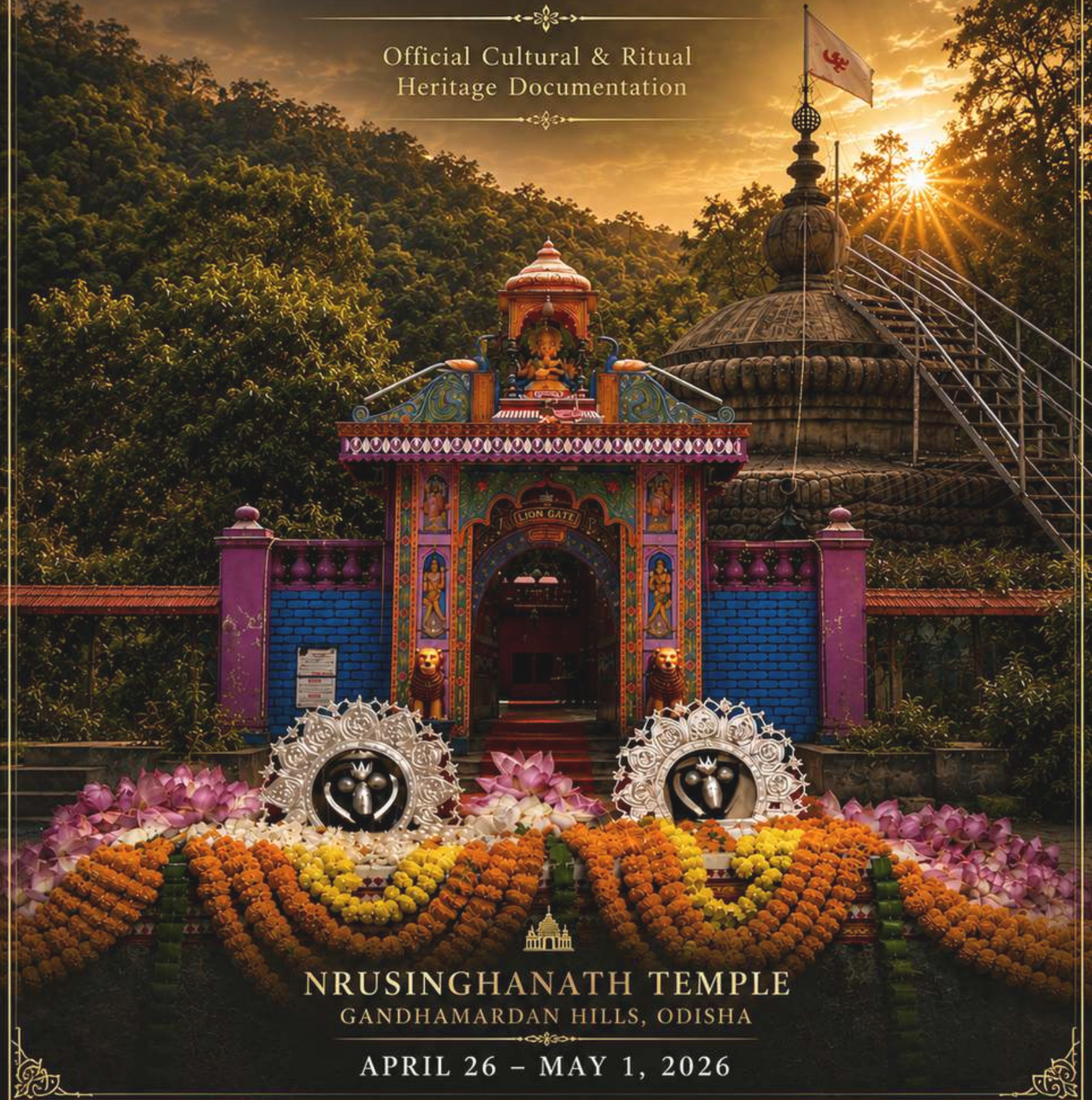


NRUSINGHANATH

BAISAKHA MELA 2026

Official Cultural & Ritual
Heritage Documentation



NRUSINGHANATH TEMPLE
GANDHAMARDAN HILLS, ODISHA

APRIL 26 – MAY 1, 2026



ॐ उग्रं वीरं महाविष्णुं
ज्वलन्तं सर्वतोमुखम् ।
नृसिंहं भीषणं भद्रं
मृत्युर्मृत्युं नमाम्यहम् ॥



Dedication



This documentation is dedicated to the generations of priests, servitors, and devotees who have kept the flame of Nrusinghanath alive — through centuries of history, through the turning of seasons, through every Baisakha month that has come and gone since this sacred site first received the presence of Lord Nrusingha.

It is dedicated equally to those who will come after us — the future pilgrims, researchers, and custodians of this heritage who will need not just memories, but records.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS



WITH GRATITUDE

This documentation was made possible through the cooperation, knowledge, time, and trust of many individuals and institutions.

The documentation team records its sincere gratitude to:

TEMPLE ADMINISTRATION & MANAGEMENT

The Shri Nrusinghanath Temple administration and all officials and personnel who supported coordination, access, and the documentation process.

GOVERNMENT & PUBLIC INSTITUTIONS

The Government of Odisha, Odisha Tourism Department, District Administration, Block Administration, and associated public authorities whose presence and institutional support contributed to the successful conduct of the Mela.

POLICE, SECURITY & PUBLIC SAFETY

Odisha Police, Bargarh Police, local police and security personnel, traffic personnel, medical and emergency support teams, and all those responsible for maintaining safety and orderly movement during the festival.

LOCAL MELA ORGANISATION

The Baisakha Mela Local Committee, local organisers, volunteers, community representatives, and support teams whose collective work enabled the festival to function at scale.

MEDIA & PUBLIC COMMUNICATION

Journalists, photographers, videographers, media organisations, and local communication teams who documented and shared the events of the Mela.

PRIESTS, SERVITORS & TRADITIONAL COMMUNITIES

The Acharyas, Pujaris, temple servitors, Kandha community, traditional knowledge holders, performers, volunteers, devotees, and local communities whose participation gives Baisakha Mela its living character.

Above all, gratitude is extended to everyone who opened their time, knowledge, spaces, and memories to this record.

This archive exists because the Mela was lived by a community.

Why This Documentation Exists



Across Odisha, hundreds of temple festivals are celebrated every year. Most leave behind nothing but photographs — and even those fade. The rituals, the meanings, the names of the priests who conducted them, the observations of the devotees who witnessed them — these are lost within a generation. This documentation exists to prevent that loss for Nrusinghanath Baisakha Mela 2026.

Our intent is not to produce an event report. Our intent is to produce the permanent historical archive of this Mela — one that functions as a cultural record, a heritage asset, a tourism reference, and a research document for decades to come.

“Gratitude to the priests and pujaris of Nrusinghanath Temple, to the temple administration and management committee, to the volunteers and security personnel, to every devotee who traveled to be present, and to the documentation team that worked through six days of ritual, heat, and ceremony to capture it all.”

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WHEN BAISAKHA BEGINS AT NRUSINGHANATH

Long before the first rays of sunlight touch the stone walls of Nrusinghanath Temple, the hills of Gandhamardan begin to stir in silence.

The pathways leading to the temple are still dim with the last darkness of night. Pilgrims wrapped in shawls sit quietly along the outer corridors waiting for the sanctum to open. Somewhere beyond the temple courtyard, the sound of a conch rises briefly through the cold morning air and disappears again into the hills.

This is how Baisakha begins at Nrusinghanath.

There is no sudden beginning to Baisakha at Nrusinghanath. It unfolds gradually — through ritual, sound, movement, and memory.

The sacred month of Baisakha holds special significance at Nrusinghanath Temple, particularly around Nrusingha Chaturdashi — the appearance day of Lord Nrusingha, revered as the fierce protector and fourth incarnation of Lord Vishnu. For centuries, devotees have traveled here during this period believing the presence of the Lord to be especially powerful during these days of worship. What unfolds over the course of the Mela is not simply a festival, but the continuation of a living spiritual tradition preserved across generations.

Before dawn, priests move barefoot across the cool stone floors of the temple carrying lamps, flowers, sandalwood paste, and vessels prepared for the first rituals of the day. The fragrance of incense begins to spread slowly through the mandapa. Oil lamps illuminate sections of the ancient stonework for brief moments before fading again into shadow. The temple does not awaken all at once — it gathers life gradually.

As the morning deepens, the atmosphere changes with it.

The sound of bells begins to echo against the surrounding hills. Smoke from yajna fires rises into the pale sky above the temple complex.

Devotees continue to arrive from villages, towns, and distant districts carrying offerings wrapped carefully in cloth — coconuts, flowers, tulsi leaves, lamps prepared for darshan. Some have traveled overnight. Some return every year as part of family tradition. Others arrive carrying private prayers known only to themselves and the deity they have come to worship.

Outside the sanctum, the wider Mela slowly comes alive.

Temporary stalls open one by one along the approach roads. Volunteers begin organizing devotee movement through the growing crowds. Bhoga kitchens prepare the first offerings the day. Sankirtan groups gather with mridanga and kartals as devotional songs begin to merge with the sounds of ritual preparations unfolding inside the temple.

Yet beyond the movement of pilgrims, beyond the rituals and administrative arrangements, there remains something at Nrusinghanath during Baisakha that resists easy explanation.

It exists in repetition.

In the priest reciting the same mantra his father once recited before him.

In the devotee returning after decades along the same pilgrimage route.

In the lamps lit each dawn before the deity.

The memory is carried quietly from one generation to the next.

The Baisakha Mela is not experienced through a single ceremony or a single moment. It unfolds slowly — across six days of worship, devotion, exhaustion, celebration, discipline, music, prayer, and collective faith.

This documentation begins at that moment of awakening.

At the hour before sunrise.

At the moment when the bells of Nrusinghanath begin to echo once again through the hills of Gandhamardan.

1.1 NRUSINGHANATH TEMPLE

A Thousand Years of Sacred Presence

Hidden within the northern slopes of the Gandhamardan hills in western Odisha, Nrusinghanath Temple stands as one of the most spiritually significant temple sites of the region. Surrounded by forests, sacred streams, waterfalls, and ancient hill pathways, the temple represents a timeless union of devotion, mythology, architecture, and nature.

Dedicated to Lord Nrusingha, the powerful half-man, half-lion incarnation of Lord Vishnu, the temple has remained an enduring centre of faith for centuries. Worshipped as the protector of righteousness and destroyer of evil, Lord Nrusingha symbolizes divine strength, justice, and unwavering devotion.

The spiritual identity of Nrusinghanath is deeply connected with the sacred landscape of Gandhamardan. According to regional belief associated with the Ramayana, a fragment of the Sanjeevani-bearing mountain carried by Hanuman fell upon these hills during his journey to Lanka. Because of this divine association, the forests surrounding the temple are believed to possess extraordinary medicinal value and continue to be known for their rich variety of healing herbs and traditional practices.

Beyond its Vaishnavite significance, the region also preserves traces of ancient Buddhist heritage. Historical references and archaeological findings suggest that Buddhist monks once inhabited the caves and rock shelters scattered across the Gandhamardan hills, using the peaceful natural environment for meditation and spiritual practice.

Architecturally, Nrusinghanath reflects the artistic richness of classical Kalinga temple design. Intricately carved stone structures, sacred motifs, and sculptural ornamentation preserve the craftsmanship associated with Odisha's medieval temple traditions while harmonizing naturally with the surrounding landscape.

For centuries, pilgrims, saints, travelers, and seekers have journeyed here not only for worship, but also to experience the sacred atmosphere that defines the region. Even today, Nrusinghanath remains a living symbol of Odisha's spiritual heritage — a place where mythology, faith, history, ecology, and devotion continue to exist in enduring harmony.



(Top view of Shri Nrusinghanath Temple).

1.2 HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF NRUSINGHANATH

Origin, Foundation, and Royal Patronage

The origins of Nrusinghanath Temple are closely associated with King Baijal Dev, also known as Baijal Singh Dev, a Chauhan ruler of the Patna kingdom in western Odisha. Historical records and regional chronicles commonly attribute the establishment of the temple to his patronage during the medieval period.

An inscriptional reference frequently cited in local historical literature places the foundation of the temple around 1413 A.D., establishing it as one of the important sacred centres of western Odisha from the early second millennium onward.

Under royal patronage, the temple emerged as both a sacred and cultural centre that strengthened Vaishnavite worship across the Gandhamardan region. Over time, Nrusinghanath gradually evolved into an enduring centre of pilgrimage and devotion, attracting worshippers, ascetics, and travelers from across western Odisha and neighboring regions.

1.3 CHOLA AND SOUTH INDIAN ARCHITECTURAL INFLUENCE

Artistic Exchange and Medieval Craft Traditions

Although primarily constructed in the classical Kalinga Deula style of Odisha temple architecture, scholars and regional historians often identify artistic influences that suggest interaction with broader South Indian traditions.

The temple's structural composition, stone detailing, and sculptural ornamentation reflect the cultural exchanges that commonly occurred across medieval Indian kingdoms through trade, pilgrimage, and royal alliances.

The jagamohana, or assembly hall, is especially notable for its three entrances and four massive pillars constructed from a distinctive stone material unlike the native rock of the Gandhamardan hills. Local traditions describe these stones as possessing a reflective or glittering quality when rubbed.

Historians interpret this as evidence of imported construction materials and organized royal craftsmanship, indicating artistic connections extending beyond the immediate region while remaining deeply rooted in Odisha's sacred architectural traditions.

1.4 CONTINUITY ACROSS CENTURIES

Preservation of Worship and Ritual Tradition

For centuries, Nrusinghanath Temple remained an active centre of worship without interruption. Unlike many medieval shrines that gradually declined over time, the temple preserved its ritual traditions through continuous patronage from local rulers, hereditary priests, servitors, and surrounding communities.

Successive regional dynasties contributed to the maintenance and ritual functioning of the shrine, allowing the temple to evolve while retaining its sacred identity. Over time, the complex absorbed artistic additions including Vaishnavite sculptural panels, Navagraha carvings, and decorative stonework representing different artistic periods.

Yet despite these additions, the spiritual foundation of the temple remained unchanged. Daily worship, ritual offerings, seasonal ceremonies, and pilgrimage traditions continued across generations, preserving an unbroken continuity of devotion at Nrusinghanath.

1.5 SURVIVAL THROUGH TIME

Sacred Resilience Within the Gandhamardan Hills

Situated at the foothills of the dense Gandhamardan range, Nrusinghanath Temple survived centuries of political transition, environmental change, and social transformation.

Its relatively secluded geographic setting helped preserve much of its cultural and architectural character across time. Unlike monuments that gradually lost their ritual purpose, Nrusinghanath continued to function as a living shrine sustained through active worship and pilgrimage.

The resilience of the temple reflects the strength of community-based sacred traditions in western Odisha, where sacred spaces were preserved not solely through royal authority, but through continuous local participation, oral memory, and collective spiritual responsibility.

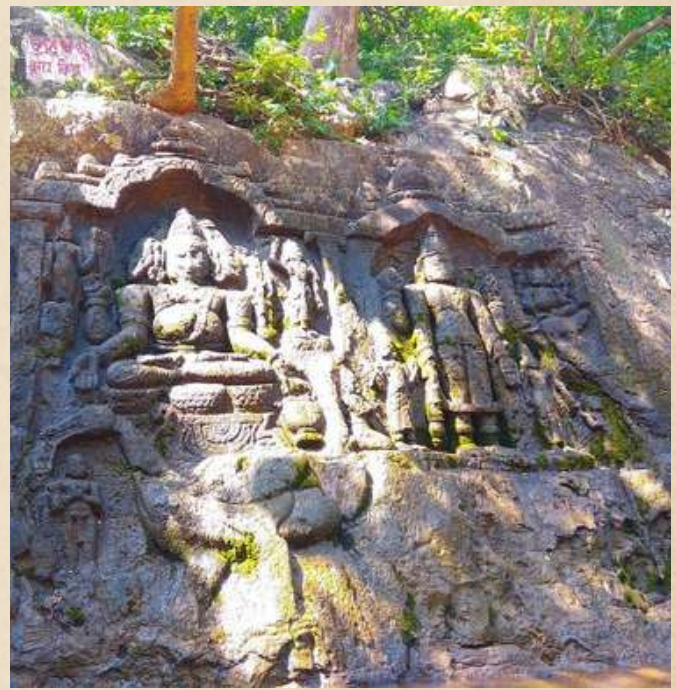
Even today, the temple stands not as a relic of the past, but as an active sacred institution where centuries-old rituals continue within an unbroken spiritual lineage.

