

ODISHA UNRAVELLED



ODISHA
INDIA'S BEST KEPT SECRET.

JANUARY 2022 | ISSUE 10

A Newsletter by Department of Tourism, Government of Odisha



Picture Credit : Asutosh Sahu

Eco Retreat Odisha
5 Exotic Locations

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Ama Ghara Ama
Handishala

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Odishaaah!



Picture Credit : Avinash Khemka

Nalabana Bird Sanctuary

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*A Newsletter by Department of Tourism,
Government of Odisha*



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INDIA'S BEST KEPT SECRET.

FOREWORD



JYOTI PRAKASH PANIGRAHI

*Minister of State (IC) for Tourism and
Odia Language, Literature & Culture*

Odisha bid adieu to another challenging year in a more resilient way. Facing disruptive events such as cyclones and the pandemic not only brought the people together but also managed to bring about a sustainable way of developing a responsible and future-proof sector.

From training and skill development initiatives to development of sustainable tourism infrastructure in identified tourist destinations, Odisha Tourism has taken strategic measures to ensure the sector's revival. The successful hosting of many national and international level sporting events in middle of the pandemic

followed by inauguration of various tourism projects by Hon'ble Chief Minister boosted both the stakeholder and investor confidence. Launching Odisha's flagship tourism product – Eco Retreat at five niche locations across the State, despite facing nature-induced setbacks, spoke volumes about the State's efficiency in managing disasters.

This edition of the newsletter enumerates the sustained efforts made in the final quarter of 2021 and a celebration of achievements made despite facing numerous adversities.

**Happy reading and a very
Happy New Year!**

EDITOR'S NOTE



SURENDRA KUMAR, IAS

Principal Secretary, Tourism, GA and PG

Year 2021 concluded in a positive note with the entire tourism fraternity coming together to ensure quick revival of the sector. The last quarter saw the tourism season in Odisha come alive with launch of new tourism projects, organisation of festivals as per the scheduled events calendar and launch of Eco Retreat Odisha in various offbeat destinations across the State.

Sustained efforts in investment promotions and facilitations bore fruit with 15 tourism and hospitality projects worth INR 298.97 Crore getting approved through single window mechanism in the last quarter, taking the overall tally to a total of 32 projects worth INR 1157.15 Crore in the last year itself. To further boost investor confidence and ensure increase in domestic tourist footfalls in the State, a

campaign through roadshows across various target cities pan India was launched. The first leg of the promotions at Vizag, Raipur, Hyderabad and Bengaluru have been successfully conducted that witnessed engaging B2B sessions between tourism stakeholders of Odisha and host States.

With the launch of second outlet of Nimantran chain of authentic Odia cuisine restaurants and premium upgradation of Panthanivas in Bhubaneswar, Odisha Tourism is leaving no stones unturned to elevate the overall experience of travellers visiting the State. The 9th edition of our newsletter highlights various initiatives taken by the Department in the last quarter, working towards achieving the overall vision of recreating Odisha as a tourism hub of global standards.

RAMCHANDI BEACH POISED TO GET A FACELIFT

Tourism Minister laid the foundation stone on 25 December 2021



Located right at the confluence of Kushabhadra river and the majestic Bay of Bengal, Ramchandi Beach offers magnificent scenic beauty. Due to its naturally formed slopes; the beach does not have high waves which makes it ideal for boating and other water sports activities. Swimming enthusiasts get the perfect aura and setting for a wonderful swimming session in the soothing waters of the sea. Gauging the potential of the beach for water sports and adventure tourism activities, Department of Tourism has initiated development of a beach front promenade in a bid to elevate the profile of the destination into a premium day visit beach tourism hub.

Tourism minister Shri Jyoti Prakash Panigrahi laid the foundation stone on 25 December 2021 for the proposed project to be executed by M/S EPIL at an estimated cost INR 16.98 Cr. Sports Minister Tusharkanti Behera also attended the event.

The proposed development is structured across 1 km

long stretch from Ramchandi temple to boating area near Lotus resort. The major component of the proposed development are Coast protection measures to prevent erosion and provide stable sea front as the tidal effect and the cyclonic weather in the last decade have led to erosion. Other key components of the promenade are

vehicle parking area, vending zone, common facilities like toilets, children play area, rain shelter, cafeteria, pathways, landscaping, seating arrangements, viewing deck area, improvement of temple premises, external electrical works for pathways, solid waste management, planters, shaded areas and signages.



PROMOTING NICHE TOURISM OFFERINGS VIA ROADSHOWS

Roadshows held in Vizag, Raipur, Hyderabad and Bengaluru

The travel industry is seeing a paradigm shift with people opting to travel responsibly. It is going to be almost two years since the pandemic started disrupting the travel and tourism sector. Niche Tourism is slowly but steadily helping revive the industry. Odisha, known for its sustainable initiatives in tourism, is leaving no stones unturned to promote its diverse niche tourism offerings to the stakeholders of this industry.

From benchmark setting glamping products to transformative beach developments, water recreation to road trips and localised experiences in cuisine – Odisha Tourism is currently pitching a refreshingly new vision for the state, while interacting with travel trade intermediaries and media through a series of roadshows pan India. Aimed at strategic promotion of the

travel, tourism and hospitality sector in the domestic markets, Odisha is extensively marketing its flagship campaigns, Odisha By Road complemented by the highly acclaimed Eco Retreat Odisha, a 3-month glamping event which began on 15 December 2021. These roadshows are also a vehicle to attract potential investors to the State. Apart from highlighting the State as an investor friendly destination owing to the attractive policies laid down in the Odisha Tourism Policy 2016, various initiatives like infrastructure development of priority destinations through integrated master planning, creation of sustainable tourism ecosystems, introduction of houseboat and cruise tourism, camping, homestays, caravan tourism, food tourism and a lot more are being actively promoted.

