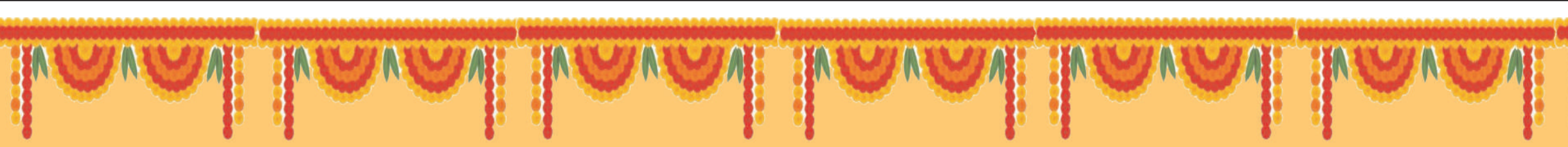


STATE TIMES

SUNDAY

Your Companion for a Funday



Ram Navami-religious and traditional festival

Ramnavami is a religious and traditional festival, celebrated every year with great enthusiasm by the people of the Hindu religion. It is celebrated as the birthday of King Dasaratha of Ayodhya and Lord Rama, son of Queen Kaushalya. Lord Rama, the Hindu deity, was the 7th incarnation of Lord Vishnu from Dashavatara.

According to the Hindu calendar, this festival falls on the 9th day of the Shukla Paksha of Chaitra month (month) every year. Ram Navami is also called Navami of the Shukla Paksha of Chaitra month, which ends with the nine-day long festival of Chaitra-Navratri.

People of Hindu religion celebrate it as a nine-day festival, by organizing unbroken recitations of Rama Charitra Manas, religious hymns, hawan, traditional kirtan and distribution of offerings after worship and Aarti, over the entire nine days. Devotees idolize Lord Rama as an infant and worship God in front of him. As everyone knows, Bhagavan was the 7th incarnation of Vishnu, Lord Rama and he was born among ordinary people to remove his problems.

People equip temples and other religious places to perform their traditional rituals and offer fruits and flowers to the Lord with the aim of removing their problems and achieving greater prosperity and success. They all gather at temples or other religious places on this day to chant Vedic mantras, perform Aarti and many other religious hymns.

Many devotees celebrate this festival by fasting for a full nine days and they get complete blessings on the last day of Navratri. South Indian people celebrate this day as the wedding anniversary of Lord Rama and Mother Sita.

All temples are decorated to celebrate Navratri in the southern region. However, according to Valmiki Ramayana, the people of Mithila and Ayodhya celebrate the wedding anniversary on Vivaha Panchami.

A grand ceremony of Ram Navami is organized by thousands of devotees at Ayodhya (Uttar Pradesh), Sitamarhi, Bihar, Rameswaram, Tamil Nadu, Bhadrachalam, Andhra Pradesh etc. At some places (eg: Ayodhya, Vanaras, etc.), the Rath Yatra of Lord Rama, Mother Sita, Lakshmana and Hanuman Ji i.e. Julius (Shobha Yatra) is taken out by thousands of devotees after taking a holy dip in the holy river Ganga or Sarayu.

Ramayana is the great and religious epic of Hinduism, which tells the history of King Dasaratha of Ayodhya and his son Prabhu Sri Rama. Once, in the Treta Yuga, there was a king named Dasaratha, who had three wives (Kaushalya, Sumitra and Kaikeyi). He had no children, due to which he was anxious for the future king of Ayodhya. One day, the great sage Vashistha advised him to perform a child sacrifice to fulfill his desire to have a son.

Rishyashrunga was specially invited to perform this yajna. After completing the oblation, the oblation deity gave him a bowl filled with divine kheer. He gave the divine kheer of the bowl to feed among the three wives. A few days after eating kheer, all the queens became pregnant. On the ninth day in the month of Chaitra, Kaushalya gave birth to Rama in the afternoon, Kaikeyi gave birth to Bharata and Sumitra gave birth to twin sons Lakshmana and Shatrughan.

Kaushalya's son Rama was the 7th incarnation of Lord Vishnu, who was born on earth to destroy unrighteousness and establish Dharma. Lord Rama saved his devotees from the attack of the wicked. He destroyed religion from the whole earth by destroying all the demons including Ravana and established Dharma on the earth.

Residents of Ayodhya were very happy with their new king, so they started celebrating their king's birthday every year with great fervour and joy as Rama Navami, which is a tradition today and religiously Hindu all over India Celebrated by people of religion.

People of Hindu religion living in the southern region of India usually celebrate this festival as Kalyanotsavam i.e. the marriage ceremony of God. They celebrate it, on the day of Rama Navami, with idols of Hindu deities Rama and Sita in their homes. At the end of the day, they perform a procession with the idols of God to perform Rama Navami.

It is celebrated with different names at different places; For example, in Maharashtra, Chaitra Navaratri is celebrated in the name of Vasantotsav etc. in Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka or Tamil Nadu.

People celebrate this festival by decorating the idols of Lord Rama, Lakshmana, Mata Sita and Hanuman Ji. They prepare sweets, sweet drinks, to perform rituals, they invite Pandit Ji to do havan and Katha, they are religious in the end of worship to remove evil powers from their homes and bring good powers and energy. Reads bhajans, mantras and aarti. People also pray for the good future of their family members and their children.

People fast for the entire nine days or the last day of Navratri to perform the holy annual puja. They recite the Hindu epic Ramayana; Lord Rama and Sita worship to bring happiness and peace in their lives. They wake up early in the morning and worship the Sun, the Hindu god after taking a bath. People worship Mata Sita, Lakshmana and Hanuman along with Lord Rama, as they are all connected to each other by heart.

People read and listen to many Hindu religious books along with singing devotional hymns throughout the day. Vedic mantras are chanted by religious people or communities at the event.

Fasting on this day is another important way to keep the body and mind pure. In some places, people organize religious and cultural festival Ramlila to tell the history of Lord Rama's life in front of people. People narrate dramatically the entire history of Lord Rama's life. The traditional and grand procession of the Rath Yatra of the festival of Rama Navami is the best way to display a peaceful Rama kingdom. In which people decorate the idols of Lord Rama, Mother Sita, Lakshmana and Hanuman well and then take out the procession in the streets.

Usually, people bathe in the holy Sarayu river of Ayodhya with the recognition of complete purification of body and soul. The people of the southern region celebrate the occasion as the wedding anniversary of Lord Rama and Mother Sita, symbolizing the bonding of love between husband and wife.