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(Architectural details on the exterior walls of Shri Nrusinghanath Temple).

LORD NRUSINGHA- THE SACRED FORM OF THE DEITY

1.6 LORD NRUSINGHA IN VAISHNAVA TRADITION

Protector, Destroyer of Evil, and Divine Guardian

At the spiritual heart of Nrusinghanath Temple resides Lord Nrusingha, the powerful man-lion incarnation of Lord Vishnu. Revered across India as the divine protector of righteousness, Lord Nrusingha represents the triumph of faith over oppression and the destruction of evil through divine intervention. Within Vaishnava tradition, the deity embodies both fierce power and compassionate protection, making him one of the most spiritually intense and symbolically significant forms of Vishnu worship.

Unlike many divine forms associated primarily with peace and benevolence, Lord Nrusingha represents sacred force directed toward the preservation of cosmic order. His fierce appearance symbolizes divine intervention at moments when righteousness is threatened and injustice prevails. At Nrusinghanath, this aspect of the deity is not understood merely as destruction, but as protection — the protection of devotees, sacred order, and spiritual balance.



(Illustrative depiction of Goddess Lakshmi and Lord Nrusingha in their divine form).

1.7 THE STORY OF PRAHLADA AND HIRANYAKASHIPU

Faith, Devotion, and Divine Intervention

The worship of Lord Nrusingha is deeply connected to the legendary story of Prahlada and Hiranyakashipu from Hindu mythology. According to Vaishnava scriptures, the demon king Hiranyakashipu sought absolute power and forbade the worship of Lord Vishnu throughout his kingdom. However, his son Prahlada remained unwavering in his devotion despite repeated punishment, persecution, and threats to his life.

Unable to break Prahlada's faith, Hiranyakashipu challenged the presence of Vishnu itself. In response, Vishnu manifested as Lord Nrusingha — a form that was neither man nor beast, neither day nor night, neither indoors nor outdoors — thereby overcoming the conditions that had protected the demon king from destruction.

The appearance of Lord Nrusingha symbolizes the victory of devotion over fear, faith over oppression, and divine justice over arrogance and tyranny. Across Vaishnava tradition, this story continues to represent the assurance that divine protection exists even in moments of extreme adversity.

At Nrusinghanath Temple, this narrative remains central to the spiritual identity of the shrine, shaping both ritual tradition and devotional understanding.

1.8 MARJARA KESHARI

Local Odia Traditions and Regional Interpretations of the Deity

Local Odia devotional traditions further enrich the identity of Lord Nrusingha through regional narratives preserved in oral history and literary works such as the Nrusingha Charitra. Within these traditions, Vishnu is believed to have assumed a localized feline form known as Marjara Keshari in order to pursue the Musika Daitya, or Mouse Demon, who hid within the caves and tunnels of the Gandhamardan hills.



(The sacred idol of Mahaprabhu Shri Shri Marjara Keshari enshrined within Shri Nrusinghanath Temple.)

This regional interpretation symbolizes the destruction of hidden evil and the restoration of harmony within the sacred landscape. Unlike purely scriptural retellings, the Marjara Keshari tradition reflects a localized devotional imagination shaped by the forests, caves, and ecology of Gandhamardan itself.

The narrative gives Nrusinghanath a distinctive spiritual identity that blends classical Vaishnava theology with regional folklore, hill traditions, and indigenous belief systems unique to western Odisha.

1.9 THE KONDH TRIBAL TRADITION AND THE DISCOVERY OF THE SACRED IMAGE

Another important tradition associated with the origin of Nrusinghanath Temple centers around a Kondh tribal couple named Hari and Yamuna. According to local belief, while digging on the hillside, Yamuna struck a stone that unexpectedly began to bleed. Frightened by the event, the couple fled the site. Later, however, they are believed to have received a divine vision in which the sacred image revealed itself as Lord Marjara Keshari and instructed them to recover and worship it.

Around the same time, King Baijal Dev is also believed to have received a divine revelation confirming the sanctity of the site. Under royal patronage, the deity was formally installed and the temple established.

This origin narrative reflects the deep connection between tribal spiritual traditions and mainstream Hindu worship practices in western Odisha. The descendants of the Kondh family continue to retain ceremonial associations with the temple even today, preserving a centuries-old relationship between the shrine and indigenous communities of the region.

The story remains one of the most important examples of how local memory, tribal belief systems, and Vaishnava worship became interconnected within the sacred identity of Nrusinghanath.

1.10 LORD NRUSINGHA AS GUARDIAN OF GANDHAMARDAN

At Nrusinghanath Temple, Lord Nrusingha continues to be worshipped not only as a cosmic force within Vaishnava theology, but also as the living guardian of the Gandhamardan hills and surrounding sacred landscape.

The spiritual atmosphere of the shrine reflects this enduring idea of divine vigilance — a deity who protects the vulnerable, preserves sacred order, and watches over the forests, streams, and pilgrimage paths of the region. Devotees often approach Lord Nrusingha not only seeking blessings, but also seeking courage, protection, healing, and spiritual reassurance during times of hardship.

Within Vaishnava philosophy, the fierce appearance of Lord Nrusingha symbolizes divine energy directed toward the protection of truth and justice. Spiritually, the deity represents fearlessness during adversity and the assurance that devotion remains protected under divine grace.

At Nrusinghanath, mythology, pilgrimage, tribal memory, ecology, and ritual devotion converge through this sacred presence. Lord Nrusingha is therefore not understood merely as a historical or mythological figure, but as a continuing spiritual force deeply embedded within the living traditions of Gandhamardan and western Odisha.

GANDHAMARDAN

1.11 GANDHAMARDAN HILLS AND THE SACRED LANDSCAPE OF WESTERN ODISHA

Stretching across the border of Bargarh and Balangir districts, the Gandhamardan hills form one of the most sacred landscapes of western Odisha. Forested ridges, perennial streams, caves, and ancient pilgrimage paths give the region a spiritual identity deeply connected with Nrusinghanath Temple.

For centuries, Gandhamardan has been revered not only as a geographical landmark, but as a living sacred landscape where mythology, devotion, ecology, and pilgrimage continue to exist in harmony.

1.12 THE RAMAYANA CONNECTION

Hanuman, Sanjeevani, and the Mythic Origins of Gandhamardan

According to sacred belief associated with the Ramayana, Hanuman carried the Sanjeevani-bearing mountain through the skies while searching for the life-restoring herb to save Lakshmana during the battle in Lanka.

Local tradition holds that a fragment of that sacred mountain fell upon this region, giving birth to Gandhamardan. Because of this legendary connection, the hills are believed to possess extraordinary medicinal and spiritual significance.



(The monumental statue of Lord Hanuman situated within the premises of Shri Nrusinghanath Temple.)

1.13 MEDICINAL HERITAGE AND TRADITIONAL HEALING PRACTICES

The forests of Gandhamardan are known for their remarkable diversity of medicinal plants and traditional healing knowledge preserved through generations.

For centuries, local communities and traditional healers have relied upon the herbs of the region for Ayurvedic and indigenous medicinal practices. Even today, Gandhamardan remains recognized as one of Odisha's important herbal landscapes.

1.14 SACRED STREAMS, FOREST PATHS, AND PILGRIMAGE ECOLOGY

Sacred streams such as Papaharini and Saptadhar flow through the hills, feeding waterfalls, natural springs, and ritual bathing sites associated with pilgrimage traditions.

Forest pathways, caves, and rocky trails surrounding Nrusinghanath have historically supported meditation, ascetic practice, and spiritual retreat, making the wider landscape itself part of the pilgrimage experience.

1.15 GANDHAMARDAN AS A LIVING SPIRITUAL LANDSCAPE

Over centuries, Gandhamardan evolved into a sacred environment where mythology, healing traditions, pilgrimage, and ecology became deeply interconnected.

Even today, the hills continue to symbolize the spiritual and ecological soul of western Odisha — a landscape where nature and devotion remain inseparably linked.



(The Gandhamardan Hills, a sacred and ecologically rich landscape associated with the traditions of Shri Nrusinghanath.)

KALINGA ARCHITECTURE

1.16 NRUSINGHANATH TEMPLE AND THE KALINGA DEULA TRADITION

Nrusinghanath Temple is an important example of the Kalinga Deula style of Odisha temple architecture, adapted uniquely to the foothill landscape of the Gandhamardan range.

Unlike the massive temple complexes of coastal Odisha, Nrusinghanath possesses a more intimate architectural scale that blends naturally with the surrounding forests, streams, and rocky terrain. Though modest in height, the temple carries a deeply striking spiritual and artistic presence within the landscape.

1.17 THE GARBHAGRIHA AND THE SACRED INNER SANCTUM

The garbhagriha, or sanctum sanctorum, forms the sacred inner core of the temple where Lord Nrusingha is enshrined.

Designed as the spiritual centre of the complex, the sanctum creates an atmosphere of darkness, silence, and concentrated devotion, drawing worshippers inward toward the divine presence.

1.18 THE JAGAMOHANA

Ritual Assembly Space and Architectural Design

In front of the sanctum stands the jagamohana, the assembly hall where devotees gather for prayer, rituals, and ceremonial worship.

The hall is architecturally significant for its three entrances and four massive supporting pillars made from a distinctive stone material believed to be different from the native rock of the Gandhamardan hills.

Local traditions describe these stones as possessing a subtle reflective quality, suggesting specialized craftsmanship and the transportation of select building materials during the temple's construction.

1.19 STONE CRAFTSMANSHIP AND SCULPTURAL ORNAMENTATION

The temple's stonework reflects the refined artistic vocabulary of medieval Odisha. Carved motifs, sacred symbols, floral ornamentation, and Vaishnavite imagery are integrated into the architectural surfaces, preserving the visual identity of Kalinga sacred art.

Sculptural representations of divine figures, guardian forms, and celestial motifs further enhance the spiritual symbolism embedded within the structure.

1.20 THE TEMPLE SHIKHARA AND SACRED VERTICALITY

The shikhara, or temple tower rising above the sanctum, follows the characteristic vertical form of Kalinga architecture.

Though comparatively modest in scale, it creates a powerful visual axis symbolizing the connection between the earthly and the divine. Against the backdrop of the Gandhamardan hills, the rising silhouette of the temple acquires a distinct sacred presence within the landscape.

BAISAKHA MELA

THE SACRED FESTIVAL CYCLE OF LORD NRUSINGHA

2.1 UNDERSTANDING THE BAISAKHA MELA TRADITION

Ritual Continuity and Collective Devotion

The Baisakha Mela at Nrusinghanath represents one of the most significant annual ritual gatherings of western Odisha. Observed during the sacred month of Baisakha, the festival centres upon the worship of Lord Nrusingha and the observance of Nrusingha Chaturdashi within the Vaishnava tradition.

For generations, devotees have journeyed to Nrusinghanath carrying offerings, vows, and inherited devotional practices preserved within family and community traditions. The Mela therefore functions not merely as a ceremonial gathering, but as a living ritual institution embedded within the sacred identity of Nrusinghanath and the Gandhamardan landscape.

2.2 THE JANMOSTAV OF LORD NRUSINGHA

Nrusingha Chaturdashi and Sacred Appearance

At the spiritual centre of the Baisakha Mela lies Nrusingha Chaturdashi, the sacred observance commemorating the divine appearance of Lord Nrusingha, the fourth incarnation of Lord Vishnu.

Within Vaishnava theology, Lord Nrusingha symbolizes the restoration of cosmic order through divine intervention and the triumph of devotion over tyranny. At Nrusinghanath, the festival is observed as the Janmostav of the deity — a ceremonial celebration preserved through yajna traditions, ritual continuity, and collective worship across generations.

The entire ceremonial cycle of the Mela gradually progresses toward this spiritually significant culmination.

2.3 KALASHA ADHIBASA AND THE BEGINNING OF THE RITUAL CYCLE

Ceremonial Invocation and Sacred Preparation

The ritual observances formally begin with Kalasha Adhibasa, the ceremonial invocation marking the opening of the sacred festival cycle.

Through ritual purification, mantra recitation, and sanctification of the ceremonial space, the temple environment gradually transforms in preparation for the Vishwashanti Mahajagyan and the observances associated with Nrusingha Chaturdashi.

This opening phase establishes the spiritual foundation of the Mela and marks the beginning of an intensified period of ritual worship and collective devotion.



(Ceremonially sanctified Kalasas placed adjacent to the Yajna Mandapa during the Mahayajna proceedings.)

2.4 VISHWASHANTI MAHAJAGYAN

Ritual Fire, Sacred Invocation, and Collective Worship

One of the central ritual observances of the Baisakha Mela is the Vishwashanti Mahajagyan, performed continuously across the ceremonial cycle leading toward Nrusingha Chaturdashi.

Conducted for spiritual welfare, ritual continuity, and collective peace, the Mahajagyan brings together sacred fire offerings, priestly observances, mantra recitations, and ceremonial worship within the jagyan mandapa throughout the festival period.



(Devotees offering Ahutis into the sacred fire during the Vishwashanti Mahajagyan.)

Over time, the yajna environment becomes the spiritual centre of the Mela, where sacred fire, sacred sound, devotion, and collective participation merge into a continuous ritual atmosphere.

2.5 COLLECTIVE RECITATION OF THE NRUSINGHA BIJA MANTRA

Ceremonial Invocation and Sacred Preparation

A central component of the Vishwashanti Mahajagyan is the collective recitation of the Nrusingha Bija Mantra across the five-day observance.

ॐ उग्रं वीरं महाविष्णुं
ज्वलन्तं सर्वतोमुखम् ।
नृसिंहं भीषणं भद्रं
मृत्युमृत्युं नमाम्यहम् ॥

By the conclusion of Nrusingha Chaturdashi, one hundred twenty-five thousand collective recitations of the mantra are ceremonially completed.

Within the Nrusingha tradition, the mantra is revered as a sacred invocation associated with divine protection, spiritual strength, and the removal of fear and adversity. Through sustained repetition across multiple days, sacred sound itself becomes an integral component of the ritual environment.

2.6 DHRUTAHUTI AND PURNA AHUTI

Ritual Offering Within the Mahajagyan Tradition

At the conclusion of each day's recitation cycle, ritual offerings known as Dhrutahuti are performed into the sacred fire as part of the yajna sequence.

According to the established ceremonial structure, one-tenth of the total mantra recitations form part of the corresponding offering cycle within the Mahajagyan observances.

The ritual cycle culminates on Nrusingha Chaturdashi through the performance of Purna Ahuti — the final sacred offering marking the ceremonial completion of the Vishwashanti Mahajagyan.

2.7 PRIESTLY TRADITION AND RITUAL RESPONSIBILITY

Ceremonial Structure and Sacred Continuity

The ritual observances associated with the Baisakha Mela are conducted through the coordinated efforts of fourteen priests responsible for maintaining the ceremonial sequence of the Mahayajna and associated temple rituals.

Their responsibilities include mantra recitation, yajna procedures, ritual offerings, ceremonial preparation, and the preservation of ritual continuity throughout the observance period.