“



SACHIN RAMCHANDRA JADHAV

Director, Odisha Tourism

“With the new variants of COVID-19 disrupting international travel, people have started looking for travel destinations within the country. However, owing to safety measures, niche tourism is gaining ground with tourists preferring to vacay at less crowded offbeat destinations. Odisha Tourism’s flagship product Eco Retreat, a 3-month glamping event at various exotic locations across the State, is such a tourism project today’s traveller is looking for. The Eco Retreats offer world class amenities for camping in luxury tents, complemented by experiences ranging from jungle trails to water sports, camp-fires to boat rides, cycling tours to adrenaline pumping activities like paragliding on the Bay of Bengal, the Eastern Ghats or the mighty Mahanadi river, and lip-smacking food. All this comes with Odisha’s stamp of tourist safety assurance, backed by its stellar record in COVID management. The synergised application of SOPs and technology for added safety will secure tourists’ experience at every Eco Retreat.”

”



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and suitable locations
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email: info@odishatourism.gov.in or pmu@odishatourism.gov.in



investodisha.gov.in/goswift



A SPECTACULAR START TO ODISHA'S TOURISM SEASON

Odisha welcomed tourists across India with the launch of its flagship events Konark Festival and International Sand Art Festival on 1 December 2021. The Konark Festival is held every year from 1st to 5th December since 1986 at the open-air auditorium in Konark with the iconic Konark Sun Temple at its backdrop. It is renowned for showcasing India's cultural depth through various classical dance forms including Odissi, Kathak, Satriya, Mohiniyattam, Bharatanatyam, and Kuchipudi among others. Simultaneously during these five days, the pristine Chandrabhaga Beach witnesses renowned sand artists competing to sculpt unique creations during the International Sand Art Festival.

This year, the Konark Festival was inaugurated on 1 December 2021 by Hon'ble Chief Minister Shri Naveen Patnaik. Minister of School & Mass Education Shri Samir Ranjan Das, Minister of Tourism and Odia Language & Culture Shri Jyoti Prakash Panigrahi, Minister of Electronic & IT, Sports & Youth Services Shri Tusharkanti Behera as honorable guests of the event lit the ceremonial lamp as part of the inaugural ceremony. The programme is organised by Department of Tourism, Government of Odisha in association with Odisha Sangeet Natak Akademi and Odisha Tourism Development Corporation (OTDC).

The International Sand Art Festival 2021 was inaugurated earlier that day by Minister of School & Mass Education Shri Samir Ranjan Das, Minister of Tourism and Odia Language & Culture Shri Jyoti Prakash Panigrahi, Minister of Electronic & IT, Sports & Youth Services Shri Tusharkanti Behera and noted Sand Artist Padma Shri Sudarshan Patnaik.

Both the festivals were organised in strict adherence to Covid-19 protocols with measures being taken for efficient crowd control including reducing the seating capacity to one-third at Konark Festival. LED screens were installed at Konark, Puri, Bhubaneswar and Cuttack for live screening of the dance festival apart from telecasting it live on DD Bharati, DD Odia and on the social media handles of Odisha Tourism in a bid to reach wider audience.

The five-day event was cut short to two days this year in view of the reports of India Meteorological Department and advisories issued by Special Relief Commissioner, Odisha on Deep Depression over southeast Bay of Bengal turning into Cyclonic Storm Jawad and reaching the coasts of Odisha. In public interest and safety, the Konark Festival 2021 and International Sand Art Festival 2021 were called off. Fortunately, the cyclone changed course and didn't make a landfall in the State.

KONARK FESTIVAL 2021

The inaugural show witnessed Odissi performance by Madhavi Mudgal & Group led by Odissi exponent Padma Shri Madhavi Mudgal from Gandharva Mahavidyalaya, New Delhi. The performances showcased Odissi dance recitals on Nartan Ganesh, Pallavi, Abhinaya and Trayi. This was followed by Kathak performance by Vaswati Mishra & group of 'Dhwani' from Lucknow Gharana of Kathak. Panchakshar, Rasamanjari, Nayika – Three Parables and Taraana are the four Kathak dance recitals performed during the event.

The second day of the event witnessed spell binding performances by Anita Sharma & Group from Guwahati and Niranjana Rout & Group from Bhubaneswar. The first set of

performances saw renowned choreographer Anita Sharma performing Satriya with her troupe. Krishna Vandana, Nandi Geet, Chali Nach, Rajaghoriya Chali, Sutradhari Nritya, Bhatima, Leela Govindam and Gajendra Moksh were the 8 dance recitals performed by the students of the Abhinaya Dance Academy. Leela Govindam was a special piece choreographed by the Sangeet Natak Akademi awardee Anita Sharma set to taal Suta & Ek Taal. The second half of the show saw enchanting Odissi performances by the students of Nupur led by eminent Odissi exponent Guru Niranjana Rout. The troupe performed Devi and then to Guru Niranjana Rout's choreographies on pure Odissi dance form Pallavi and Sun set to taal Khemata and taal Jati respectively.



INTERNATIONAL SAND ART FESTIVAL 2021

- The theme for the inaugural day was 'Culture and Monuments' on which various enchanting sand sculptures were created.
- The second day witnessed sand artists working on themes of 'Ecotourism' and 'Manabasa', a festival celebrated by married Odia women.

