized governance, reduced local autonomy, and focus on revenue collection. Later, some reforms were introduced to revive local institutions.

After Bharat attained independence, strengthening the Panchayati system became a key goal for rural

development. Gandhi proposed the concept of “Gram Swaraj,” envisioning self-sufficient villages.

In 1992, the Government of Bharat introduced the 73rd Constitutional Amendment Act, granting constitutional status to Panchayats. This ensured regular elections every five years, reservations for women and Scheduled Castes/Tribes, and empowerment of Gram Sabhas.

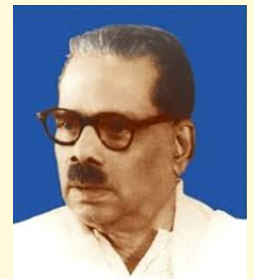
Today, the Panchayati Raj system functions at three levels:

- Village level – Gram Panchayat led by a Sarpanch
- Block level – Mandal Parishad
- District level – Zilla Parishad

Panchayats undertake development works like roads, water supply, education, healthcare, and poverty alleviation. They have become crucial in implementing central and state government schemes. Due to the Panchayati system, democracy has reached the grassroots, public participation has increased, and rural development has accelerated. Rooted in ancient traditions, Panchayati Raj remains a key pillar of modern democracy of Bharat. Development of villages leads to national development.

Bharatidasan (Birth Anniversary, April 29)

Bharatidasan—a symbol of national consciousness and a guide for social reform.



In Bharatiya literature, Bharatidasan stands as a great poet who harmonized patriotism, social equality, and love for language. His original name was Kanakasubburathinam. Born on April 29, 1891, in Puducherry, he passed away on April 21, 1964. He dedicated his life to patriotism, social upliftment, and education.

From a young age, he showed interest in literature and developed a deep love for the Tamil language. Social inequalities, caste discrimination, and injustice deeply affected him.

A turning point in his life was the influence of Subramania Bharati. Inspired by Bharati's ideals, he adopted the name “Bharatidasan,” meaning “disciple of Bharati.”

The hardships under British rule deeply impacted him. Leaders like Gandhi and Subhas Chandra Bose inspired his nationalist spirit. His writings ignited the desire for freedom among people and called for sacrifice and the end of slavery.

His works were not merely literary creations but powerful tools for social awakening. He addressed the struggles of common people in simple language, uses

of equality, freedom, and justice in society. making his works widely popular.

His nationalism extended beyond political freedom to social equality:

He opposed the caste system

Supported equal rights for women

Worked for the upliftment of oppressed communities

Women's liberation was a major theme in his writings. He believed women should be educated, independent, and equal in society.

He had immense love for the Tamil language, considering it the soul of a nation. His works preserved tradition while introducing modern ideas.

Key features of his writings:

Patriotism

Social justice

Equality

Simple language

Close connection to people's lives

Even after his death, his ideas continue to inspire. His works are part of academic curricula and promote national consciousness among youth. Honored as a "people's poet," he earned a place in the hearts of the masses.

In summary, Bharatidasan was not just a nationalist but also a social reformer, language lover, and people's poet. His life symbolizes patriotism, and his works established values of equality, freedom, and justice in society.

Bejjanki Lakshmi Narasimha Swamy Jatara

The Bejjanki Lakshmi Narasimha Swamy temple is one of the most revered Narasimha kshetras in Telangana. The Narasimha incarnation of Vishnu is protecting devotees. The jatara associated with this temple has a history of centuries and preserves rural traditions.



Held during the month of Phalguna, the festival creates a vibrant atmosphere with crowds, rituals, fairs, and celebrations. A unique feature that distinguishes it from other fairs is the tradition of "Goat Cart Processions" (Mekala Bandlu).

In this tradition, devotees who fulfill their vows decorate goats and bring them on carts as offerings to the deity.

The process typically involves:

A devotee makes a wish (health, wealth, family welfare, etc.). If fulfilled, they vow to offer goats. During the jatara, the goats are decorated with turmeric, vermilion, garlands, bells, and ornaments.

The carts are also colorfully decorated.

Groups travel from villages with drums, folk songs, dances, and processions, creating a festive spirit. Upon reaching the temple, the goats are offered or donated, symbolizing devotion and gratitude.

This tradition reflects rural life, agriculture, and the bond between humans and animals. It strengthens cultural continuity across generations.

While vow offerings exist in many Bharatiya fairs, large-scale collective practices like Mekala Bandlu are rare, making Bejjanki jatara unique.

The Status of Women in Sanatana Bharatiya Society

Sanatana (Hindu) culture represents a profound philosophy encompassing creation, preservation, and dissolution. In this philosophy, women hold a highly respected and spiritually significant place, unmatched in many other civilizations. Women are regarded not just as part of the family system but as the source of creation, embodiment of power (Shakti), and protectors of dharma.



In Sanatana (Hindu) thought, women symbolize strength, knowledge, compassion, courage, and creativity. The principle "Yatra Naryastu Pujyante Ramante Tatra Devataḥ" emphasizes that divinity resides where women are honored.

In Vedic times, women actively participated in education, philosophy, and rituals. Figures like Gargi and Maitreyi were not only scholars but also guides to society. This shows that women were never restricted but allowed to grow equally in knowledge and spirituality.

The concept of Shakti highlights that all creation and transformation arise from feminine energy. Even Shiva is incomplete without Shakti, emphasizing the essential role of women.

In epics, women's greatness is reflected through figures like Sita, symbolizing patience, dignity, and self-respect, and Draupadi, representing courage and resistance against injustice.

Even in medieval times, women like Meerabai, Akka Mahadevi, and Rani Rudrama Devi demonstrated spiritual strength and leadership.

Modern women's empowerment is not new but a revival of ancient values. Women's progress in education, careers, and politics reflects historical justice.

In Hindu society, women are seen as mothers, teachers, leaders, creators, and protectors of dharma.

Empowering women strengthens families, society, and the nation.

Thus, the status of women in Sanatana (Hindu) culture is not just an idea but a living truth—one that continues to guide the present and future.

Important Days in This Month

- Sri Hanuman Vijayotsavam –April 2
- World Health Day –April 7
- Ramana Maharshi Birth Anniversary–April14
- Basaveshwara Jayanti –April 20
- Akshaya Tritiya –April 20
- Adi Shankaracharya & Ramanujacharya Jayanti – April 22

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