



Temple Khilla Ramalayam

# Splendid sculptures

One of the oldest and the most renowned temples in Nizamabad is Ramalayam in Dichpally. This 14th century temple dedicated to the Ram Avatar of Lord Vishnu is also called the Indhoor Khajuraho and Khilla Ramalayam

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Sitting on a hillock the Dichpally Ramalayam offers one sweeping view of the quaint little town of Dichpally and is undoubtedly a worthy vantage point to enjoy the early morning breeze. While the steps up the hillock lead you through an entrance typical of a fort complete with a fortification wall all around the temple grounds, which is probably why the locals now call this temple Khilla Ramalayam.

Considered to be a fine example of the Kakatiya's architectural splendor, this stone structure of black and white basalt has sculptures on its pillars that are reminiscent of the ones on the famous Khajuraho temples, bestowing on it the moniker of Indhoor Khajuraho, indicative of a time when Nizamabad was Indhoor, named so after a

Rashtrakuta King. These carvings based on Vatsyana's Kamasutra were so remarkable that even the name of this town traces its origins to it. These stone sculptures were called Gicchu Bommalu by the villagers of that time, meaning pictures of Gicchu, the Sanskrit word for romance and beauty. Over time the village of gicchu, Gicchu Palle came to be Dichpally.

Legend has it that in the Treta yuga, right after meeting Hanuman for the first time, Lord Ram was on his way to wage war on Ravan, he stopped here on this hill and stayed a fortnight and to mark this a Ramalayam was built here. In the 13th century when Alauddin Khilji conquered Nizamabad, there began a trend where the building of Hindu temples was not allowed, so the construction of this temple stopped midway and it was only many years later that the

idols of Ram, Sita and Hanuman were installed here. The temple as you see it today was only completed in 1949 when steps leading up the hillock and a sub-way connecting it to another popular temple in Nizamabad were built under the stewardship of Gajavada Chinnaya.

The Ramalayam is the biggest and most popular place in town and the wider roads in town leading here are evidence to that. Follow the sign posts and soon you will spot the 'temple on the hillock'. This also makes it a picturesque location for taking panoramic shots, with an almost submerged ancient mandapam just about visible in a

clear lake on one side and little brick houses with red roofs lined along its bank on the other.

## FACT FILE

Take the NH44 to drive down from Hyderabad to Nizamabad. Around 15 kilometres before you reach the town of Nizamabad get off the NH7 to reach Dichpally. The Dichpally Ramalayam is about 160 kilometres from Hyderabad and it takes less than 2 and half hours to reach.

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