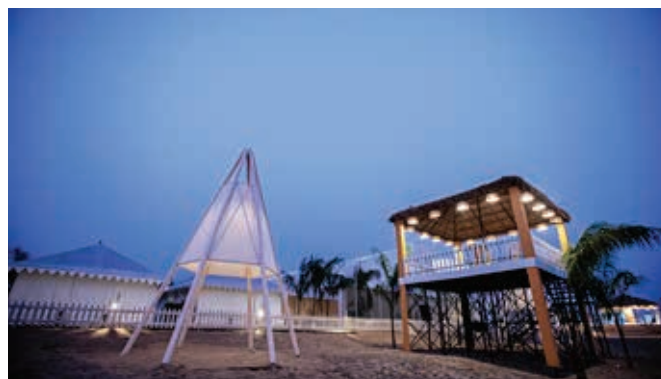


EXPERIENCE GLAMPING AT 5 EXO

KONARK, SATKOSIA, BHITARKANIKA, DARINGBADI & HIRAKUD V

Nestled in the lap of nature, Odisha is home to many breath-taking tourist destinations. From golden sandy beaches, lakes to waterfalls, the state has always had the potential to unlock its natural secrets and bring travellers close to nature. Eco Retreat Odisha, launched in 2019, by Odisha Tourism is a luxury glamping project that is held in pristine locations across the state.

Launched on 15 December 2021 by Hon'ble Chief Minister Shri Naveen Patnaik, Eco Retreat 2021 has been expanded to 5 niche locations this year offering 3-star resort like facilities and amenities. The locations comprise two beaches overlooking the majestic Bay of Bengal, one quaint hill station on the Eastern Ghats and two locations on the banks of Mahanadi river adjoining wildlife sanctuaries. **This** flagship project is acclaimed to be a successful zero-waste glamping event that ensures conservation of natural resources, with safe and environmental-friendly activities.



KONARK

Set on the idyllic Ramchandni Beach, few kilometers away from the iconic Konark Sun Temple – a UNESCO World Heritage Site, this glam camp promises mesmerising views of the magnificent Bay of Bengal. Offering an unparalleled glamping experience, visitors here will be treated to cultural performances and guided tours to nearby destinations of nature, culture, historic and architectural importance. For adrenaline seekers, this site is ideal for parasailing and indulging in other water sports activities, ATV rides, beach volleyball, ar-

chery and much more.

Visits to the Konark Sun Temple, Konark Museum, and Balukhand Sanctuary are a must... as is the ride to the Golden Beach in Puri which was recently re-certified as a Blue Flag Beach. Guests interested in art and crafts can visit Raghurajpur - a heritage crafts village where every household is an art gallery in itself. After a hectic day outdoors, return to the luxurious campsite and unwind at a beach shack or put your feet up and relax in the air-conditioned tent for an indulgent end to the day.

OTIC LOCATIONS ACROSS ODISHA

WELCOME TOURISTS FOR A LUXURIOUS STAY AT ECO RETREAT



BHITARKANIKA

An unexplored virgin beach inside a National Park. Throw in plush amenities and who wouldn't want to escape from the humdrum of a busy monotonous life? This is Eco Retreat at Pentha Beach inside the Bhitarkanika National Park. Surrounded by a casuarina forest, Pentha Beach is absolutely breathtaking. The Bhitarkanika National Park is also a Ramsar Site and the second largest mangrove ecosystem of India. The wetlands house largest variety of mangrove species in India along with the largest number of saltwater crocodiles in the Indian sub-continent,

monitor lizards, eight varieties of kingfisher, has one of the largest heronry in India and acts as a feeding ground for migratory birds during winters. Do not miss the opportunity of going on a boat safari along the creeks of Bhitarkanika to spot this exquisite wildlife. Visit the Bhitarkanika sanctuary as well as the crocodile breeding centre. Go on a trip to the nearby turtle sanctuary at Gahirmatha Beach where the lovely Olive Ridley turtles come to nest every year. Other activities on offer here include rifle shooting, archery, zorbing, cycling, cultural performances, etc.



DARINGBADI

Daringbadi is a hill station surrounded by beautiful valleys and plateaus dotted with pine forests, coffee and pepper plantations that makes this campsite incredibly scenic. Perfect for those looking to luxuriate in tranquil environs, this eco retreat's itinerary includes visits to Dasingbadi waterfall, and Daringbadi coffee garden. You can even visit nearby picture-perfect des-

tinations like Belghar – a place land locked by green mountains popularly known as the land of Hills and Waterfalls, Ushabati valley to spot huge gathering of peacocks, Putudi waterfall and Mandasaru (also known as silent valley) for that solitude amidst nature or interact with the local tribe 'Kutia Kandha'. Other recreational activities on offer include rifle shooting, archery, bicycling, and yoga on the hills, etc.



HIRAKUD

Built across the mighty Mahanadi river, the main attraction of this Eco Retreat is Asia's longest earthen dam Hirakud. Behind the dam extends a reservoir spread over 743 sq. km. Nestled between Debrigarh Wildlife Sanctuary and the reservoir, this glamping site offers an opportunity to explore the vibrant culture of Western Odisha and delectable traditional Odia cuisine. Expect guided treks into the Debrigarh Wildlife Sanctuary or find your wild side from a range of exciting water sports activities like parasailing, jet skiing, banana

boat rides, etc. Widely known for its exquisite handloom and handicrafts, do not hesitate to go on a shopping spree.

The presiding deity of the area is Maa Samaleswari and one can even catch the evening light and sound show at Maa Samaleswari Temple located nearby. After a day full of exciting activities, witness a cultural evening with beautiful folk performances before retiring for a luxurious night at a capacious swiss cottage that comes replete with every modern amenity.



SATKOSIA

Satkosia spreads along the magnificent gorge over the mighty Mahanadi river. The name is an amalgamation of two Odia words – 'Sat' meaning seven and 'Kos' which is a unit distance measure for two miles. Beauty of this gorge is that this is the meeting point of two bio-geographic regions of India – the Deccan Peninsula and the Eastern Ghats. This biodiversity rich hotspot houses the Satkosia Tiger Reserve while the glamping retreat rests camouflaged on the banks of the Mahanadi river next to the tiger sanctuary - a perfect destination for anyone who wants to experience luxury in the lap of nature. Offering visitors the best of adventure and lei-

sure, the retreat is also great for those who want to explore the natural wonders the region has to offer. One can go on a boat ride into the river Mahanadi, which in itself is an exciting river safari. Satkosia Gorge Sanctuary is famous for birding where one can witness hundreds of species of birds. You can even witness muggers, gharials and turtles sunbathing on the riverbanks and other land animals like spotted deer, sambar, barking deer, langurs, porcupines and the Malabar giant squirrel among others. Other activities at the camp include volleyball, archery, rifle shooting, cultural performances, etc.