The organized priestly structure reflects the ceremonial discipline required for sustaining large-scale ritual traditions within the Nrusinghanath temple system.

2.8 THE KANDHA COMMUNITY AND THE ROLE OF THE KARTA COUPLE

Indigenous Continuity Within the Ritual Tradition

An important cultural dimension of the Baisakha Mela is the participation of the Kandha community within the ritual structure of the Vishwashanti Mahajagyan.

Traditionally, the role of the principal Karta couple is undertaken by representatives of the Kandha Samaj, reflecting the enduring relationship between indigenous cultural traditions and the ritual heritage of Nrusinghanath.

This ceremonial continuity preserves a significant cultural connection between tribal devotional practices, sacred geography, and temple worship traditions within western Odisha.



(The Karta-Karti couple from the Kandha community participating in the Janmotsav rituals of Lord Nrusingha.)

2.10 THE MELA LANDSCAPE BEYOND THE TEMPLE

Mina Bazar, Temporary Settlements, and Public Gathering Spaces

Alongside the ritual observances, a large temporary public landscape gradually emerges around Nrusinghanath during the festival period.

Mina Bazar stalls, devotional marketplaces, food vendors, toy shops, household traders, and temporary commercial structures arrive from multiple districts and neighboring states, transforming the pilgrimage environment into a vibrant seasonal gathering space.

Traditional fairground attractions, including Doli structures and temporary amusement installations, become part of the wider social atmosphere of the Mela, particularly during evening hours when public movement intensifies across the festival grounds.

Beyond the temple rituals themselves, the Mela therefore functions as a living cultural landscape where pilgrimage, commerce, public gathering, and collective celebration coexist within a shared ceremonial environment.



(A congregation of devotees within the temple premises during the religious proceedings of Baisakha Mela.)

2.11 PREPARING THE TEMPLE FOR THE MELA

Roads, Ritual Journeys, and Sacred Movement

Prior to the principal observances, the temple complex undergoes extensive ritual and administrative preparation.

Priests, servitors, volunteers, and temple authorities collectively coordinate the preparation of ceremonial materials, lighting arrangements, ritual spaces, and pilgrim movement systems required for the festival period.

Simultaneously, logistical arrangements involving crowd management, water distribution, sanitation, security, healthcare support, and bhoga distribution become essential for sustaining the large-scale pilgrimage environment throughout the Mela.



(Painters undertaking decorative and maintenance work on the walls of Shri Nrusinghanath Temple.)



(Floral and illuminated decorations embellishing the temple gateway during the festival celebrations.)

2.12 THE SIX-DAY RITUAL CYCLE

Ceremonial Overview of Baisakha Mela 2026

The Baisakha Mela of 2026 unfolded across six days of ritual observance, ceremonial worship, devotional gathering, and continuous pilgrimage activity at Nrusinghanath Temple.

Beginning with Kalasha Adhibasa and the initiation of the Vishwashanti Mahajagyan, the ritual cycle gradually intensified through mantra recitation, yajna observances, ceremonial worship, and increasing participation of pilgrims across the festival period.

The observances reached their spiritual culmination on Nrusingha Chaturdashi through the completion of one hundred twenty-five thousand collective recitations of the Nrusingha Bija Mantra and the performance of Purna Ahuti within the Mahajagyan tradition.

This documentation records those six days not merely as a sequence of events, but as a living ritual environment shaped by sacred continuity, collective devotion, priestly tradition, pilgrimage movement, and cultural heritage.

SECTION III

THE SIX-DAY RITUAL DOCUMENTATION

BAISAKHA MELA 2026

DAY ONE

APRIL 26, 2026

Kalasha Adhibasa and Ankuraropana
The Ceremonial Beginning of the Vishwashanti Mahajagyan

3.1 DAWN AT NRUSINGHANATH

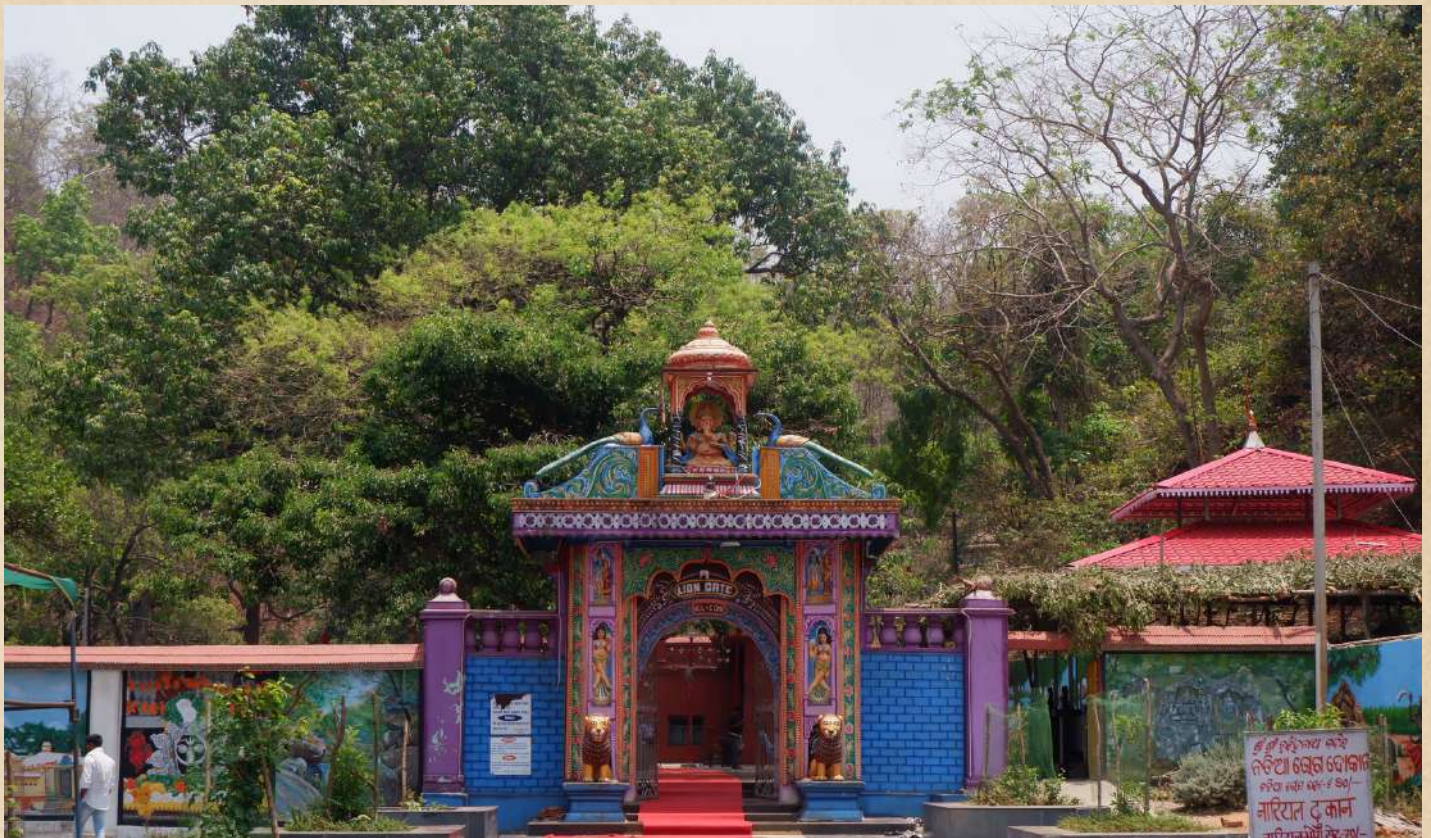
The first day of the Baisakha Mela 2026 began beneath the sacred foothills of Gandhamardan, where the temple of Lord Nrusingha gradually awakened to the rhythm of ritual observance. As the first rays of sunlight touched the temple complex, the sounds of morning arati, temple bells, conch shells, and devotional recitations resonated through the surrounding landscape.

Pilgrims began arriving steadily from nearby villages, towns, and distant districts, carrying offerings and preparing to participate in the opening ceremonies of the annual observance. Despite the intense summer heat characteristic of the month of Baisakha, the atmosphere remained marked by devotion, anticipation, and collective spiritual energy.

For Nrusinghanath, this was not merely the beginning of a festival. It was the commencement of a sacred ritual cycle that would continue across six days and culminate in the observance of Nrusingha Chaturdashi, the Janmostav of Lord Nrusingha.

Documentation Note

The opening morning reflected a gradual transition from daily temple worship to large-scale ritual observance. The movement of pilgrims, priests, volunteers, and temple servitors throughout the precinct signaled the beginning of one of the most important annual observances associated with the shrine.



(The main entrance of Shri Nrusinghanath Temple at dawn on the inaugural day of the festival.)

3.2 PREPARING THE JAGYAN MANDAPA

As the morning progressed, attention gradually shifted toward the yajna mandapa, the ceremonial space where the Vishwashanti Mahajagyan would be conducted throughout the observance period.

The mandapa underwent systematic preparation according to established yajna traditions. Ritual vessels, sacred materials, offerings, kalashas, ceremonial implements, and fire ritual arrangements were assembled and organized under priestly supervision. Every element required for the coming days was carefully prepared within the ritual enclosure.

While the daily worship of Lord Nrusingha continued within the sanctum under the care of the temple's traditional unmarried priests, responsibility for the Vishwashanti Mahajagyan was entrusted to fourteen invited scholars and ritual specialists assembled under the guidance of the presiding Acharya.

Within ritual traditions, the preparation of the mandapa signifies the transformation of ordinary space into sacred space — a consecrated environment prepared to host prayer, sacrifice, mantra, and collective worship.

Documentation Note

The preparation phase demonstrated the level of ceremonial coordination required for a multi-day yajna tradition, involving ritual scholars, temple authorities, volunteers, and ceremonial assistants working simultaneously within the sacred enclosure.



(The Yajna Mandapa prepared for the performance of the Vishwashanti Mahajagyan.)



(The Kalasas prepared for Adhibasa)

3.3 ANKURAROPANA AND RITUAL PURIFICATION

One of the earliest major observances of the day was Ankuraropana, performed as part of the ceremonial purification and preparation of the Vishwashanti Mahajagyan.

The ritual was accompanied by Panchagavya Shodhana and associated purification rites intended to sanctify the participants, ritual materials, and ceremonial environment. Through these observances, the yajna mandapa was gradually transformed into a consecrated ritual space prepared for the sacred proceedings ahead.

Ankuraropana occupies an important place within yajna traditions. Through the symbolic sowing of sacred seeds, the ceremony invokes fertility, renewal, prosperity, and auspicious beginnings. It reflects the belief that every sacred undertaking must begin with the invocation of growth and harmony before progressing toward its larger spiritual objectives.

The performance of Ankuraropana therefore marked the formal opening of the ritual cycle and established the ceremonial foundation upon which the succeeding observances would unfold.

Documentation Note

As one of the first ritual acts of the Mahajagyan sequence, Ankuraropana symbolically linked the observance to ideas of regeneration, continuity, and the nurturing of life. Its performance signified that the ceremonial cycle had formally commenced.



(Ankura ropana ceremony performing in the presence of Pandits and devotees)



(The ceremonial sowing of sacred seeds during the Ankura Ropana ritual preceding the Mahajagyan)

3.4 INVOCATION OF THE VISHWASHANTI MAHAJAGYAN

Following the completion of the preliminary rites, the Vishwashanti Mahajagyan was formally inaugurated under the guidance of the presiding Acharya, who assumed ceremonial responsibility for the observances that would continue throughout the coming days.

Representatives of the Kandha community participated as the Karta couple, continuing a ritual association preserved within the traditions of Nrusinghanath. Their presence reflected the enduring relationship between indigenous cultural traditions and the ritual heritage of the temple.

Through Vedic recitations, sacred invocations, and ceremonial procedures, the Mahayajna was formally established. From this moment onward, the yajna fire, mantra recitations, and ritual offerings would become the spiritual centre of the Mela.

The very name Vishwashanti — "Universal Peace" — reflects the philosophical objective of the observance. The Mahajagyan is performed not merely for individual welfare, but for the harmony and well-being of all existence.

Documentation Note

The inauguration of the Mahajagyan marked the ceremonial transition from preparation to active observance, establishing the ritual framework that would guide the festival throughout the coming days.

3.5 KALASHA JATRA TO PAPA HARINI

The most visually significant observance of the first day was the Kalasha Jatra associated with the Kalasha Adhibasa ceremonies.

Women, young girls, elders, devotees, and ritual participants assembled carrying ceremonial kalashas and proceeded toward the sacred waters of Papaharini. Accompanied by Vedic recitations, devotional chanting, temple music, and the rhythmic movement of the procession, the atmosphere reflected both reverence and collective participation.

As the procession moved through the sacred landscape of Nrusinghanath, it connected ritual observance with the forests, pathways, streams, and natural surroundings that form an integral part of the temple's spiritual identity. The journey from temple to water symbolized purification, invocation, and the gathering of sacred elements necessary for the forthcoming observances.

The serene environment surrounding Papaharini, combined with the continuous chanting of mantras and sacred recitations, created one of the most spiritually immersive moments of the opening day.

Documentation Note

The Kalasha Jatra represented one of the clearest expressions of community participation during the first day. Guided by priests yet sustained through collective involvement, the procession transformed ritual into a shared expression of devotion.



(Ritually prepared Kalashas arranged prior to their ceremonial procession during the Kalasa Jatra.)



(Devotees carrying the sacred Kalashas in procession towards Papaharini during the ceremonial Kalasa Jatra.)

3.6 KALASHA ADHIBASA

At the Papaharini Ghat, water was ceremonially collected and the kalashas were prepared according to established ritual procedure before being carried back to the yajna mandapa.

Upon their return, coconuts, sacred cloth, and ritual elements were placed upon the kalashas before their ceremonial installation within the mandapa. This process formally completed the Kalasha Adhibasa observances.

Within Hindu ritual traditions, the kalasha represents sacred presence, abundance, fertility, and divine invocation. The act of Kalasha Adhibasa therefore serves as an important ritual of consecration, establishing the spiritual environment necessary for the continuation of the Mahajagyan.

With the installation completed, the ritual foundation of the six-day observance stood firmly established.

Documentation Note

The completion of Kalasha Adhibasa formally consecrated the ritual environment and signified that the Vishwashanti Mahajagyan had entered its active ceremonial phase.



(The sacred Kalasa Jatra, marking the ceremonial procession of consecrated Kalasas to Papaharini.)



(Devotees drawing the holy waters of Papaharini into ceremonial Kalasas amidst devotional observances.)

3.7 TRADITIONAL UNDERSTANDING OF THE VISHWASHANTI MAHAJAGYAN

During the day's observances, the presiding Acharya shared the traditional interpretation associated with the Vishwashanti Mahajagyan.

According to ritual narratives preserved within yajna traditions, King Janaka is believed to have initiated a sacred observance through the ceremonial sowing of Panchashasya using a golden plough and a pair of oxen before entrusting responsibility for the ritual to the officiating Acharya.

Within this understanding, the Vishwashanti Mahajagyan is performed not solely for individual benefit, but for the welfare of all living and non-living existence. The observance embodies a vision of universal harmony that extends beyond the temple itself and seeks the well-being of the wider world.

The philosophical foundations of the Mahajagyan therefore align closely with the meaning of Vishwashanti itself — peace, balance, and harmony across all forms of existence.

Documentation Note

The discourse delivered by the Acharya connected the ritual proceedings to broader philosophical ideas of peace, responsibility, and universal welfare, reinforcing the spiritual purpose of the observance

3.8 CLOSING REFLECTIONS OF THE FIRST DAY

As evening descended upon Nrusinghanath and the sounds of ritual activity gradually softened, the first day of the Baisakha Mela drew to a close.

