

## Balaji Math Temple – A Heritage of Puruna Gunupur

The Balaji Math Temple, also known as Sana Matha, is a beautiful and peaceful temple located about 4 km northwest of the Gunupur Bus Stand. This old temple is not just a place of worship but also an important part of the area's history and culture.

### How It All Began

The temple was started in the mid-18th century, during the time of King Sri Vikrama Dev II. A Brahmin named Nityananda Panda brought a brass idol of Lord Balaji from the holy city of Puri to Gunupur. At first, the idol was kept in a simple mud house and worshipped with devotion.

Later, with the efforts of Mahanta Balarama Das Babaji and Sri Sahajaram Das Mahanta, the temple grew into a bigger and more respected place. The current stone structure, with beautiful carvings, was likely built before the year 1843. Even though the temple was never fully completed, its design still attracts many visitors.

### A Story of Struggle

The temple's construction was stopped because of a court case. The king of Jeypore claimed control over the temple and removed Mahanta Balarama Das from his position. This shows how power and religion were closely connected in those days.

### The Old Fort and a Sad Memory

Near the temple are the remains of an old mud fort, built by the Rajas of Kimedi. Inside the fort, near a tamarind tree, is a place where the wives of a local man named Narayana Patro are said to have performed sati (self-sacrifice) after his death. This place tells a sad story from the past.