PROMOTING AUTHENTIC ODIA CUISINE THROUGH NIMANTRAN CHAIN OF RESTAURANTS

Second restaurant of Nimantran opens at Puri on 23 December

Odisha Tourism, in its efforts to promote authentic Odia cuisine, has launched its second outlet of Nimantran at Puri, overlooking the picturesque Blue Flag Beach. The restaurant was inaugurated by Chairperson OTDC Smt. Shreemayee Mishra on 23 December 2021.

The restaurant will serve Odia cuisines that are synonymous with the culture of different regions in the State apart from signature dishes created

by renowned chefs by taking inspiration from local cuisine of Puri. The two-storey restaurant is built on a sustainably developed pre-fabricated structure and can withstand a wind speed upto 250 km/hr.

The third restaurant is due to be launched soon at the 17th century heritage palace Rani Bakhri located near Samaleswari Temple in Sambalpur.



**NOW EXPERIENCE
THE ODIA CUISINE AT**
BLUE FLAG BEACH, PURI



NIMANTRAN
AN AUTHENTIC ODIA CUISINE RESTAURANT



ODISHA WELCOMES ATHLETES FROM ACROSS THE GLOBE

Bhubaneswar hosts national & international level sporting events with strict adherence to Covid safety protocols

Odisha hosted the much-anticipated FIH Odisha Hockey Men's Junior World Cup 2021, which saw 16 top teams from across the globe compete for the title from 24 November to 5 December 2021 at Kalinga Stadium in Bhubaneswar. While Argentina lifted the trophy, efforts of Odisha State Government were lauded for successfully organising an international sporting event in India despite the challenges posed by Covid-19 and Cyclone Jawad.



The Indian Rugby Football Union (IRFU) aka Rugby India, the governing body for the sport of rugby in India, in association with The Government of Odisha, Societe Generale, KIIT University and Odisha Rugby Football Association hosted the 8th Senior National Rugby Sevens Championship at KIIT University, Bhubaneswar, Odisha from 17th to 19th December 2021. A total of 27 States and affiliated units to IRFU participated in the championship. All the matches were broadcast live on the Rugby India Facebook & YouTube channels

Para Sports Association of Odisha along with the Department of Sports and Youth Services Govt. of Odisha organised the 4th National Para-Badminton Championship under the Aegis of Paralympic committee of India and Badminton Association of India. The 3-day mega event held from 24th to 26th December 2021 at 2 venues in Bhubaneswar – Railway Indoor stadium, Bhubaneswar in association with K.C. Memorial Trust and Udaan Badminton Academy, witnessed participation from over 500 players.





Odisha hosted the country's first-ever Physical National Yogasana Sports Championships in Bhubaneswar. Organised by the National Yogasana Sports Federation (NYSF) in association with the Government of Odisha from 11th to 13th November 2021, the competition is a part of sustained efforts being made to ensure Yogasana becomes part of the prestigious Olympics platform. The championship saw 560 bright, talented, and young athletes from 30 states aiming high for 50 medals in a uniquely designed competition.



ODISHA POISED TO BOOST INDIA'S SPORTS ECOSYSTEM

Five sports infrastructure facilities including the Biju Patnaik Weightlifting Hall and a new sports hostel at the Kalinga stadium, a swimming pool each in Angul and Baripada and the indoor stadium in Rourkela was inaugurated by Hon'ble Chief Minister Shri Naveen Patnaik on 16 December 2021 at Kalinga Stadium, Bhubaneswar.

The Chief Minister also reviewed the progress of major sports infrastructure projects currently ongoing within the premises of Kainga Stadium. The upcoming infrastructure includes an indoor aquatic

centre which will become an iconic facility for swimmers once complete. Similarly, the Indoor Athletics Stadium scheduled to be completed in a year will become first such facility in India.

During this visit, foundation stones for 89 multipurpose indoor stadiums across the State were also laid. These stadiums will have facilities for sports like badminton, table tennis, weightlifting and can be used as shelters and hospitals during disaster and pandemic like situations. With the locations identified for such indoor stadiums, tender process has been initiated for 87 locations

and work is expected to start shortly in about 50 locations where the tender has been finalised. It is expected that all the indoor stadium will start functioning in 2022-23.

Apart from Bhubaneswar, Rourkela is being transformed into becoming the second hub of Sports in the state. With India's largest Hockey Stadium coming up for the Hockey World Cup in 2023, the State Government is adding many sports infrastructure to the city's length and breadth. The inaugurated Indoor Stadium is an added milestone for the smart city and will be a hub for shuttlers of the region.

SEASON 2 OF 'AMA GHARA AMA HANDISHALA' LAUNCHED



Odia cuisine forms a part of Odisha's diverse tourism offerings and it can only be elevated to a tourism status when residents of the State take pride in promoting it. In a bid to promote Odia cuisine among the Odia masses, Season 2 of 'Ama Ghara Ama Handishala', a competition focused on promoting traditional Odia cuisines, was launched by Odisha Tourism Development Corporation on 6 October 2021.

The competition that was started in 2020 amid Covid-19 restrictions saw great number of participations that gained nationwide popularity. Gauging the success of Season 1, OTDC launched the Season 2 with few modifications in the competition. This season top 40 participants selected by a team of experts shall be taken to different tourism destinations across the State where they will prepare various Odia cuisines in a bid to win the competition. The competition will be telecast live. To participate in the competition, interested participants need to send their videos of food preparation online.




