

SREE NARAYANA GURU AND MAHATMA GANDHI: PERSONALITY

NEWS: PM to inaugurate Centenary celebration of conversation between Sree Narayana Guru and Mahatma Gandhi on 24th June, 2025

WHAT'S IN THE NEWS?

PM Modi commemorated 100 years of the historic meeting between Mahatma Gandhi and Sree Narayana Guru at Sivagiri Mutt, where they discussed Vaikom Satyagraha, untouchability, and social equality—key themes that shaped India's reform movements.

Historic Context and Celebration

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi addressed the centenary celebration marking 100 years of the historic conversation between Mahatma Gandhi and Sree Narayana Guru.
- The conversation took place at Sivagiri Mutt in Kerala during Gandhi's visit and focused on issues like the Vaikom Satyagraha, non-violence, and abolition of untouchability.

Mahatma Gandhi (1869 – 1948)

- Born on 2nd October 1869 in Porbandar, Gujarat; commemorated globally as the International Day of Non-Violence.
- Lawyer, social activist, writer, and leader of the Indian nationalist movement advocating non-violence, truth, and upliftment of marginalized communities.
- Political mentor was Gopal Krishna Gokhale.
- Practiced satyagraha against racial discrimination in South Africa (1893–1915).
- Pravasi Bharatiya Divas (9th January) marks his return to India in 1915.
- Authored *Hind Swaraj* and *The Story of My Experiments with Truth*; edited *Harijan*, *Navjivan*, *Young India*, and *Indian Opinion*.

Sree Narayana Guru (1856 – 1928)

- Born into the Ezhava caste in Kerala, a marginalized community facing temple entry restrictions and caste discrimination.
- Led the *Aruvippuram Movement* (1888) by consecrating a Sivalinga, challenging Brahmanical privilege.
- Founded *SNDP Yogam* (1903), sparking social reform in Kerala.
- Established *Sivagiri Madhom* (1904) as a center of spiritual and social reform.
- Founded *Advaita Ashram* (1913) in Aluva, promoting non-duality and universal brotherhood.
- Advocated “One caste, One Religion, One God for all human beings”; condemned caste divisions, animal sacrifice, and religious discrimination.

- Authored philosophical works including *Advaita Deepika*, *Asrama*, *Thevarappathinkangal*, *Atmavilasam*, *Daiva Dasakam*, and *Brahmavidya Panchakam*.

Comparison Table: Mahatma Gandhi and Sree Narayana Guru

| Aspect | Mahatma Gandhi | Sree Narayana Guru |
|--------------------|--|---|
| Birth | 2 October 1869, Porbandar, Gujarat | 1856, Kerala |
| Community | Hindu Bania (Vaishya) | Ezhava caste, marginalized group |
| Key Movement | Indian Nationalist Movement, Non-violence, Quit India | SNDP Movement, Aruvippuram Movement |
| Philosophy | Non-violence, truth, upliftment of downtrodden | Social equality, non-duality (Advaita), religious harmony |
| Religious Views | Advocated Hindu-Muslim unity, anti-untouchability | "One caste, One religion, One God", condemned caste divisions |
| Literary Works | Hind Swaraj, Autobiography, edited multiple weeklies | Advaita Deepika, Daiva Dasakam, Brahmavidya Panchakam |
| Global Legacy | International Day of Non-Violence on his birth anniversary | Regional and national legacy in Kerala social reform |
| Mentor/Influence | Gopal Krishna Gokhale | Adi Shankara's Advaita Vedanta tradition |
| International Link | Satyagraha in South Africa | Primarily Indian reformer with local movements |

Significance

- This centenary marks the convergence of two historic reformers whose legacies continue to inspire movements against untouchability, caste discrimination, and for promoting equality, non-violence, and social justice in India.

Source: <https://www.pib.gov.in/PressReleasePage.aspx?PRID=2138936>