The Kalasha Adhibasa had been completed, Ankuraropana had established the ceremonial foundation of the observances, and the Vishwashanti Mahajagyan had been formally inaugurated. The sacred environment required for the coming days had been consecrated, and the ritual cycle leading toward Nrusingha Chaturdashi had begun.

Though the principal ceremonies of the festival still lay ahead, the spiritual foundations of the observance had now been firmly established. The jagyan mandapa had been sanctified, the kalashas installed, and the first acts of invocation had formally initiated the collective aspiration for peace, harmony, and devotion.

The days that followed would build upon these foundations, gradually leading toward the culmination of the observances on Nrusingha Chaturdashi and the completion of the Vishwashanti Mahajagyan.

3.8 CLOSING REFLECTIONS OF THE FIRST DAY

The opening day of Baisakha Mela 2026 established the ceremonial, spiritual, and organizational foundations of the six-day observance. Through Ankuraropana, Kalasha Adhibasa, ritual purification, and the inauguration of the Vishwashanti Mahayajna, the sacred cycle of worship dedicated to Lord Nrusingha was formally set into motion.

The day concluded not with completion, but with commencement — the beginning of a ritual journey that would unfold over the following days through mantra, jagyan, devotion, pilgrimage, and collective participation.

SECTION III

DAY TWO

APRIL 27, 2026

**Yajna Arambha and Bija Mantra Japa
The Formal Commencement of the Vishwashanti Mahajagyan**

4.1 MORNING AT NRUSINGHANATH

The second day of Baisakha Mela 2026 began with a noticeable increase in activity throughout the sacred precincts of Nrusinghanath. From the early hours of the morning, pilgrims, devotees, priests, and visitors gathered in large numbers around the temple complex, creating an atmosphere of anticipation and spiritual enthusiasm.

The rituals initiated on the previous day had established the ceremonial foundation of the observance, and attention now turned toward the formal commencement of the Vishwashanti Mahajagyan. The sounds of temple bells, conch shells, devotional recitations, and ritual preparations filled the surroundings as participants assembled for the day's proceedings.

Within the jagyan mandapa, priests continued their preparations while devotees offered prayers before Lord Nrusingha. The growing movement of pilgrims through the temple complex reflected the increasing momentum of the festival as the sacred observances progressed toward their principal stages.

Documentation Note

The second morning of the festival demonstrated a visible expansion in public participation. The presence of large numbers of devotees and ritual participants signaled the transition from preparatory ceremonies toward the active performance of the Vishwashanti Mahajagyan.



(Fresh flowers arranged at a local flower stall)



(A cow ceremonially kept for Gopujana, symbolizing purity, prosperity, and reverence in Hindu tradition.)

4.2 PARSWA DEVA-DEVI NIMANTRAN

One of the most prominent observances of the second day was the Parswa Deva-Devi Nimantran, a ceremonial invitation extended to the deities residing in the temples surrounding the main shrine of Lord Nrusingha. Accompanied by priests, devotees, and ritual participants, the Karta and Karti proceeded through the temple precinct and neighboring shrines to formally invite the surrounding deities to witness and spiritually participate in the Vishwashanti Mahajagyan. Temples dedicated to Lord Shiva, Lord Ganesha, Goddess Durga, and other divine manifestations were visited as part of this sacred procession.

The procession became a vibrant expression of collective devotion. Traditional drums, jhanja, and ghanta resonated across the temple grounds as men, women, elders, and young participants walked together in an atmosphere of reverence and celebration, transforming the invitation ritual into a shared community observance.

Within Hindu ritual traditions, the invitation of surrounding deities reflects the belief that major religious undertakings should be performed with the blessings and presence of all divine manifestations associated with the sacred landscape.

Documentation Note

The Parswa Deva-Devi Nimantran represented one of the clearest examples of community participation during the second day. Through ritual procession, music, and collective involvement, the observance connected individual devotion with the broader sacred environment of Nrusinghanath.



(The Karta and Karti returning after ceremonially inviting the Parswa Deva-Devis to participate in the sacred observances of the Vishwashanti Mahajagyan.)

4.3 BIJA MANTRA JAPA

A central spiritual observance of the second day was the continuation of the Bija Mantra Japa dedicated to Lord Nrusingha.

Fourteen invited Pandits participated in the sacred recitation of the powerful Nrusingha mantra:

ॐ उग्रं वीरं महाविष्णुं
ज्वलन्तं सर्वतोमुखम् ।
नृसिंहं भीषणं भद्रं
मृत्युमृत्युं नमाम्यहम् ॥

The recitation formed part of an ongoing cycle of 1,25,000 mantra repetitions being performed throughout the observance period. Separate Acharyas and ritual scholars remained dedicated to this spiritual discipline across the duration of the Baisakha Mela, ensuring the continuous flow of sacred recitation within the jagyan tradition.

Within Vedic ritual practice, mantra japa serves as a means of invoking divine presence, cultivating spiritual concentration, and generating sacred merit. The continuous repetition of the Nrusingha Bija Mantra is traditionally associated with protection, purification, courage, and divine grace.

As the recitations continued throughout the day, the sound of sacred mantras became an enduring presence within the jagyan mandapa, creating an atmosphere of spiritual focus and devotional intensity.

Documentation Note

The Parswa Deva-Devi Nimantran represented one of the clearest examples of community participation during the second day. Through ritual procession, music, and collective involvement, the observance connected individual devotion with the broader sacred environment of Nrusinghanath.

4.4 GHRUTAHUTI

Following the mantra recitations, Ghrutahuti was performed as part of the sacred yajna procedures.

According to established ritual tradition, one-tenth of the accumulated mantra count was symbolically offered into the sacred fire through oblations of clarified butter. These offerings served as a ritual dedication of the spiritual merit generated through the mantra recitations.

As each offering entered the yajna fire, accompanying mantras were recited by the priests, linking the discipline of japa with the sacrificial tradition of the jagyan. The fire became both witness and medium through which devotional intentions were ceremonially offered to the divine.

Within Vedic understanding, Ghrutahuti symbolizes the transformation of spiritual effort into sacred offering, uniting prayer, sacrifice, and devotion within a single ritual act.

Documentation Note

The performance of Ghrutahuti demonstrated the close relationship between mantra recitation and fire ritual within jagyan traditions. The observance served as a ceremonial bridge between spiritual discipline and ritual offering.

4.5 KALASHA PUJANA AND AGNI PRATISHTHA

Before the commencement of the principal fire rituals, Kalasha Pujana was performed within the yajna mandapa.

The consecrated kalashas established during the previous day's observances were worshipped through traditional offerings and invocations. These sacred vessels, symbolizing divine presence and auspiciousness, continued to serve as important ritual focal points throughout the Mahayajna.

Following Kalasha Pujana, Agni Pratishtha was performed. Through Vedic chants and ceremonial procedures, the sacred fire was ritually established within the Homa Kunda. The installation of Agni marked a significant moment in the observance, for it was through this sacred fire that the jagyan offerings would be conveyed to the divine realm.

Within Vedic tradition, Agni occupies a central position as the mediator between human devotion and divine acceptance. The successful establishment of the sacred fire therefore signified the formal beginning of the active sacrificial phase of the Mahajagyan.

Documentation Note

Kalasha Pujana and Agni Pratishtha marked the ceremonial transition from preparatory observances to active yajna proceedings, establishing the ritual conditions necessary for the continuation of the Mahajagyan.



(Consecrated Kalasas installed and ceremonially worshipped within the Yajna Mandapa during the Vishwashanti Mahajagyan.)

4.6 HOMA KUNDA PUJA AND CONSECRATION OF THE YAJNA MANDAPA

Following the establishment of the sacred fire, detailed worship of the Homa Kunda and consecration of the yajna mandapa were conducted.

Priests performed ritual offerings, recitations, and purification ceremonies intended to sanctify the sacrificial arena and invoke divine energies into the ritual space. Through these observances, the Homa Kunda was transformed into the spiritual center of the Mahajagyan.

The consecration rituals also reaffirmed the sacred character of the yajna mandapa itself. Every aspect of the ceremonial environment was ritually purified and dedicated to the successful completion of the Vishwashanti Mahajagyan.

The observance reflected the traditional understanding that sacred rituals require not only spiritual intention but also the ceremonial preparation of an appropriate ritual environment.

Documentation Note

The consecration of the Homa Kunda and yajna mandapa emphasized the importance of sacred space within Vedic ritual traditions, ensuring that the Mahajagyan proceeded within a spiritually purified environment.



(The Karta-Karti couple taking their ceremonial place beside the yajna Kunda before the beginning of the Homa Kunda Puja.)

4.7 GOPUJANA

Among the most revered observances of the second day was Gopujana, the ceremonial worship of a sacred cow.

A cow was respectfully brought before the yajna mandapa and worshipped according to traditional procedures. Priests, devotees, and ritual participants offered flowers, prayers, and sacred substances while seeking blessings for prosperity, harmony, and spiritual well-being.

As part of the ceremony, a red cloth was ceremonially tied around the cow's head, and offerings of food were presented with reverence. Devotees actively participated in the observance, expressing gratitude toward Gau Mata, who occupies a revered position within Hindu religious tradition.

The worship of the cow symbolizes respect for nourishment, motherhood, generosity, and the sustaining forces of nature. Through Gopujana, participants acknowledged the sacred relationship between humanity, nature, and divine creation.

Documentation Note

Gopujana represented a powerful expression of gratitude and reverence within the ritual sequence. The participation of devotees highlighted the continued connection between traditional worship practices and community involvement.



(The officiating priest along with the Karta and Karti performing Gopujana during the Vishwashanti Mahajagyan.)

4.8 COMMENCEMENT OF THE VISHWASHANTI MAHAJAGYAN

With the completion of the preliminary observances, the principal proceedings of the Vishwashanti Mahajagyan formally commenced.

Priests began the performance of homa, offering sacred substances into the consecrated fire while reciting Vedic mantras. The jagyan fire, established through Agni Pratishtha, now became the central focus of the observance.

The Mahajagyan was conducted for the welfare of all beings and reflected the philosophical ideals associated with Vishwashanti, or universal peace. Through collective prayer, ritual offering, and sacred recitation, participants sought harmony, prosperity, and spiritual well-being for the wider world.

The commencement of homa therefore marked a significant milestone within the six-day ritual cycle, signaling that the Vishwashanti Mahajagyan had entered its active sacrificial phase.

Documentation Note

The beginning of the homa established the yajna fire as the spiritual center of the festival and marked the formal continuation of the Mahajagyan initiated during the previous day.



(The Karta, Karti, and officiating priests at the Yajna Mandapa during the commencement of the Vishwashanti Mahajagyan.)

4.9 EVENING GANGA AARTI AT PAPA HARINI

As evening descended upon Nrusinghanath, the day's observances culminated in a devotional Ganga Aarti performed at the sacred Papaharini Ghat.

According to local tradition, Papaharini is regarded as a sacred stream whose waters possess purifying significance. The very name Papaharini means “that which removes sins,” reflecting a belief comparable to the purifying qualities traditionally associated with the sacred River Ganga. The Aarti was led by a priest who offered ceremonial lamps before the sacred waters while accompanying priests and assistants recited mantras and devotional hymns. Devotees gathered along the banks of the stream and participated in the ceremony through prayer and collective worship.

As the lamps illuminated the flowing waters and sacred chants echoed through the surrounding landscape, the atmosphere became one of serenity, devotion, and spiritual reflection. The observance served as an expression of gratitude toward the sacred waters and concluded the day's activities with a powerful sense of collective reverence.

Documentation Note

The Ganga Aarti at Papaharini brought together ritual worship, natural landscape, and community participation, creating one of the most visually and spiritually memorable moments of the second day.

4.10 CLOSING REFLECTIONS OF THE SECOND DAY

As night settled over the foothills of Gandhamardan, the second day of the Baisakha Mela concluded with the Vishwashanti Mahayajna firmly established in its active phase.

The Parswa Deva-Devi Nimantran had extended ceremonial invitations throughout the sacred landscape, the Bija Mantra Japa continued to generate a constant current of spiritual devotion, and the sacred fire had been formally established through Agni Pratishtha. Through Gopujana, homa, and the evening Ganga Aarti, the observances of the day reinforced the themes of purification, gratitude, and collective welfare that lie at the heart of the Mahajagyan.

With the ritual foundations strengthened and the yajna proceedings underway, the festival now moved steadily toward its succeeding stages and the eventual observance of Nrusingha Chaturdashi.

DAY TWO SUMMARY

The second day of Baisakha Mela 2026 marked the formal commencement of the active sacrificial phase of the Vishwashanti Mahajagyan. Through Parswa Deva-Devi Nimantran, Bija Mantra Japa, Ghrutahuti, Kalasha Pujana, Agni Pratishtha, Homa Kunda consecration, Gopujana, and the initiation of homa, the sacred observances expanded in both ritual complexity and public participation.

The day concluded with the devotional Ganga Aarti at Papaharini, leaving participants immersed in an atmosphere of prayer, purification, and spiritual reflection. Building upon the foundations established during the first day, the Mahajagyan now continued toward the succeeding stages of the six-day observance dedicated to Lord Nrusingha.

SECTION IV

DAY THREE

APRIL 28, 2026

Continuation of the Vishwashanti Mahajagyan and Cultural Celebrations

5.1 MORNING AT NRUSINGHANATH

The third day of Baisakha Mela 2026 witnessed a significant increase in devotional activity throughout the sacred precincts of Nrusinghanath. From the early hours of the morning, pilgrims continued arriving from various parts of Odisha and neighboring Chhattisgarh, adding to the steadily growing congregation that had gathered for the annual observance.

The temple complex, jagyan mandapa, and surrounding pathways remained active with ritual preparations, devotional practices, and the movement of devotees seeking darshan of Lord Nrusingha. The sounds of temple bells, conch shells, Vedic recitations, and devotional chanting created an atmosphere of spiritual continuity as the Vishwashanti Mahajagyan entered its third day.

By this stage of the observance, many devotees had begun staying within the temple premises and nearby areas, allowing them to participate more fully in both the ritual and cultural dimensions of the Mela.

Documentation Note

The increasing number of pilgrims reflected the growing prominence of the festival as it progressed toward its principal observances. Participation from neighboring regions demonstrated the wider cultural and spiritual influence of Nrusinghanath.

5.2 CONTINUATION OF THE BIJA MANTRA JAPA

The sacred cycle of Bija Mantra Japa dedicated to Lord Nrusingha continued throughout the third day under the guidance of the same group of Acharyas and ritual scholars entrusted with this responsibility during the Mela.

The continuous recitation formed part of the larger spiritual discipline associated with the Vishwashanti Mahajagyan. Through the repeated chanting of the sacred Nrusingha mantra, the participating scholars maintained an uninterrupted stream of prayer and devotion that accompanied the ritual proceedings of the festival. Within traditional understanding, continuous mantra recitation serves not only as an act of worship but also as a means of sustaining the spiritual atmosphere of the sacred observance.

As pilgrims visited the yajna mandapa and observed the recitations, the rhythmic repetition of the mantra remained a constant presence throughout the day, reflecting the deep connection between individual devotion and collective spiritual practice.

Documentation Note

The ongoing Bija Mantra Japa continued to function as one of the foundational spiritual disciplines of the Mahayajna, providing continuity between the various ritual observances conducted throughout the festival.



(Priests engaged in the continuous recitation of the sacred Bija Mantra outside the Yajna Mandapa.)

5.3 HOMA AND AHUTI PROCEEDINGS

The Vishwashanti Mahajagyan continued actively throughout the day with the performance of Homa and Ahuti rituals within the consecrated yajna mandapa.

Priests offered sacred substances into the jagyan fire while reciting Vedic mantras according to established ritual procedures. The offerings were performed continuously at various stages of the day, maintaining the sacrificial tradition initiated during the previous observances.