ODISHA
INDIA'S BEST KEPT SECRET

PRESENT

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SEASON - 2

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Last date of submission of entries: 31st January 2022

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PANTHANIVAS BHUBANESWAR OVERHAULED INTO A PREMIUM HOSPITALITY PROPERTY

A restaurant Utkal Aroma, a bakery Baked Bonanza and a bar The Cask added to the 33-room hospitality unit

Travel is all about experiencing new places, culture, cuisine, traditions, and way of living. It not just helps a person break away from monotony but also provides unique and invaluable life experiences. Unlike material things, experiences stay with them no matter where they go. Odisha Tourism Development Corporation in its efforts to elevate a traveller's experience when they visit Bhubaneswar had undertaken a renovation drive to overhaul the

existing property 'Panthanivas' into a premium hospitality unit. The renewed property, developed in the lines of a 3-star property, was launched on 24 December 2021.

The 33-room hospitality unit now includes a reception and lobby area, a 40-cover multi-cuisine restaurant named Utkala Aroma, a 20-cover bakery named Baked Bonanza, and a 32-cover bar named The Cask.

“



SHREEMAYEE MISHRA

Chairperson, OTDC

F&B forms an important part of a premium hospitality unit. Leisure and recreation are a major aspect of travel and the services rendered via this unit greatly enhances the guest experience. By launching Utkal Aroma, Baked Bonanza and The Cask, OTDC aims to provide premium service offerings through Panthanivas Bhubaneswar with plans to extend similar offerings in other units of OTDC

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INTERNATIONAL ODISSI DANCE FESTIVAL HELD IN TEMPLE CITY

Guru Kelu Charan Mohapatra (GKCM) Odishi Research Centre under the aegis of Department of Odia Language, Literature and Culture organised the International Odissi Dance Festival at Utkal Rangamancha, Bhubaneswar. The 5-day dance festival that successfully concluded on 30 December 2021 showcased performances like classical Abhinayas by renowned Odissi dance exponents along with their troupes. The performances were divided into morning, afternoon and evening shows showcasing a broad spectrum of various Odissi performances accompanied by a live orchestra of Odissi music veterans.



HIRAKUD RESERVOIR AND ITS SURROUNDINGS SOON TO BE DEVELOPED INTO WESTERN ODISHA'S TOURISM HUB



ASIT TRIPATHY
*Principal Adviser to
Chief Minister, Odisha*

“Hirakud Dam, the longest earthen dam in the world, is a major draw for tourists from near and far, especially during October to February. However, there are many destinations around it that have potential to draw tourists round the year. Odisha Tourism has identified these destinations and is currently drafting an integrated tourism masterplan for development of Hirakud Dam and nearby areas as a tourism hub to curate specific niche experiences based on tourism offerings related to nature, wildlife, water sports, adventure etc. With Veer Surendra Sai Airport in Jharsuguda located just 1.5 hours away, the place is accessible to visitors flying in from major cities and metros across India. Such integrated development plan is being taken up to not only offer tourists an extended tourism season with options to avail multiple leisure activities but also augment development of local livelihood opportunities.”

CHIEF MINISTER SHRI NAVEEN PATNAIK INAUGURATES TOURISM PROJECTS WORTH OVER INR 32.76 CRORE

Odisha Government is taking proactive measures to develop the State into a sought-after tourism destination. Backed by the Odisha Tourism Policy 2016 and an Investor friendly climate built over the years, the State is generating massive interest from

tourism investors across the country. Three new landmark projects by private investors amounting to over INR 32.76 Crore was inaugurated by Hon'ble CM Shri Naveen Patnaik on 30 November 2021, thanks to the synergised application of 5T approach laid down by the Government.

The projects that were inaugurated are:

1. A resort at Gopalpur, Ganjam by Specadi Resorts Private Limited against an investment of INR 22.96 crore.
2. An Amusement Park at Balasore by Padmabati Amusement Park against an investment of INR 5.05 crore
3. A Water Park at Bargarh by Aqua island against an investment of INR 4.75 crore

Odisha Government is taking focused strides to strike a balance between providing the best of support to enterprises and to its people to grow. Investment projects like these in the tourism sector will not only help in elevating the profile of such destinations with tourism potential but also help in generating local employment opportunities.



ODISHA TOURISM IN FOCUS

Floating Restaurant at Silver City Boat Club Inaugurated



The renovated Silver City Boat Club in Cuttack, that was inaugurated earlier this year, introduced the State's very first floating restaurant. Tourists can enjoy the majestic view of Mahanadi river in this 8-seater floating restaurant while partaking from delectable cuisines being served.

Odisha wins two accolades at India's Best Awards 2021



As per the readership poll of Travel and Leisure India for the most outstanding domestic destinations, Odisha has been adjudged the Best State while Mayurbhanj has been voted as the Best Offbeat Destination at the India's Best Awards 2021.

Bhitarkanika to soon get luxury overnight cruise boats



The four Catamarans currently docked at Bhitarkanika would now be refurbished and upgraded to be operated as overnight luxury cruise boats. DoT signed an agreement with Heritage River Journeys Pvt Ltd - India's leading luxury cruise company for refurbishment and operation of the boats.

Odisha gets its first Leed Platinum certified Hotel



'Welcomhotel Bhubaneswar' by ITC, a Leed Platinum certified Hotel was inaugurated by Hon'ble Chief Minister Shri Naveen Patnaik. Inspired by local indigenous stone architecture, this initiative will further bolster the state's vibrant hospitality & tourism landscape.



Odisha's Samaleswari and Rajarani Temple illuminated on Elimination of Cervical Cancer Day

On the occasion of 'Elimination of Cervical Cancer Day', Samaleswari Temple and Rajarani Temple were illuminated with teal light to raise awareness about cervical cancer. The initiative to illuminate Samaleswari Temple was taken by a Sambalpur city-based organisation 'Utkantha'. BSCL along with the Archaeological Survey of India, Bhubaneswar circle, and KRIAA Foundation illuminated the Rajarani temple. The initiative was a part of the concept 'Lighting a Heritage' started by the World Health Organisation and various historical monuments across the globe lit up to spread the awareness.

Odisha Tourism partners with 12th Hotelier India Awards

Odisha Tourism partnered with the 12th Hotelier India Awards held at New Delhi, where Additional Secretary Ms. Rina Mohapatra addressed the gathering of various Hospitality Industry stakeholders and felicitated the winners of the Green Hotelier & Best GM categories.

Railway Heritage Museum inaugurated in Baripada

Union Minister of State for Tribal Affairs and Jal Shakti Bishweswar Tudu inaugurated the Railway Heritage Museum in Baripada on 17 November 2021. The heritage museum set up on 54000 square feet area near Baripada railway station at a cost of INR 1.55 Crore, houses two restored narrow gauge locomotive engines and their coaches that stand as a testimony to the glorious history of erstwhile Mayurbhanj State Railway.

QUALIFIERS FOR BMW MOTORRAD INTERNATIONAL GS TROPHY 2022 HELD IN KONARK



BMW, for the very first time, held its multi-city qualifier round for BMW Motorrad International GS Trophy 2022 in Konark where enduro riders across the country who own BMW GS bikes participated in one-of-a-kind off-road competition. The three finalists from this event Rameez Mullick from Kolkata, Chowde Gowda from Bengaluru and Adib Javanmardi from Pune will be representing India at the international GS Trophy in Albania to compete against the best of riders across the world. The event was held at Helipad Ground in Konark where a special endurance track was built to hold the competition. The riding enthusiasts took a road trip from different parts of the country to participate in the two-day event starting from 18 December 2021. To experience the best of tourism season in Odisha, the entire BMW contingent including the company officials stayed at Eco Retreat Konark and visited all nearby attractions including the iconic UN World Heritage site Sun Temple. Odisha Tourism wishes 'Team India' the best of luck.

NATURE THRIVES, HUMAN SURVIVES

42 families living within Debrigarh Wildlife Sanctuary relocated to a new settlement 5 kms away



Situated adjacent to the huge Hirakud Reservoir is Debrigarh Wildlife Sanctuary, a nature's paradise teeming with exotic wildlife and along with them reside the forest dwellers. In an attempt to reduce the man-animal conflict, Odisha Government had drawn up a blueprint in August 2021 to rehabilitate 420 families who have been living inside the Sanctuary.

A hamlet 'Lambipali' occupied by dwellers displaced by the construction of Hirakud Dam had come up around 7 decades ago. Surrounded by wildlife with no connecting roads, drinking water and health facilities, the inhabitants used to live cut off from the civilisation. In the first phase of the State Government's relocation drive, the residents of Lambipali village have now been given a new lease of life. The entire village consisting of 42 families were shifted to their new homes on 17 December 2021 to a new settlement located five kilometers away from the Sanctuary, which has also been named as Lambipali.

The new resettlement colony

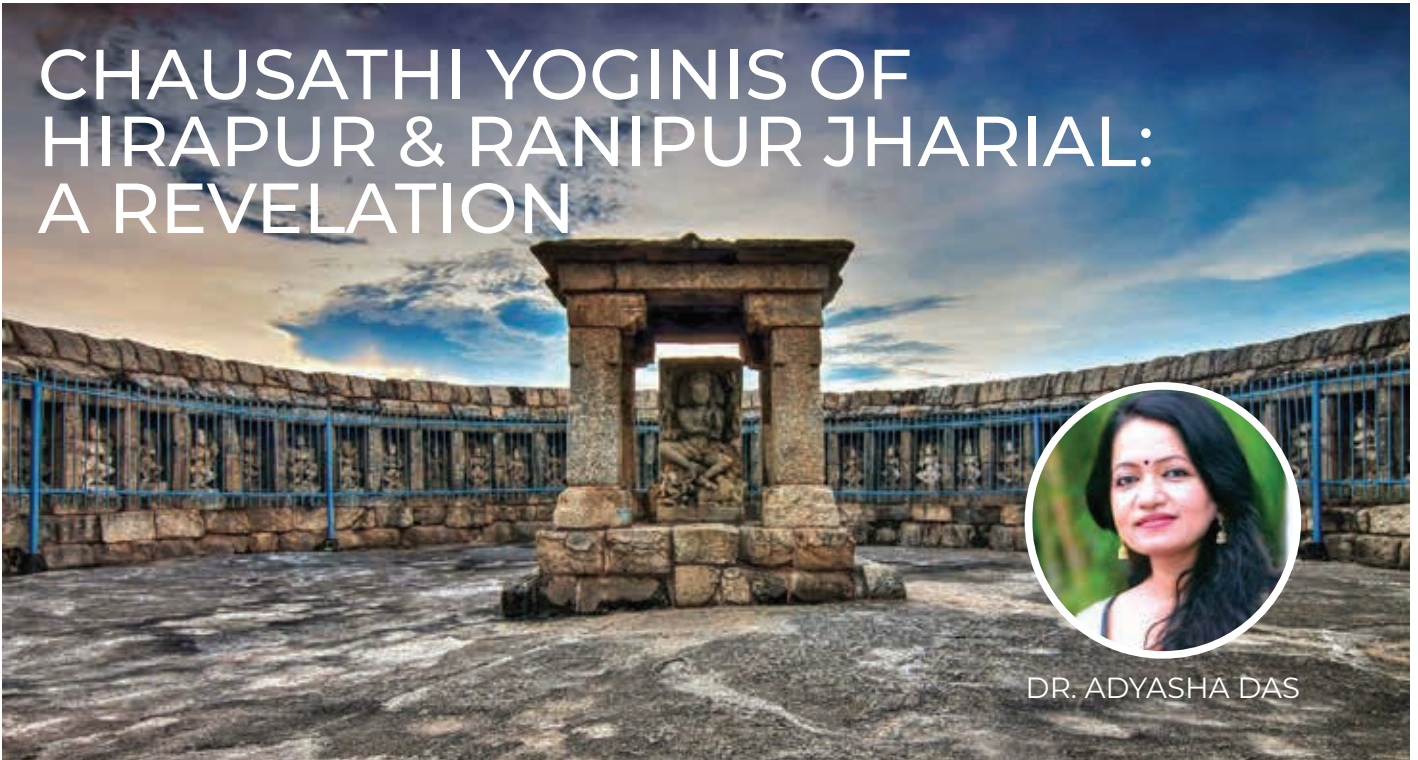
built by Hirakud Wildlife Division had residents of Lambipali village working as masons and labourers. Community toilets along with a separate bathing ghat for women has already been built. Water filters have been provided to every household and there is proper drainage system. The colony has also been provided with power connection. Construction of a community hall is under progress which will have a library for children and women. In celebration, the relocated villagers organised 'Parichaya Parba' and 'Bandhu Milan' in their new colony, inviting villagers from two neighbouring villages of Tangerpali and Kantal.