The sacred fire, established through Agni Pratishtha, remained the spiritual center of the Mahayajna. Through the offering of Ahutis, participants symbolically dedicated prayers, intentions, and aspirations toward the welfare of all beings.

The continuation of these rituals reflected the broader purpose of the Vishwashanti Mahajagyan, whose objective extends beyond individual benefit toward the pursuit of universal harmony and well-being.

Documentation Note

The uninterrupted performance of Homa and Ahuti rituals demonstrated the sustained ritual intensity of the Mahajagyan and reinforced its role as the central spiritual observance of the festival.



(The Homa proceedings of Day Two of the Vishwashanti Mahayajna being conducted at the Yajna Mandapa.)

5.4 ONGOING VISHWASHANTI MAHAJAGYAN

As the third day progressed, the Vishwashanti Mahajagyan continued according to its established ritual sequence.

Priests, scholars, temple authorities, volunteers, and devotees collectively contributed to the successful continuation of the observance. The yajna mandapa remained a focal point of activity, where ritual offerings, sacred recitations, and devotional participation proceeded throughout the day.

The Mahajagyan represented a synthesis of Vedic tradition, temple worship, and community participation. While priests conducted the formal ceremonies, the presence and involvement of devotees reflected the collective nature of the observance.

The third day therefore served as a continuation and strengthening of the ritual foundations established during the opening days of the festival.

Documentation Note

The ongoing Mahajagyan demonstrated the coordination required for a multi-day ritual observance involving priests, temple administrators, volunteers, and large numbers of devotees.

5.5 EVENING GANGA AARTI AT PAPA HARINI

As evening approached, devotees once again gathered at the sacred Papaharini Ghat for the daily Ganga Aarti. Papaharini occupies a revered place within the spiritual landscape of Nrusinghanath. Traditionally regarded as a sacred stream possessing purifying qualities, its very name signifies the removal of sins and spiritual impurities. For generations, pilgrims have associated its waters with purification, devotion, and divine grace.

The Aarti was performed by a priest while accompanying priests and assistants participated through mantra recitations and ritual support. Devotees assembled along the banks of the stream, joining the ceremony through prayer and collective worship.

The glow of ceremonial lamps reflected upon the flowing waters as sacred chants echoed through the surrounding landscape. The resulting atmosphere combined natural beauty with devotional intensity, creating one of the most spiritually moving moments of the day.

Documentation Note

The Ganga Aarti continued to serve as an important devotional gathering that connected the ritual life of the temple with the sacred natural environment surrounding Nrusinghanath.



(The sacred Ganga Aarti being performed at Papaharini on the evening of the third day of Baisakha Mela 2026)

5.6 CULTURAL PROGRAMME AT THE MELA GROUNDS

Following the completion of the evening rituals, attention shifted toward the open-air cultural stage established within the temple premises. The cultural programme organized by the Baisakha Mela Committee formed an important part of the festival's broader objective of preserving and promoting regional artistic traditions alongside religious observances. Large numbers of devotees and visitors gathered before the stage to witness the performances.

The programme transformed the temple complex into a vibrant cultural space where devotional traditions, folk heritage, and performing arts came together within the festive atmosphere of the Mela.

As night descended, the audience continued to grow, with pilgrims from Odisha, Chhattisgarh, and neighboring regions joining the celebrations.

Documentation Note

The cultural programme highlighted the role of the Baisakha Mela not only as a religious observance but also as a platform for preserving and showcasing traditional artistic heritage.



(Artists presenting an Odissi dance performance during the evening cultural)

5.7 INAUGURAL CEREMONY AND DISTINGUISHED GUESTS

The evening programme was formally inaugurated in the presence of several distinguished guests and public representatives.

The inaugural ceremony was attended by **Bargarh Shri MP Pradeep Purohit** and **Padampur MLA Smt. Barsha Singh Bariha** as chief guests. District IPS Officer **Prahlad Suja Meena** addressed the gathering as **chief speaker**, while **Padampur Additional District Collector Sarojini Prasanna Kullu** and **Deputy District Collector Hemsagar Bhoi** attended as **guests of honor**.

The ceremonial lamp-lighting was performed in the presence of **Chhattisgarh Chief Minister's Guruji, Shri Sadan Tiwari Guruji**, marking the formal commencement of the cultural proceedings.

Also present on the occasion were the interim trustee of the temple, **Debashish Sinha**, and Executive Officer **Purushottam Pradhan**, who joined other dignitaries in encouraging the cultural and devotional initiatives associated with the festival.

Documentation Note

The participation of public representatives, administrative officials, and temple authorities reflected the broader social and cultural significance of the Baisakha Mela within the region.



(Bargarh MP Shri Pradeep Purohit, Padampur MLA Smt. Barsha Singh Bariha, and other dignitaries participating in the traditional Deepa Prajwalan ceremony.)

5.8 CULTURAL PERFORMANCES AND FOLK TRADITIONS

The cultural programme featured performances by artists and cultural institutions from Odisha and neighboring states, offering audiences a diverse presentation of classical, folk, and traditional art forms.

Among the notable presentations was the performance of Narsimha Avtar by the Saskha Cultural Institute of Mandosil. The Nataraj Dance Academy presented Odissi dance, showcasing one of Odisha's most celebrated classical traditions.

The D. Pallavi Institute from Mayurbhanj captivated audiences with the dynamic and physically demanding Malkhamb performance, while the traditional folk narrative form of Pandavani was presented by the Shursurvi Sangam of Gariabandha, Chhattisgarh.

These performances reflected the cultural diversity of the region and highlighted the continued vitality of traditional artistic expressions.

Documentation Note

The cultural presentations created an important bridge between devotional observance and artistic heritage, allowing audiences to engage with multiple forms of traditional expression within a sacred festival setting.



(The participating dance troupe being honoured on stage during the cultural programme)

5.9 NIGHT-LONG DEVOTIONAL AND CULTURAL ATMOSPHERE

One of the most anticipated attractions of the evening was the staging of the folk play Shri Shri Nrusimhanath Charit and Mushik Datya Darbar.

The performance, organized to promote local folk traditions and storytelling practices, drew large audiences and continued late into the night. Thousands of devotees and visitors remained present within the temple premises to witness the presentation.

As the night progressed, the festival atmosphere became increasingly vibrant. Pilgrims from Odisha and Chhattisgarh mingled within the temple grounds, while many devotees chose to remain within the premises to continue their participation in the ongoing observances.

The successful conduct of the programme was made possible through the efforts of the organizers, volunteers, local administration, and the Baisakha Mela Committee, who ensured the smooth management of the growing crowds.

Documentation Note

The night-long cultural activities demonstrated the remarkable ability of the Baisakha Mela to combine pilgrimage, community participation, and traditional artistic expression within a single sacred gathering.



(Cultural activity inside temple premises)

5.10 CLOSING REFLECTIONS OF THE THIRD DAY

As the third day of the Baisakha Mela drew to a close, the Vishwashanti Mahajagyan continued steadily while the cultural celebrations added a new dimension to the festival experience.

The ongoing Bija Mantra Japa, Homa, and Ahuti rituals sustained the spiritual focus of the observance, while the evening Ganga Aarti at Papaharini reinforced the themes of purification and devotion. The cultural programme brought together artists, dignitaries, devotees, and pilgrims in a shared celebration of heritage and faith.

With growing participation from across the region and increasing numbers of pilgrims arriving at Nrusinghanath, the festival continued its progression toward the principal observances that lay ahead.

DAY THREE SUMMARY

The third day of Baisakha Mela 2026 was marked by the continued performance of the Vishwashanti Mahajagyan and the successful organization of a large-scale cultural programme within the temple premises. Through ongoing Bija Mantra Japa, Homa, Ahuti, and the evening Ganga Aarti, the spiritual objectives of the festival remained central to the day's observances.

The cultural presentations, folk traditions, and night-long performances attracted thousands of devotees and visitors, transforming the sacred landscape of Nrusinghanath into a vibrant center of religious, cultural, and community life. The day concluded with both the ritual and cultural dimensions of the festival flourishing side by side as the observance moved toward its succeeding stages.

SECTION V

DAY FOUR

APRIL 29, 2026

Continuation of the Vishwashanti Mahajagyan and Digital Outreach Initiatives

6.1 MORNING AT NRUSINGHANATH

The fourth day of Baisakha Mela 2026 witnessed a further increase in pilgrim participation as devotees continued to arrive at Nrusinghanath from various parts of Odisha and neighboring states. The temple complex, which had already become a focal point of religious and cultural activity, experienced an even greater influx of visitors throughout the day.

From the early morning hours, the sounds of temple bells, conch shells, devotional songs, and Vedic recitations resonated across the sacred landscape. Pilgrims assembled for darshan, participated in ritual observances, and gathered around the jagyan mandapa where the Vishwashanti Mahajagyan continued according to its established sequence.

Many devotees who had arrived during the previous days remained within the temple premises, contributing to a continuous atmosphere of devotion, pilgrimage, and communal participation.

Documentation Note

The fourth day reflected the steadily growing momentum of the festival. Increased attendance and extended participation by devotees demonstrated the importance of the Baisakha Mela as a major regional religious gathering.

6.2 CONTINUATION OF THE BIJA MANTRA JAPA

The sacred Bija Mantra Japa dedicated to Lord Nrusingha continued uninterrupted under the guidance of the Acharyas and ritual scholars assigned to this spiritual discipline throughout the observance period.

The recitation remained one of the most important devotional components of the Vishwashanti Mahajagyan. Through the continuous chanting of sacred mantras, the participating scholars sustained the spiritual atmosphere of the jagyan and reinforced the ritual objectives of peace, protection, and universal welfare.

As devotees entered the mandapa and witnessed the ongoing recitations, many paused in prayer and reflection, adding their own devotion to the collective spiritual effort that characterized the festival.

The uninterrupted nature of the mantra recitations emphasized the continuity of worship that remained at the heart of the six-day observance.

Documentation Note

The ongoing Bija Mantra Japa served as a constant spiritual foundation throughout the festival, linking each day's rituals to a continuous cycle of prayer and sacred recitation.

6.3 HOMA AND AHUTI PROCEEDINGS

The Vishwashanti Mahajagyan continued actively throughout the fourth day with the performance of Homa and Ahuti rituals within the jagyan mandapa.

Priests conducted offerings into the sacred fire while reciting Vedic mantras and following established ritual procedures. The jagyan fire remained the ceremonial center of the observance, receiving offerings intended for the welfare and harmony of all existence.

Throughout the day, devotees gathered around the mandapa to witness the proceedings and participate through prayer and reverent observation. The rhythm of sacred recitation, ritual offerings, and ceremonial worship continued without interruption.

The continuation of Homa and Ahuti reinforced the spiritual objectives of the Mahajagyan and reflected the collective aspiration for peace and well-being embodied within the concept of Vishwashanti.

Documentation Note

The sustained performance of Homa and Ahuti rituals demonstrated the continuity and discipline required for a multi-day Mahajagyan tradition.



(The Homa proceedings of day four of the Vishwashanti Mahajagyan being conducted at the jagyan Mandapa.)

6.4 ONGOING VISHWASHANTI MAHAJAGYAN

As the fourth day progressed, the Vishwashanti Mahajagyan continued according to its established ritual framework.

Priests, scholars, temple servitors, volunteers, and devotees worked collectively to ensure the smooth continuation of the observance. The jagyan mandapa remained a center of ritual activity where sacred offerings, mantra recitations, and ceremonial worship proceeded throughout the day.

The observance reflected the traditional understanding that spiritual well-being is strengthened through collective participation. While the priests performed the formal rituals, the devotion and presence of the pilgrims formed an equally important aspect of the sacred atmosphere.

The growing participation observed on the fourth day demonstrated the expanding reach and significance of the festival within the region.

Documentation Note

The continued progress of the Mahajagyan highlighted the successful coordination between ritual specialists, temple administration, volunteers, and devotees throughout the observance period.



(The Karta and Karti performing worship of the sacred idol of Lord Brahma installed within the jagyan Mandapa as part of the Vishwashanti Mahajagyan rituals.)

6.5 EVENING GANGA AARTI AT PAPA HARINI

As evening approached, devotees once again assembled at the sacred Papaharini Ghat for the daily Ganga Aarti.

Regarded as a sacred stream associated with purification and spiritual renewal, Papaharini occupies a significant place within the religious traditions of Nrusinghanath. Pilgrims traditionally associate its waters with the removal of sins and the attainment of divine blessings.

The Aarti was performed with ceremonial lamps, devotional chants, and sacred recitations. Priests and assistants conducted the proceedings while devotees gathered along the banks to participate through prayer and worship.

The reflection of the illuminated lamps upon the flowing waters created a serene and spiritually uplifting atmosphere. The ceremony provided an opportunity for reflection and devotion before the cultural activities of the evening commenced.

Documentation Note

The Ganga Aarti continued to serve as an important devotional gathering, uniting ritual worship with the sacred natural environment surrounding Nrusinghanath.

6.6 CULTURAL PROGRAMME AND GROWING PARTICIPATION

Following the completion of the evening rituals, the open-air cultural stage within the temple premises became the center of activity for the growing crowds gathered at the Mela.

The cultural programme organized by the Baisakha Mela Committee attracted even larger audiences than the previous evening. Devotees, pilgrims, visitors, and cultural enthusiasts assembled in significant numbers to witness the performances.

The expanding participation reflected the increasing popularity of the Mela and its ability to bring together religious observance and cultural expression within a shared festive environment. By nightfall, the temple premises had transformed into a vibrant gathering space filled with devotion, celebration, and artistic activity.

Documentation Note

The increasing attendance at the cultural programme demonstrated the growing appeal of the festival and the important role of traditional arts within the broader Mela experience.



(Artists presenting the energetic rhythms and graceful movements of Sambalpuri folk dance during the evening cultural programme.)

6.7 DISTINGUISHED GUESTS AND STAGE PROCEEDINGS

The cultural programme was attended by several distinguished guests from administrative, literary, and public service backgrounds.

Among those present was renowned poet and **Padma Shri awardee Haldhar Nag**, who attended the programme as Guest of Honour. Also present were **Padampur SDPO Pandab Sabar** and **Sub-Collector Hemsagar Bhoi**.

Temple Executive Officer Purushottam Pradhan and other invited guests joined the gathering and participated in the proceedings. Their presence reflected the continued support of public representatives, administrators, and cultural personalities for the Baisakha Mela and its associated activities.

The evening provided an opportunity for interaction between devotees, cultural performers, temple authorities, and distinguished guests, reinforcing the festival's role as an important social and cultural gathering.

Documentation Note

The increasing attendance at the cultural programme demonstrated the growing appeal of the festival and the important role of traditional arts within the broader Mela experience.



(Renowned poet and Padma Shri awardee Haldhar Nag, along with Padampur SDPO Pandab Sabar and Sub-Collector Hemsagar Bhoi, seated on the stage as Guests of Honour during the evening cultural programme.)

6.8 CLASSICAL AND FOLK CULTURAL PERFORMANCES

The evening's cultural programme featured a series of performances representing the artistic traditions of Odisha.

Classical Odissi dance presentations captivated audiences through their graceful movements, expressive storytelling, and devotional themes. Alongside these performances, Sambalpuri cultural presentations brought the vibrant folk traditions of western Odisha to the stage.

The performances celebrated the diversity of Odisha's artistic heritage while providing entertainment and cultural enrichment for the thousands of devotees gathered within the temple premises.

Through music, dance, and traditional expression, the cultural programme complemented the spiritual atmosphere of the Mela and strengthened the connection between devotion and heritage.

Documentation Note

The cultural performances served as an important platform for preserving and promoting both classical and folk traditions within the context of a major religious festival.