Under the village relocation policy, each beneficiary family

is entitled to get INR 15 Lakh as aid from the Forest Department and will be provided with 10 decimiles of land with pucca house through housing scheme along with other basic facilities like health, education and road connectivity. Three other villages of Kurumkel, Bhutuli and Rengali located inside the Sanctuary shall also be relocated in phases to ensure villagers get broader livelihood opportunities and not be dependent on forest and natural resources anymore. The Sanctuary, having a high density of Schedule 1 Species, is a haven for wildlife. It also sees migratory birds flocking during the winters. Such sustained efforts made by the State Government has ensured win-win situation for both man and wildlife.



CHAUSATHI YOGINIS OF HIRAPUR & RANIPUR JHARIAL: A REVELATION



DR. ADYASHA DAS

My tryst with the Yoginis began with a training assignment at Hirapur, a nondescript village near Bhubaneswar where the relatively unknown Chausathi Yogini Temple is located. I did not realize then that I was stepping into a passion that would deeply connect me to the elusive Yoginis. This interest spurred not only my readings and writings but also my travels in Odisha and all over the country, even foreign lands in the trail of the Yoginis. Visiting the abode of the Yoginis was an intensely spiritual and transcendental experience. The cult of the Chausathi (sixty-four) Yoginis was widely prevalent in the central and eastern parts of India along with other cults of Shakti-tantrism in about 8th century A.D. The yogini temples of Hirapur and Ranipur Jharial are mementos of the significance of this now extinct cult from Odisha. The Yoginis have deep connections with modernity in the continued significance of the Goddess concept, inspiring a quest for the goddess within us, from the mundane to the magnificent. They symbolize



gender asymmetry, women empowerment and represent a cult that connects the ancient and the obscure with the utterly modern in a magical loop. Odisha is successfully promoting its temples as destinations for temple tourism. The twin temples representing the Yogini Cult in Odisha are potential niche tourism destinations. The infinite wisdom of the ages and the sacred creative force of All that is, will be and ever was is felt when one visits the Yoginis.

My books "The Chausathi Yoginis of Hirapur: from Tantra to Tourism", "The Yoginis of Ranipur Jharial: The Tantric Goddesses of Yore" and "The Yogini Poems: Love and Life" have been based on the Yogini cult which extolled women as rendering dominant roles in leadership, creative inventions of an ancient culture.

Dr. Adyasha Das is an Associate Professor at Indian Institute of Tourism & Travel Management (IITM) Bhubaneswar, Ministry of Tourism, Government of India

PHUNTSOKLING

A trip to the Land of Happiness and Plenty.

BY MAMTA SAHOO



The Tibetans call it Phuntsokling, which literally translates to -“Land of Happiness and Plenty” and a road trip to this land truly brought nothing but happiness to me. Jirang, referred to as the Mini Tibet or Little Tibet of Odisha houses the largest Buddhist monastery in eastern India. Inaugurated by The Dalai Lama in 2010, it is known as the Padmasambhava Mahavihara monastery. Nyingma School of Buddhism in Tibet also claim that Guru Padmasambhava, also known as second Buddha, was born and brought up in Odisha before he left for Tibet. I had heard from my friends about the beauty of the monastery and how it not only wowed you with its architecture but also brought peace to your body and mind. I conveyed the same to my fiancé and on the very next weekend we started on this amazing road trip from Bhubaneswar. Passing through the Eastern Ghats, the road to Jirang via

Taptapani on the NH 326 is a symbol of a classic road trip – scenic. Beautifully constructed smooth road with rocky hills lining on one side and forest on the other, it was an insta worthy road trip to remember. Driving through this road was like entering into a scenery. Along the way to the monastery, we saw monks in traditional maroon robes carrying their cotton bags and riding scooters. The residential area here will give a vibe of Tibetan culture in Odisha. The monastery is surrounded by a large lake. It has a statue of the Padmasambhava sitting inside a lotus. This lake sits right in front of the monastery complex. There is a cafeteria by the lake serving Tibetan food, momo and delicious coffee. Soaking in the picturesque atmosphere, we had our snacks. Going inside the monastery we were amazed by the decorative walls which had beautiful paintings depicting nature, various

stages of Buddha's life and different animals. Art and folk tales of Tibetan Buddhism whispered from every corner of the monument. There are colorful paintings of Tibetan art and different mandalas that signify transformation of the soul. We saw paintings of the phoenix and dragon as well which symbolize the yin and yang forces in the universe. The walls are filled with bright color murals of Buddha and Bodhisattvas, mandalas and Tibetan art. Most paintings are accentuated by a golden hue, making the paintings pop out of the wall. A carpet runs in the center of the room from the door to the statue of Lord Buddha. After admiring the handiwork of the artists inside, we took a stroll outside which has a manicured lawn. We sat outside to gaze at beauty of the monastery, soaking in the peaceful atmosphere to our heart's content.

Mamta Sahoo is a Civil Engineer. Her love for travel has put her on a journey to become a Travel Blogger

A DAY OUTING TO NANDANKANAN



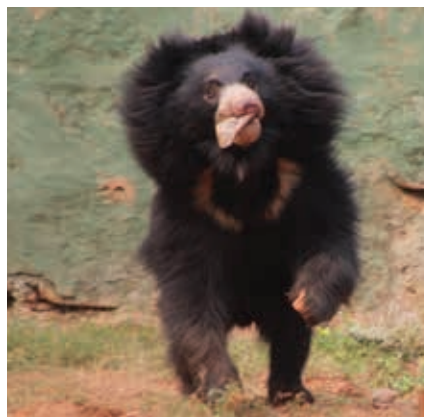
GAGORI BHATTACHARYA



After my husband relocated to Bhubaneswar following a job change, I stayed with him for a few months as the college where I teach was closed due to Covid. Looking for an escape from our daily routine, we planned to visit Nandan Kanan Zoological Park which is very near to the city and well connected by roads. After reaching there we realized how great the place is to take a day off from our busy life.

Spread across a huge area covered with different flora and fauna, the main attractions here are the many wildlife species. Entry fee is very nominal and the process was very smooth. In each and every corner you will get the direction signages so that you don't miss any corner of the park. Plenty of resting places, drinking water facilities, dustbins and of course neat and clean Toilets make this place a tourist friendly destination. You can opt for guides, battery operated cars to roam here. But, as we had time we decided to roam by ourselves.

Now, let's skip to the good part. We were mesmerized to see so many animals living perfectly



healthy and happy (as we saw some bears dancing before the crowds). From Bears to Lions, Elephants to Sambars (Deer) the display of wildlife here is very extensive. We even saw zones specified for the nocturnals, reptiles, birds and fishes. In every zone, all the details related to the species were well mentioned in boards – their scientific names to their food habits and their natural habitats. Reading these



took me back to my biology classes during school days. The best part of this park is



to witness a wide number of tigers, including Royal Bengal Tigers, White Tigers and the rare Melanistic Tigers. My photography freak husband in his words 'got some of the best shots of life ever in DSLR'. And the day doesn't end here, there is a Jungle safari as well where we witnessed more animals in the wilderness. After a long day of roaming in an attempt to not leave out any corners, we had a great Buffet lunch in the restaurant located inside. Food was tasty and the place very neat and clean. With a full day filled with these amazing activities we returned home with a great memory and a memory card full of pictures.

Gagori Bhattacharya is an Assistant Professor at Kingston Law College, Kolkata.

DEBA-KUNDA THE POND THAT CLEANSES EVERYTHING



ABHISHEK
CHAKRABARTTI



Deeply rooted within us humans is the urge to cleanse ourselves every now and then. The cleansing can be of the body or the mind itself. One can do both at Deba-kunda, God's very own pond.

Riding my Royal Enfield, I covered some really dusty roads to reach the gates of the heavenly Deba-kunda. Mesmerised by the beauty and somewhat feeling a little unclean from all the dust that my body had accumulated over the journey, I decided to jump into the cold water and the only thing that my mouth could utter was "Har Har Mahadev". My arms were in the air and my eyes were staring at the beautiful temple that stood on top of the waterfall. As I was standing in the holy water of Deba-kunda, it seemed like it was coming down directly from the heavens above. The 7 o'clock sun shining behind the temple mast and the greenery surrounding it, received my adulation as I folded my hands and closed my eyes to cut off any noise between me and the sound of the water and temple bells. The bath had taken away all my

tiresomeness and had also replenished the strength in me to take almost 300 steps to the temple above the waterfall. After offering my prayers, I came out to find a beautiful statue of Lord Hanuman. His face looked so peaceful. I sat on his feet for a good 15 minutes watching the water nearby. Then I noticed some people climbing more steps to someplace above. I followed them and lo and behold, there was another waterfall right in front my eyes! I soliloquised, "This is a two step waterfall". Delighted, I rushed to the base of the waterfall and sat there overlooking the whole Deba-kunda. The same water was gushing down to form the bigger waterfall as I realised that now I was standing on the top of it! I couldn't take another bath because my mind was already submerged in the holiness of this place. The scent of burning camphor, mixed with the scent of the jungle felt somewhat surreal. Yes, there were a lot of people around, some had travelled to pray and some had come to just do some sight-seeing. But it never felt over-crowded or noisy. It seemed like everyone was ex-

periencing some level of peace and their energies were diverted towards spirituality. That's what this place does to you.

I had started from my hotel in Baripada by dawn. It was a 1 hour 30 minutes ride. I stopped at a roadside vendor where a cute middle-aged couple were selling breakfast. The Baripada-Udala road took me through fields. The tarmac was well paved upto a certain point, but as you enter the forest region, the road ends and a dusty patch begins, this is what takes you to the gates of Deba-kunda. History tells us that the "Ambika Mandira" (temple on the top of the waterfall), was discovered by Rajkumar Prafulla Chandra Bhanja Deo, a researcher and a king during British Raj.

The Deba-kunda was a small part of a bigger itinerary which covered the Simlipal Wildlife Sanctuary as well. But I can say without a shred of doubt that it was the most memorable part of my journey in the winters of January 2021.

Abhishek Chakrabarti works as the lead software developer for Samsung R&D, Bangalore. Born and brought up in Odisha, he is re-exploring his home state as a major travel destination.

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