(Artists presenting a traditional folk dance performance during the evening cultural programme.)

6.9 ANNOUNCEMENT OF THE NRUSINGHANATH TEMPLE DIGITAL PORTAL

One of the notable highlights of the evening was the public introduction of the Nrusinghanath Temple Digital Portal.

During the programme, **Sitanshu Sahu, Founder and Chief Executive Officer of Sarvyon**, addressed the gathering and presented details regarding the digital initiative developed by Team Sarvyon for Shri Nrusinghanath Temple.

The presentation introduced the portal as a pioneering digital platform designed to support the temple's outreach, accessibility, and engagement with devotees. The initiative represented an important step toward integrating modern technology with the preservation and promotion of the temple's religious and cultural heritage.

The portal was presented as the first dedicated digital portal of its kind developed for a temple in Odisha, reflecting an innovative approach to connecting devotees with temple information and services through digital means.

The announcement was received with interest by the audience and represented a significant milestone in the temple's ongoing efforts to expand its reach beyond the physical boundaries of the shrine.

Documentation Note

The launch presentation highlighted the growing role of digital technology in heritage preservation, temple administration, and devotional engagement, demonstrating how traditional institutions can embrace contemporary tools while maintaining their cultural identity.



(Shitanshu Kumar Sahoo, Founder and CEO of Sarvyon Global Technologies Pvt.Ltd and Naabannaa Foundation, announcing the launch of the Nrusinghanath Temple Digital Portal during the evening cultural programme.)

6.10 CLOSING REFLECTIONS OF THE FOURTH DAY

As the fourth day of the Baisakha Mela concluded, the Vishwashanti Mahajagyan continued steadily while public participation reached new levels.

The ongoing Bija Mantra Japa, Homa, Ahuti, and Ganga Aarti maintained the spiritual foundation of the observance, while the evening cultural programme strengthened the festival's role as a celebration of regional heritage and community participation.

The introduction of the Nrusinghanath Temple Digital Portal added a contemporary dimension to the day's activities, demonstrating how traditional institutions can engage with modern forms of communication and outreach.

With increasing numbers of devotees arriving at the temple and the principal observances still ahead, the festival continued its progression toward the most significant stages of the six-day celebration.

DAY FOUR SUMMARY

The fourth day of Baisakha Mela 2026 witnessed the continued performance of the Vishwashanti Mahajagyan alongside growing cultural and public participation. Through ongoing Bija Mantra Japa, Homa, Ahuti, and the evening Ganga Aarti at Papaharini, the spiritual objectives of the observance remained central to the day's proceedings.

The cultural programme attracted larger audiences than previous days and featured distinguished guests, Odissi and Sambalpuri performances, and the announcement of the Nrusinghanath Temple Digital Portal by Team Sarvyon. The day successfully combined devotion, cultural heritage, community engagement, and technological innovation, further strengthening the significance of the festival as it moved toward its culminating observances.

SECTION V

DAY FIVE

APRIL 30, 2026

Nrusingha Janmotsav and the Hoisting of the Shanti Dhwaja

7.1 MORNING AT NRUSINGHANATH

The fifth day of Baisakha Mela 2026 marked one of the most significant stages of the festival as devotees gathered in large numbers to participate in the observances associated with Nrusingha Janmotsav. From the early hours of the morning, the temple complex witnessed a continuous influx of pilgrims arriving from various parts of Odisha and neighboring states.

The atmosphere throughout Nrusinghanath reflected a sense of anticipation and devotion. Temple premises, pathways, and surrounding areas remained crowded with devotees who had assembled to witness the special rituals connected with the divine appearance of Lord Nrusingha.

Many pilgrims who had been staying within the temple premises during the previous days continued their participation in the ongoing religious activities, while new visitors joined the celebrations, making this one of the largest gatherings witnessed during the festival up to that point.

Documentation Note

The fifth day represented a major spiritual milestone within the Baisakha Mela. The increasing number of devotees reflected the importance of Nrusingha Janmotsav within the annual observance.

7.2 CONTINUATION OF THE VISHWASHANTI MAHAJAGYAN

The Vishwashanti Mahajagyan continued throughout the day according to the established ritual sequence. The sacred Bija Mantra Japa dedicated to Lord Nrusingha remained ongoing under the supervision of the designated Acharyas and ritual scholars.

Within the jagyan mandapa, Homa and Ahuti rituals were performed continuously as priests offered sacred substances into the consecrated fire while reciting Vedic mantras. The jagyan fire remained the spiritual center of the observance, symbolizing the continued dedication of prayers for universal peace, prosperity, and welfare.

The combination of mantra recitation, ritual offerings, and devotional participation created an atmosphere of spiritual intensity that complemented the special Janmotsav observances taking place within the temple.

Documentation Note

The continuation of the Mahajagyan ensured that the central spiritual objectives of the festival remained active even as the focus shifted toward the celebration of Lord Nrusingha's divine appearance.

7.3 SPECIAL PUJA FOR NRUSINGHA JANMOTSAV

A special puja dedicated to Lord Nrusingha was conducted inside the temple as part of the Janmotsav celebrations.

For this sacred observance, the deity was adorned with elaborate floral decorations that enhanced the beauty and sanctity of the temple interior. Garlands, flowers, and ceremonial decorations transformed the shrine into a vibrant devotional space befitting the occasion.

The special puja was performed with Shri Debashish Sinha, Additional Block Development Officer and Interim Trustee of the temple, and his wife serving as the Karta and Karti of the ceremony. Under the guidance of the temple priests, the rituals were conducted according to established traditions associated with Nrusingha Janmotsav.

Devotees gathered in large numbers to witness the worship and offer prayers before the beautifully decorated deity.

Documentation Note

The Janmotsav Puja formed one of the central ritual observances of the day and reflected the deep devotional connection between the temple, its administrators, and the wider community of devotees.



(ABDO Shri Debashish Sinha and his wife participating in the sacred Nrusingha Janmotsav Puja inside the main temple of Shri Nrusinghanath.)

7.4 FASTING OBSERVANCE OF THE DEITY

An important feature of the day's observances was the ceremonial fasting associated with Lord Nrusingha's Janmotsav.

Throughout the day, the deity remained in a ritual state of fasting, and the customary offerings of food were withheld until the appropriate ceremonial moment. This observance formed part of the traditional sequence leading toward the celebration of the divine appearance of Lord Nrusingha.

The fasting period created an atmosphere of anticipation among devotees, who awaited the subsequent rituals that would mark the conclusion of the observance and the offering of sacred food to the deity.

Such practices reflect the symbolic reenactment of sacred events within temple traditions, allowing devotees to participate spiritually in the divine narrative being commemorated.

Documentation Note

The fasting observance highlighted the ritual significance of the Janmotsav celebrations and prepared the temple community for the ceremonies that followed later in the day.



(The sacred idol of Mahaprabhu Shri Shri Marjara Keshari adorned with flowers on the occasion of Nrusingha Janmotsav.)

7.5 OFFERING OF PITA KANDHA

One of the most distinctive traditions of the day involved the ceremonial offering of Pita Kandha.

According to longstanding temple custom, descendants of Yamuna Kandhuni and Hari Kandha entered the temple carrying Pita Kandha, consisting of forest roots and tubers traditionally associated with the observance. Their participation represents an important hereditary role preserved within the ritual traditions of Nrusinghanath.

The ceremonial presentation of Pita Kandha took place before the deity as part of the Janmotsav proceedings. Following this offering, Lord Nrusingha's ritual fast was formally concluded.

The observance reflected the continuing connection between temple traditions and the cultural heritage of the local communities that have historically participated in the worship of Lord Nrusingha.

Documentation Note

The offering of Pita Kandha remains one of the unique ritual traditions associated with Nrusinghanath and demonstrates the continued preservation of hereditary ceremonial practices within the temple.



(Devotees from the Kandha community ceremonially offering Pita Kandha to Mahaprabhu Shri Shri Marjara Keshari inside the temple.)

7.6 JANMOTSAV RITUALS OF LORD NRUSINGHA

Following the offering of Pita Kandha and the conclusion of the fasting observance, the temple priests performed a series of rituals associated with the divine birth of Lord Nrusingha.

The Janmotsav observances commenced with the 108 Padma Abhishek, followed by Panchamrit Snana, marking the ceremonial bathing of the deity. The Kandha community offered Pita Kandha as bhoga, continuing the longstanding ritual association of the community with the Janmotsav observances. Phala–Phula Bhoga, consisting of fruits and flowers along with the Pita Kandha offering, was subsequently presented to the deity.

The rituals continued with Nutana Bastra, the offering and adornment of new garments, followed by Alankara Besa, during which the deity was ceremonially adorned. The sequence concluded with Bhoga Arpana, the formal offering of bhoga to Lord Nrusingha.

These ceremonies symbolically reenacted traditional rites performed following the birth of a child. Through these observances, devotees celebrated the sacred appearance of Lord Nrusingha and participated in the commemoration of this important event within Vaishnava tradition.

Among the rituals performed was the symbolic navi-cutting ceremony, representing one of the customary rites associated with birth traditions. The observances were conducted with devotional chanting, ritual worship, and the participation of assembled devotees.

The atmosphere within the temple became one of joy and celebration as the Janmotsav ceremonies progressed through these sacred observances.

Documentation Note

The Janmotsav rituals connected devotional worship with traditional cultural practices, allowing the divine birth narrative to be commemorated through symbolic ceremonial observances.



(The sacred Janmotsav rituals of Lord Nrusinghanath being performed inside the main temple during the auspicious celebrations.)

7.7 DHWAJA BANDHANA – HOISTING OF THE SHANTI DHWAJA

As part of the sacred observances of Nrusingha Janmotsav, the traditional Dhwaja Bandhana ceremony was performed at Shri Nrusinghanath Temple. Every year, the temple Dhwaja is ceremonially changed on the auspicious day of Nrusingha Janmotsav, marking an important and enduring tradition of the temple. The ritual takes place at the top of the main temple, where the existing flag is ceremonially replaced with a new white Dhwaja (flag).

The Karta undertook the ceremonial responsibility of changing the Dhwaja. Before the flag was replaced, the prescribed puja and Aarti were performed at the temple top, marking the ritual commencement of the ceremony.

The white Dhwaja holds symbolic significance as an emblem of peace and harmony. Its annual hoisting on the day of Janmotsav forms an important part of the day's sacred observances and reflects the continuing connection between the temple's religious traditions and the cultural practices of the Kandha community.

A large number of devotees gathered around the temple and along the hilltop approach to witness the ceremony. The gathering added a strong communal dimension to the ritual, as pilgrims watched the Dhwaja being ceremonially changed above the ancient shrine.

At approximately 10:00 PM, the Maha Dipa was raised at the top of the temple, forming another significant observance of the Janmotsav celebrations. The illumination of the Maha Dipa at the temple summit marked the continuation of the sacred evening rituals and was witnessed by the gathered devotees.

Documentation Note

The annual Dhwaja Bandhana on Nrusingha Janmotsav is a significant temple tradition, marked by the ceremonial changing of the white Dhwaja after puja and Aarti. The observance was witnessed by a large gathering of devotees, followed at approximately 10:00 PM by the raising of the Maha Dipa at the temple summit.



(The Karta from Kandha Community hoisting the Dhwaja and rituals of Dhwaja Bandhana.)

6.10 CLOSING REFLECTIONS OF THE FIFTH DAY

The fifth day of Baisakha Mela 2026 represented one of the most important stages of the festival, bringing together the spiritual significance of Nrusingha Janmotsav and the continued observance of the Vishwashanti Mahajagyan.

The special temple worship, ceremonial fasting, offering of Kandhamula, Janmotsav rituals, and hoisting of the Shanti Dhwaja highlighted the unique traditions associated with the worship of Lord Nrusingha at Nrusinghanath. These observances reinforced the connection between ritual practice, community participation, and hereditary traditions preserved across generations.

The large gathering of devotees, combined with the successful organization of the cultural programme, demonstrated the enduring importance of the festival as a center of faith, culture, and collective identity.

DAY FIVE SUMMARY

The fifth day of Baisakha Mela 2026 was dedicated to Nrusingha Janmotsav, alongside the continuation of the Vishwashanti Mahajagyan and the annual Dhawaja Rohan. Unlike other days, the temple remained open throughout the day as Lord Nrusingha observed the traditional fasting observance.

The evening Janmotsav rituals included 108 Padma Abhishek, Panchamrit Snana, Kandhamula and Phala–Phula Bhoga, Nutana Bastra, Alankara Besa, and Bhoga Arpana, along with symbolic birth rituals commemorating the divine appearance of Lord Nrusingha.

The evening continued with the ceremonial changing of the white Shanti Dhawaja, witnessed by a large gathering of devotees. At approximately 10:00 PM, the Maha Dipa was raised at the temple summit. Together with the cultural programme and participation of thousands of devotees, these observances made the fifth day a significant part of Baisakha Mela 2026.

SECTION V

DAY SIX

MAY 1, 2026

Purnahuti, Kalasa Visarjana, and the Culmination of the Vishwashanti Mahayajna

8.1 MORNING AT NRUSINGHANATH

The sixth and final day of Baisakha Mela 2026 began with an atmosphere of devotion, gratitude, and anticipation as devotees assembled for the concluding ceremonies of the Vishwashanti Mahajagyan. Having participated in six days of continuous ritual observances, pilgrims gathered in large numbers within the temple premises to witness the final offerings and completion rites of the sacred jagyan.

The temple complex remained vibrant with activity as priests prepared for the concluding ceremonies. Devotees visited the shrine of Lord Nrusinghanath for darshan and offered prayers before participating in the final day's proceedings.

The sense of spiritual fulfillment was evident among participants, many of whom had remained present throughout the festival and now awaited the culmination of the Mahajagyan.

Documentation Note

The final day carried a unique atmosphere that combined celebration with reflection, marking the successful completion of six days of continuous religious observance.

8.2 CONTINUATION OF THE VISHWASHANTI MAHAJAGYAN

The concluding day began with the continuation of the Vishwashanti Mahajagyan according to the established ritual sequence maintained throughout the festival.

The sacred fire remained the focal point of the jagyan mandapa as priests continued the recitation of Vedic mantras and performed the final stages of Homa and Ahuti. The Bija Mantra Japa, which had been sustained throughout the observance period, remained an integral spiritual component of the proceedings.

Devotees assembled around the jagyan mandapa to witness the rituals and participate through prayer, meditation, and reverent observation.

The continuity of these practices emphasized the collective spiritual effort that had characterized the entire Baisakha Mela.

Documentation Note

The concluding stages of the Mahajagyan reflected the culmination of six days of uninterrupted ritual discipline, prayer, and sacred observance.



(The Homa proceedings of Day six of the Vishwashanti Mahajagyan being conducted at the Jagyan Mandapa.)

8.3 PURNAHUTI: THE FINAL OFFERING

The most significant ritual of the day was the performance of Purnahuti, the concluding offering of the Vishwashanti Mahajagyan.

The ceremony was performed by the Karta and Karti under the guidance of the officiating priests. Temple trustees, administrative officials, invited guests, and other participants also joined in offering Ahutis into the sacred fire as part of the concluding ritual.

Purnahuti signifies the ceremonial completion of a jagyan and represents the offering of all prayers, intentions, and spiritual efforts accumulated during the observance to the divine. Through this final act, the Mahajagyan reached its ritual conclusion.

As sacred offerings were placed into the fire amidst Vedic recitations, devotees witnessed the culmination of six days of worship dedicated to peace, prosperity, and universal welfare.

Documentation Note

Purnahuti represented the ceremonial climax of the Vishwashanti Mahajagyan and symbolized the successful completion of the sacred observance.



(The Purnahuti ceremony being performed on the sixth and concluding day of the Vishwashanti Mahajagyan)

8.4 COLLECTIVE PARTICIPATION IN THE FINAL AHUTI

An important feature of the concluding ceremony was the collective participation of temple authorities, trustees, officials, and devotees in the final offerings.

Under the guidance of the officiating priests, participants were invited to offer Ahutis into the sacred fire as an expression of devotion and gratitude. The ceremony reflected the collective nature of the Vishwashanti Mahajagyan, which had been sustained through the efforts of priests, administrators, volunteers, and devotees throughout the six-day observance.

The shared participation reinforced the spirit of community and unity that remained central to the festival.

Documentation Note

The collective Ahuti ceremony highlighted the communal character of the Mahajagyan and provided an opportunity for participants to become directly involved in its final rites.



(Participant devotees offering Ahuti during the Purnahuti)

8.5 KALASA VISARJANA PROCESSION

Following the completion of Purnahuti, attention turned toward the final ceremonial procession associated with the Mahajagyan.

The sacred Kalasas that had been installed and worshipped throughout the observance were prepared for Kalasa Visarjana. Priests, ritual participants, and devotees assembled in procession and carried the consecrated vessels from the jagyan mandapa toward Papaharini.

Accompanied by devotional chants and ceremonial observances, the procession moved through the temple premises toward the sacred waters, symbolizing the completion of the ritual cycle initiated during the opening days of the festival.

The movement of the procession attracted large numbers of devotees who joined in prayer and accompanied the ceremonial journey.

Documentation Note

The Kalasa Visarjana procession served as a symbolic transition from ritual completion to ceremonial dissolution, bringing the observance to its natural conclusion.



(Kalasa Visarjan Jatra proceeding towards Papaharini for the concluding ritual immersion.)

8.6 KALASA VISARJANA AT PAPA HARINI

At the sacred waters of Papaharini, the final rites of Kalasa Visarjana were performed according to established ritual traditions.

The consecrated Kalasas, which had served as vessels of divine presence throughout the Mahajagyan, were ceremonially immersed following the prescribed rites. Priests recited sacred mantras while devotees gathered along the banks to witness the conclusion of the observance.

The immersion symbolized the completion of the ritual cycle and the return of the invoked divine energies to the cosmic order. The ceremony also served as a reminder of the cyclical nature of religious observances and the continuing relationship between sacred worship and the natural world.

The concluding rites at Papaharini brought the six-day Mahajagyan to a spiritually meaningful close.

Documentation Note

Kalasa Visarjana represented the final ritual act of the Vishwashanti Mahajagyan and completed the ceremonial sequence initiated at the beginning of the festival.



(Kalasa Visarjan at Papaharini signifying the completion of the sacred proceedings.)

8.7 CULTURAL PROGRAMME AND DISTINGUISHED GUESTS

The concluding evening's cultural programme was organized on the open-air stage within the temple premises and attracted one of the largest audiences of the entire festival.

The programme was attended by several distinguished guests, including **Shri Tokhan Sahu, Union Minister of State for Housing and Urban Affairs, Government of India; Dr. Mukesh Mahaling, Minister for Health and Family Welfare, Government of Odisha; Shri Aditya Goyal, District Collector of Bargarh; Shri Pradeep Purohit, Member of Parliament from Bargarh; Shri Chunilal Sahu, former Member of Parliament from Mahasamund; Shri Gobardhan Bhue, Chairman of the Special Development Council, Bargarh; and Shri Hemsagar Bhoi, Sub-Collector of Padampur.**

The presence of public representatives, administrative officials, and community leaders reflected the importance of the Baisakha Mela as a major religious and cultural gathering in western Odisha.

Documentation Note

The participation of distinguished guests highlighted the regional significance of the festival and its role in bringing together religious, cultural, and civic communities.



(Stage view of distinguished guests during the concluding cultural program evening.)

8.8 CULTURAL PERFORMANCES AND ARTISTIC TRADITIONS

The evening programme featured a range of cultural presentations representing the artistic heritage of Odisha.

Classical Odissi performances captivated audiences through their elegance and devotional expression, while Sambalpuri cultural presentations celebrated the vibrant folk traditions of western Odisha. Additional folk dance performances added diversity and energy to the programme.

Artists from different regions contributed to the festive atmosphere, offering performances that complemented the spiritual significance of the concluding day.

The programme attracted thousands of devotees and visitors, many of whom remained within the temple premises late into the evening to witness the cultural celebrations.

Documentation Note

The cultural presentations reinforced the festival's commitment to preserving and promoting regional artistic traditions alongside religious observances.



(Stage performance narrating the divine story of Lord Krishna through traditional dance.)

8.9 CLOSING GATHERING AND FESTIVAL ATMOSPHERE

As the cultural programme continued into the evening, devotees reflected upon the completion of the six-day observance.

The temple premises remained filled with pilgrims, visitors, volunteers, priests, and community members who had contributed to the success of the Baisakha Mela. Conversations, devotional activities, and cultural performances continued to create a vibrant atmosphere of celebration and fellowship.

For many participants, the conclusion of the Mahajagyan marked not an ending but a renewal of spiritual commitment inspired by the rituals, traditions, and collective experiences of the preceding days.

Documentation Note

The concluding gathering reflected the sense of unity and shared devotion that had developed throughout the festival.



8.10 CLOSING REFLECTIONS OF THE SIXTH DAY

The sixth day of Baisakha Mela 2026 brought the Vishwashanti Mahayajna to its successful conclusion through the performance of Purnahuti and Kalasa Visarjana. These final ceremonies completed a ritual sequence that had begun six days earlier with the consecration of sacred vessels and the establishment of the jagyan.

Throughout the observance, priests, temple authorities, volunteers, community representatives, and thousands of devotees worked collectively to sustain the spiritual and cultural life of the festival. The concluding rituals symbolized the fulfillment of prayers offered for peace, prosperity, and universal welfare.

The successful completion of the Mahajagyan and the accompanying cultural programmes demonstrated the continuing vitality of the religious and cultural traditions associated with Shri Nrusinghanath Temple.

DAY SIX SUMMARY

The sixth and final day of Baisakha Mela 2026 was marked by the performance of Purnahuti and Kalasa Visarjana, bringing the Vishwashanti Mahajagyan to its ceremonial conclusion. The Karta, Karti, priests, temple trustees, officials, and devotees collectively participated in the final offerings, symbolizing the completion of six days of sacred observance.

Following the final rituals, a ceremonial procession carried the consecrated Kalasas to Papaharini, where the immersion ceremony was performed according to tradition. The evening cultural programme, attended by distinguished guests and thousands of devotees, celebrated Odisha's rich artistic heritage through Odissi, Sambalpuri, and folk performances.

The successful completion of the Baisakha Mela reaffirmed the enduring spiritual, cultural, and communal significance of Shri Nrusinghanath Temple and its traditions, leaving devotees with a renewed sense of faith, unity, and devotion.

SECTION IX

OBSERVATIONS, CULTURAL IMPACT, AND HERITAGE CONTINUITY

9.1 BAISAKHA MELA AS LIVING INTANGIBLE HERITAGE

The six-day Baisakha Mela documented at Shri Nrusinghanath Temple in 2026 demonstrates that the significance of the festival cannot be understood through its individual ceremonies alone. Its heritage value lies in the continuity of relationships between ritual, place, community, memory, and participation.

The Mela is sustained through practices that are repeatedly enacted rather than merely remembered. Kalasha Adhibasa, Ankuraropana, Bija Mantra Japa, Homa, Ahuti, Ganga Aarti, Janmotsav observances, Purnahuti, and Kalasa Visarjana together constitute a sequence through which the sacred calendar becomes a lived experience. The opening consecration of the Kalasas and their eventual immersion at Papaharini demonstrate this continuity particularly clearly: the ritual cycle begins by establishing sacred presence and concludes by ceremonially dissolving that presence.

This continuity is also social.

The festival depends upon the participation of priests, Acharyas, ritual scholars, temple authorities, hereditary communities, volunteers, cultural performers, administrators, and pilgrims. The documented role of the Kandha community, including hereditary participation in the offering of Kandhamula during Nrusingha Janmotsav, illustrates how local community traditions remain embedded within the wider ritual identity of the temple.

The Mela therefore represents a form of living heritage in which knowledge is not preserved exclusively in written form. It survives through performance, repetition, responsibility, participation, and memory.

This distinction is fundamental.

A ritual preserved only in an archive becomes a record of heritage. A ritual that continues to be performed, taught, witnessed, and inherited remains a living heritage tradition.

Nrusinghanath demonstrates the latter.

9.2 PRESERVATION THROUGH RITUAL CONTINUITY

One of the clearest observations from the 2026 Mela is the importance of continuity.

The Vishwashanti Mahajagyan was not experienced as a series of disconnected ceremonies. Each day built upon the ritual conditions established previously. The consecrated Kalasas established during the opening observances remained central to the subsequent proceedings; the Bija Mantra Japa continued across the festival; the sacred fire established through Agni Pratishtha remained the centre of the Mahajagyan; and the final Purnahuti and Kalasa Visarjana completed the sequence.

This continuity illustrates an important principle of ritual preservation: the survival of a tradition depends not simply on remembering its components, but on preserving the relationships between them.

If Ankuraropana is remembered but its place within the opening of the ritual cycle is forgotten, part of its meaning is lost.

If the final Kalasa Visarjana is documented without understanding the consecration that preceded it, the concluding ceremony becomes isolated from the ritual logic that gives it significance. The documentation therefore records not merely individual acts, but their sequence.

This is one reason why day-wise documentation is particularly valuable. It allows future researchers to reconstruct not only what ceremonies occurred, but how the festival moved from preparation to culmination.

The six-day sequence documented in 2026 demonstrates a gradual intensification:

consecration → invocation → establishment of the yajna → sustained ritual practice → Janmotsav → culmination → dissolution.

The significance of the festival lies partly in this progression.

9.3 PILGRIMAGE, TOURISM, AND REGIONAL IDENTITY

The Baisakha Mela also reveals the geographical reach of Nrusinghanath as a pilgrimage centre. Across the documented days, pilgrims arrived from different parts of Odisha and neighbouring Chhattisgarh, with participation increasing as the festival approached its principal observances. By the third and fourth days, many devotees had begun remaining within the temple premises and surrounding areas to participate more fully in the ritual and cultural programme.

The pilgrimage experience extends beyond the temple structure itself.

The approach to Nrusinghanath, the Gandhamardan hills, Papaharini, the jagyan mandapa, the temple precincts, and the cultural spaces of the Mela together form a larger sacred geography. This matters for the understanding of tourism.

Nrusinghanath should not be approached merely as a destination where a monument can be viewed. Its significance emerges through the relationship between place, pilgrimage, ritual, landscape, and community.

The documented Ganga Aarti at Papaharini provides a clear example. The ceremony connected the ritual life of the temple with the natural environment, transforming the riverbank into an extension of the sacred experience.

A responsible approach to cultural tourism must therefore preserve the character of this relationship.

Tourism can increase awareness and provide economic opportunities, but unmanaged tourism can also reduce sacred spaces to visual attractions.

The long-term value of Nrusinghanath lies in ensuring that increased visibility does not come at the expense of ritual dignity, ecological sensitivity, or community ownership.

9.4 ECONOMIC ACTIVITY AND COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION

A large religious gathering inevitably creates an economic ecosystem around the sacred centre. The Mela brings together pilgrims, local vendors, flower sellers, food providers, cultural performers, transport providers, volunteers, service personnel, and other participants whose activities support the functioning of the festival.

The documentation shows this ecosystem emerging alongside the ritual programme. Temporary stalls became active as the festival began, while devotional gatherings and cultural programmes created sustained public movement around the temple precinct.

The economic dimension should therefore not be treated as something external to the Mela. It is part of the social life created by the pilgrimage.

At the same time, the economic activity surrounding a sacred festival should remain subordinate to the cultural character of the place. The challenge is not to eliminate commercial activity, which would be unrealistic, but to ensure that it remains compatible with sanitation, public order, environmental responsibility, pedestrian movement, and the dignity of the sacred landscape. The Mela demonstrates how religious gatherings can function simultaneously as spiritual institutions, cultural gatherings, and local economic ecosystems.

9.5 YOUTH PARTICIPATION AND FUTURE GENERATIONS

The continuation of Nrusinghanath's traditions ultimately depends upon whether the next generation encounters those traditions as meaningful practices rather than distant historical accounts.

The 2026 Mela provides evidence of intergenerational participation. The Parswa Deva-Devi Nimantran, for example, brought together men, women, elders, and younger participants within a common ritual procession.

Similarly, the broader Mela brought younger participants into contact with ritual specialists, cultural performers, hereditary communities, administrators, and pilgrims.

This is significant because cultural continuity rarely occurs through formal instruction alone. It occurs through observation and participation.

A young devotee who watches a priest perform a ritual, accompanies a family member to Papaharini, observes the preparation of an offering, listens to devotional music, or participates in a procession is encountering heritage through lived experience.

The responsibility of future preservation is therefore not simply to tell younger generations that a tradition is important.

It is to ensure that they can still experience, understand, question, and participate in it.

9.6 WHY DOCUMENTATION MATTERS

Memory, Preservation, and Historical Responsibility

The most important conclusion emerging from the documentation is perhaps the simplest: **What is not recorded becomes increasingly difficult to reconstruct.**

A festival of this scale produces thousands of individual experiences. Yet without systematic documentation, most of those experiences disappear with the people who witnessed them. The purpose of this archive is therefore not to compete with memory, but to support it. Photographs preserve appearance.

Written records preserve sequence and interpretation.

Oral testimony preserves personal memory.

Names preserve responsibility.

Dates preserve chronology.

Ritual descriptions preserve knowledge.

Together, these materials create something that none could provide independently: a historical record of the festival as it was experienced in a particular year.

This is especially important because the Baisakha Mela is not static. Its fundamental ritual identity may remain continuous while its surrounding social, technological, administrative, and cultural environment changes.

Documentation makes those changes visible.

The 2026 record therefore has value not only for the present generation, but for researchers who may examine Nrusinghanath decades from now.

SECTION IX

CONCLUDING OBSERVATION

The 2026 Baisakha Mela demonstrates that heritage survives most effectively when it remains embedded within community practice.

At Nrusinghanath, ritual, pilgrimage, landscape, cultural performance, hereditary responsibility, administration, and collective participation do not exist as isolated categories. They overlap continuously.

The Mela begins with preparation and consecration, grows through sustained worship and pilgrimage, reaches its principal devotional intensity around Nrusingha Janmotsav, and concludes through Purnahuti and Kalasa Visarjana. The sequence is simultaneously religious, cultural, social, and spatial.

The central observation is therefore not that Nrusinghanath possesses a heritage that needs to be preserved.

It is that Nrusinghanath continues to produce and transmit heritage through living practice. The task of documentation is to ensure that this living process is not lost from historical memory.

10.1 OPERATIONAL CHALLENGES DURING PEAK ATTENDANCE

The increasing number of pilgrims created progressively greater demands upon the temple environment as the Mela approached its principal observances.

The fourth and fifth days demonstrated particularly strong increases in participation, with pathways, temple premises, and surrounding areas becoming increasingly active.

Large-scale pilgrimage requires coordination across multiple systems simultaneously:

- ritual movement,
- pedestrian circulation,
- security,
- sanitation,
- water availability,
- medical readiness,
- volunteer coordination,
- food and bhoga distribution,
- cultural programming,
- and communication.

The challenge is that these systems cannot be managed independently.

A disruption in one can affect the others.

Future planning should therefore treat the Mela as an integrated operational environment rather than a collection of separate arrangements.

10.2 CROWD MOVEMENT AND INFRASTRUCTURE OBSERVATIONS

The physical geography of Nrusinghanath creates both its distinctive character and its logistical challenges.

The temple is situated within the Gandhamardan landscape rather than an urban environment. This contributes significantly to its sacred identity, but it also means that increasing attendance must be accommodated without treating the landscape simply as expandable event infrastructure. The objective should therefore not be maximum physical capacity.

It should be safe, orderly, dignified movement while preserving the character of the sacred environment.

Future planning should pay particular attention to:

- clearly defined pedestrian routes;
- separation of ritual and general movement where necessary;
- shaded waiting areas;
- drinking-water access;
- sanitation;
- emergency access;
- wayfinding;
- controlled vehicle movement;
- and accessible information for pilgrims.

These are not merely administrative conveniences.

They directly affect the quality and safety of the pilgrimage experience.

10.3 DOCUMENTATION CHALLENGES IN RITUAL ENVIRONMENTS

Documenting a living religious ceremony presents a different challenge from photographing a public event.

The photographer or researcher must remain close enough to record meaningful detail while maintaining appropriate distance from the ritual itself.

The objective should never be to interrupt a ceremony in order to obtain a better photograph. This creates unavoidable limitations.

Certain moments may not be photographically accessible.

Some ritual details may be difficult to record while simultaneously maintaining contextual accuracy.

Crowds, movement, heat, smoke, low light, restricted spaces, and changing ceremonial positions can further complicate documentation.

These limitations should not be regarded as failures.

They are part of the methodology of documenting sacred practice.

A serious archive must acknowledge what could be observed, what could be recorded, and what remained inaccessible.

10.4 PRESERVATION CHALLENGES IN LARGE-SCALE TEMPLE FESTIVALS

The preservation challenge extends beyond architecture.

The heritage of Nrusinghanath includes:

- ritual knowledge,
- oral traditions,
- hereditary responsibilities,
- community participation,
- sacred geography,
- cultural performance,
- devotional practices,
- material objects,
- and the memory of individual participants.

Some of these are tangible.

Many are not.

A stone structure can survive centuries while the knowledge required to interpret it disappears within a generation.

This creates an important preservation principle:

Preserving the place without preserving the knowledge associated with the place is incomplete preservation.

The archive must therefore evolve beyond photographs toward a structured record containing names, dates, ritual descriptions, oral histories, contextual explanations, and verified historical references.

10.5 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE BAISAKHA MELAS

The 2026 experience suggests several practical directions for future documentation and festival planning.

1. Maintain an annual ritual record

Each year's Mela should have a dedicated archival record rather than relying on scattered photographs and recollections.

2. Preserve oral knowledge

Priests, hereditary servitors, community elders, and long-term devotees should be interviewed systematically.

3. Record ritual terminology accurately

Local ritual names should be documented alongside their meanings, functions, and sequence.

4. Build a photographic standard

Important rituals should be documented consistently each year so that changes can be compared across time.

SECTION X

CHALLENGES, LIMITATIONS, AND LEARNINGS FROM 2026

10.1 OPERATIONAL CHALLENGES DURING PEAK ATTENDANCE

The growth of the Mela presents a fundamental organisational challenge: the systems required to support a large pilgrimage gathering must function without disturbing the ritual character of the temple.

Attendance increased progressively through the festival, with particularly large gatherings developing around the principal observances and cultural programmes. The expanding number of pilgrims required continuous coordination between temple authorities, volunteers, organisers, and local administration.

The principal lesson is therefore one of preparedness at scale. A growing Mela requires systems capable of anticipating peak movement rather than responding only after pressure has developed.

10.2 CROWD MOVEMENT AND INFRASTRUCTURE OBSERVATIONS

Large pilgrimage gatherings place simultaneous demands upon roads, pathways, water facilities, sanitation, public spaces, ritual areas, and emergency systems. The 2026 documentation records a festival environment in which temple premises, yajna spaces, surrounding pathways, cultural stages, and temporary public areas were continuously active.

Future planning should consequently consider the Mela as one connected spatial system rather than treating the temple and surrounding fairground as separate environments.

Particular attention should be given to pilgrim movement, shaded waiting areas, drinking water, sanitation, emergency access, temporary accommodation, and clearly organised public circulation during peak periods.

10.3 DOCUMENTATION CHALLENGES IN RITUAL ENVIRONMENTS

Documenting a living ritual presents a challenge of its own. A photographer or researcher must record detail without interfering with worship, disturbing ritual concentration, or reducing sacred activity to spectacle.

The 2026 archive therefore demonstrates the value of observing multiple dimensions of the Mela: ritual proceedings, sacred objects, priests and ritual labour, architecture, pilgrims, devotional expression, and the night-time environment.

Future documentation can be strengthened through systematic metadata, identified dates and locations, recorded oral testimonies, and consistent archival standards.

10.4 PRESERVATION CHALLENGES IN LARGE-SCALE TEMPLE FESTIVALS

As participation grows, preservation faces a delicate balance. Increased visibility can strengthen public interest in a heritage site, but greater scale can also place pressure upon sacred spaces, natural surroundings, traditional practices, and the ability of ritual systems to operate without interruption.

The objective should therefore not be to freeze the Mela in an imagined past. Living traditions naturally develop. The responsibility is to ensure that development does not sever the relationship between ritual practice, sacred space, community knowledge, and inherited meaning.

10.5 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE BAISAKHA MELAS

Based on the observations recorded during 2026, five practical priorities emerge:

1. Plan for the peak, not the average.

Infrastructure and crowd systems should be designed around the highest periods of pilgrimage.

2. Establish a structured annual documentation process.

Every Mela should produce an organised record of rituals, participants, oral histories, photographs, and significant events.

3. Preserve ritual knowledge alongside physical heritage.

Names, responsibilities, sequences, traditional interpretations, and community roles should be documented with equal seriousness.

4. Strengthen digital accessibility without replacing physical heritage.

Digital platforms can improve access to information while the temple remains fundamentally a lived sacred institution. The 2026 Mela already marked an important step in this direction through the introduction of the Nrusinghanath Temple Digital Portal.

5. Keep development compatible with sacred character.

Tourism, commercial activity, infrastructure, and cultural programming should support the identity of Nrusinghanath rather than redefine it.

Concluding Observation

The challenges observed in 2026 should not be interpreted simply as shortcomings. They are indicators of a living institution whose scale and public importance require increasingly thoughtful planning.

SECTION XI

FUTURE VISION

PRESERVING NRUSINGHANATH FOR THE NEXT CENTURY

Documentation of Baisakha Mela 2026 should not be understood as a conclusion. It should mark the beginning of a continuing archival practice.

A festival of this scale is not preserved by recording a single year alone. Its history becomes meaningful when successive years are documented with enough consistency to reveal continuity, change, people, practices, spaces, and memory.

The responsibility, therefore, is not simply to preserve what was witnessed in 2026, but to establish a foundation through which future generations may understand Nrusinghanath as a living place of worship, pilgrimage, community, and cultural memory.

11.1 TOWARD AN ANNUAL DOCUMENTATION SYSTEM

Each year's Baisakha Mela should be documented through a consistent framework covering the ritual calendar, principal ceremonies, participating priests and communities, pilgrim experiences, cultural programmes, administrative arrangements, significant developments, and photographic evidence.

Maintained over time, such records would create something more valuable than a series of isolated festival reports: a longitudinal history of Nrusinghanath.

The value of this approach lies in continuity. Future records should not merely repeat the documentation of 2026, but allow each generation to be understood on its own terms while remaining connected to the larger history of the temple and Mela.

11.2 BUILDING A DIGITAL HERITAGE ARCHIVE

The preservation of Nrusinghanath's heritage should extend beyond the printed page.

A long-term digital archive can bring together:

- Photographic records
- Audiovisual documentation
- Ritual descriptions
- Oral histories and recorded interviews
- Architectural and spatial records
- Archival documents and maps
- Annual Baisakha Mela documentation

Digital material should be properly dated, described, indexed, and preserved so that it remains useful not only for devotees and visitors, but also for researchers, cultural institutions, and future documentation teams.

The temple's digital presence introduced in 2026 provides an important foundation for extending the reach of this heritage beyond the physical boundaries of the shrine.

11.3 RESEARCH, SCHOLARSHIP, AND CULTURAL STUDY

Nrusinghanath offers a significant field for interdisciplinary study. Its traditions can be examined through architecture, ritual studies, anthropology, folklore, pilgrimage studies, regional history, sacred geography, performing arts, oral traditions, and digital heritage.

Such scholarship should begin with primary evidence: temple records, oral histories, ritual observation, architectural documentation, community knowledge, and properly identified archival materials.

The objective should not be to impose an external interpretation upon the tradition, but to understand Nrusinghanath through the voices, practices, spaces, and histories that continue to sustain it.

11.4 TOURISM RECOGNITION AND INSTITUTIONAL COLLABORATION

The growing regional reach of Baisakha Mela creates opportunities for responsible cultural and pilgrimage tourism.

Such recognition, however, should be accompanied by careful institutional collaboration. Temple authorities, local communities, cultural institutions, researchers, administration, and technology partners each have a role to play, provided that the ritual authority and cultural character of the temple remain respected.

Future collaboration should therefore prioritise **heritage protection, accurate interpretation, visitor awareness, infrastructure, documentation, and community benefit** rather than visibility alone.

11.5 LONG-TERM PRESERVATION GOALS

The preservation of Nrusinghanath should ultimately be understood in three interconnected dimensions:

Preserve the Place.

Protect the temple, sacred spaces, architectural character, surrounding landscape, and pilgrimage environment.

Preserve the Practice

Safeguard ritual knowledge, hereditary responsibilities, community participation, devotional traditions, and cultural performances.

Preserve the Memory.

Maintain written records, photographs, oral histories, digital archives, and scholarly documentation so that future generations can understand what the tradition meant and how it was lived.

The future of Nrusinghanath should not require the temple to become something other than itself. Its strength lies in the continuity between place, worship, people, and memory.

Concluding Vision

The responsibility of the present generation is therefore not simply to celebrate Nrusinghanath, but to leave behind enough knowledge for future generations to understand why it mattered.

CLOSING REFLECTION

A RECORD OF A LIVING TRADITION

A Mela ends.

A gathering disperses.

The lamps are extinguished.

The temporary spaces disappear.

But what has been lived does not necessarily disappear with them.

It remains in ritual, in memory, in stories, in photographs, in places, and in the people who return year after year.

Baisakha Mela 2026 is now part of that continuing memory.

This volume cannot preserve everything. No archive can.

But it can preserve enough to allow another generation to look back and recognise the place, the practices, the people, and the devotion that made this Mela what it was.

The record now belongs to the future.

PRESERVE. PROTECT. PROMOTE.

For generations to come.

THE FUTURE OF NRUSINGHANATH

The Baisakha Mela of 2026 is now part of the history of Nrusinghanath.

What has been recorded here belongs not only to the present, but to those who will return to these pages years from now seeking to understand how the Mela was observed, performed, experienced, and remembered.

An archive becomes meaningful when it outlives the moment it records.
May this record serve as one such beginning.

A VISION TO PRESERVE

IN RECOGNITION OF

SHRI PURUSHOTTAM PRADHAN

Executive Officer, Shri Nrusinghanath Temple

The preservation of cultural heritage begins with recognising that traditions survive not only through ritual, but also through the conscious effort to document, protect, and transmit them. The documentation of Baisakha Mela 2026 reflects a commitment to ensuring that the ritual life, cultural practices, community participation, and collective memory surrounding Nrusinghanath are not confined to the present moment.

Special acknowledgement is extended to Shri Purushottam Pradhan for his vision and support towards documenting and preserving the living cultural and ritual traditions of Baisakha Mela for future generations.

PRESERVING WHAT MUST NOT BE LOST

Tradition survives through practice.

Heritage survives through memory.

Memory survives when it is preserved.

ARCHIVAL CREDITS

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• Volunteers • Devotees • Performers • Local Communities

ARCHIVAL SCOPE

Ritual Documentation • Cultural Documentation • Field Observation • Photography • Oral
Information • Architectural Observation • Digital Preservation

ABOUT THE DOCUMENTATION TEAM

RECORDING THE MELA AS IT WAS LIVED

The documentation team approached the 2026 Baisakha Mela as a cultural heritage record rather than as conventional event coverage.

The work combined field observation, photography, ritual documentation, cultural recording, oral information, architectural observation, and digital preservation.

The central principle was simple:

Record the Mela as it was lived.

The resulting archive is intended to remain useful beyond the immediate festival period—as a reference for the temple, community, researchers, cultural institutions, and future generations.

DIGITAL ARCHIVE

THE RECORD CONTINUES ONLINE

The printed documentation forms one part of a larger archival effort.

The digital archive provides an evolving space for preserving and presenting the Baisakha Mela beyond the physical volume.

OFFICIAL TEMPLE WEBSITE

nrusinghanathtemple.in

BAISAKHA MELA 2026

Digital Heritage Archive

Rituals • Events • Cultural Heritage • Photography • Videos • Documentation

ARCHIVAL NOTE

This volume documents Baisakha Mela 2026 through field observation, photographic documentation, ritual recording, oral information, and cultural documentation undertaken during the festival.

The record seeks to preserve the Mela as a living cultural and religious tradition while distinguishing observed documentation from interpretation.

Where knowledge has been drawn from traditional or oral sources, it should be understood within that context.

This archive is intended as a record of the festival in its 2026 context and as a foundation for continued documentation in the years ahead.

GLOSSARY OF RITUAL TERMS

Ankuraropana — Ritual sowing or germination ceremony forming part of the opening ritual preparations.

Abakasha Niti — Daily ritual observance associated with the temple's regular worship cycle.

Ahuti — A sacred offering made into the ritual fire.

Ghrutahuti / Dhritahuti — Offering of ghee into the sacred fire as part of the yajna sequence.

Janmostav / Janmotsav — Celebration of the divine birth or appearance of the deity.

Kalasha Adhibasa — Ritual consecration and establishment of the sacred kalashas.

Kalasha Jatra — Ceremonial procession associated with the collection and bringing of sacred water.

Karta / Karti — Principal male and female participants responsible for designated ritual duties within the Mahayajna.

Mahajagyan — A large-scale sacrificial ritual involving prescribed recitation, offerings, and ceremonial procedures.

Nrusingha Chaturdashi — The sacred observance marking the divine appearance of Lord Nrusingha.

Purnahuti / Purna Ahuti — The final offering completing the yajna.

Sudhi — Ritual purification or purification-related observance within the ceremonial preparation.

Vishwashanti Mahajagyan — The Mahajagyan conducted during the Baisakha Mela with the stated intention of universal peace and well-being.

REFERENCES, ORAL SOURCES, AND INTERVIEWS

Primary and Institutional Sources

- Shri Nrusinghanath Temple — Official temple information and Baisakha Mela documentation.
- Temple and festival records consulted during the 2026 observance.
- Ritual observations recorded during the Baisakha Mela, 26 April–1 May 2026.
- Oral explanations provided by ritual authorities and participants during the observance.

Oral and Field Sources

- Acharya and participating ritual scholars of the Vishwashanti Mahajagyan.
- Temple priests and servitors.
- Representatives associated with the Kandha Samaj and Karta/Karti tradition.
- Temple administration and Baisakha Mela organisers.
- Devotees and community participants.
- Artists and cultural programme participants.

Documentation Principle

Oral traditions recorded in this volume are presented as oral and community-held traditions. They should not automatically be treated as independently verified historical claims. Where interpretation derives from oral testimony, the distinction between tradition, observation, and established historical evidence should be maintained.

INDEX OF RITUALS AND CEREMONIES

- **Ankuraropana** — Section II; Day One
- **Abakasha Niti** — Day Two
- **Bija Mantra Japa** — Day Two onward
- **Chandan Ritual** — Day Three
- **Ganga Aarti** — Day Two
- **Ghrutahuti** — Mahajagyan sequence
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- **Nrusingha Janmotsav** — Day Five
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