

JANUARY 2020

A Newsletter by Department of Tourism,
Government of Odisha

ODISHA UNRAVELLED

***Have you lived it up yet at the
Marine Drive Eco Retreat?***

The party will go on till 15 February 2020 !



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Jiranga Monastery | Himadri Tanaya Das



Editorial Team

Vishal Kumar Dev, IAS

Commissioner cum Secretary to Government

Sachin Ramchandra Jadhav, IAS

Director Tourism

Content and Design

Project Mangement Unit

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Keynote

Some treasures take longer to discover. Odisha is fast emerging as India's best kept secret after India and the world have started taking notice of its beautiful facets. The Government's efforts to popularise the state's diverse destinations coupled with its aggressive outreach to investors in the hospitality sector, travel operators around the world and entrepreneurs in niche tourism products is steadily paying off, as evident from the several single window proposals we are receiving. Odisha, led by Hon'ble Chief Minister, Shri. Naveen Patnaik is witnessing a beautiful synchrony of modernisation of its tourism horizon and rejuvenation of traditional spiritual tourism. The focus on tourism is an unequivocal reaffirmation from our leader about the sector's potential to be the prime engine of its progress towards sustainable prosperity. This new year marks a start of another round of higher goal setting fuelled by our collective aspirations. Each one of us Odias must take active ownership of our potential as a tourism hub and become brand ambassadors of Odisha in our own ways. Let's get together to develop a cleaner, greener and richer Odisha which amply showcases its cultural and natural heritage.



Shri. Jyoti Prakash Panigrahi
Hon'ble Minister of Tourism, Odia Language & Literature and Culture, Government of Odisha



Vishal K. Dev IAS
Commissioner cum Secretary, Dept. of Tourism, Sports & Youth Services

Editor's Note

Odisha witnessed a very eventful 2019, with Cyclone *Fani* leaving behind a lot of devastation, but also reinvigorating us to spring back to a stronger state. The tourism sector was highly motivated to innovate and scale up sustainable tourism and hospitality products with a view to especially attracting high spending groups and emerge as a holiday destination of reckoning.

The efforts of the state government in general and the Department of Tourism in particular bore fruition, with the Marine Drive Eco Retreat as the most outstanding example of innovative and sustainable tourism – being Eastern India's first tented city project. It is noteworthy that this project was executed in a mere four weeks as a textbook example of interdepartmental teamwork and synergy across the administrative echelons.

Adding more colour to our mission to diversify tourism in Odisha was the definite progress on water recreation through watersports and houseboat hospitality projects.

The Department is gearing up to welcome a surge of tourists from the national and global markets. In that, we anticipate the operationalisation of more than 7 luxury hotels and resorts at key tourist destinations by 2023, with two of them expected to be operational before the dawn of 2021.

Our conviction is fuelled by the potential of tourism and hospitality to be the prime mover of Odisha's march towards sustainable prosperity towards 2030.

Wonderlaaah!



India's best kept secret is all set to welcome India's largest amusement park developer and operator. Wonderla Parks and Resorts is set to initiate investment in its fourth amusement park after Bengaluru, Hyderabad and Kochi in Khordha, 16 km from Bhubaneswar City Centre. The smart capital city, hitherto known globally for its rich cultural heritage, will soon get the fillip of thrill recreation in 2022-23.

Reimagining Ekamra Kshetra



After successfully initiating the Puri Transformation project under the leadership of Hon'ble Chief Minister Shri. Naveen Patnaik, the Government of Odisha has embarked on a mission to revamp the Ekamra Kshetra, the hub of Bhubaneswar's temple town, in its quest to be recognised as a UNESCO World Heritage City. The

Ekamra Kshetra project covers an area of 1126 acre with an outer core of 476 acre, intermediate core of 504 acre and inner core of 145 acre. The grand project comprises eviction drives synchronised with compensation for and resettlement of affected persons and businesses, installation of creative signage systems in Odia, Hindi and English under the

Heritage Signage Guidelines for Ekamra Kshetra Heritage Zone. The first phase includes Outer Access Road Development, Lingaraj Entry Plaza, Bindu Sagar revival plan, parking space, Lingaraj Heritage Complex, development of amenities for Kedar Gouri – Mukteswar complex, Heritage e-auto project, relocation projects and heritage interpretation centre.

A collaboration for holistic heritage

The Department has signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the Indian Heritage Cities Network Foundation (IHCNF) for providing institutional expertise and assistance in the planning of Heritage Zone Development projects across the state. Initial discussions have also included exchange of ideas for the development of the Buddhist Circuit comprising the Ratnagiri – Udayagiri – Lalitgiri Diamond Triangle, the all-important site of Langudi, Dhauli Shanti Stupa and its vicinity, among other Buddhist sites.



Stupa Complex (6th-7th c.AD) Ratnagiri

PC : Dr. Sunil Patnaik

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Glamping *a la* Odisha

The Marine Drive Eco Retreat witnessed a tremendous opening with 17 days of December 2019 recording over 60% bookings, which led to the Government extending the festival to 15 February 2020.

The Marine Drive Eco Retreat has been envisioned as eastern India's first 'Glamping' festival – a unique experience of Glamorous Camping – set up at the pristine Ramachandi Beach near the grand Konark Sun Temple, a UNESCO World Heritage Site.

Scheduled from 14 December 2019 to 31 January 2020, the Eco Retreat offers a unique experience of Glamorous Camping in 50 luxury cottages, delectable cuisine, beach spa, adventure & water sports activities, nature trails and wholesome day itineraries, cultural evenings, and a lot more.

The Marine Drive Eco Retreat has been developed as an environmentally sustainable model incorporating best practices in material utilisation, zero liquid and sewerage discharge and holistic waste management.





Heralding a new wave of Beach Tourism



The Government of Odisha has aggressively initiated its mission to develop beach tourism through a set of interventions aimed at diversifying beach-side experiences while expediting infrastructure development which facilitates responsible recreation, tourism and hospitality across segments like water sports, beach markets, food & beverage, creative arts, luxury hospitality and other public activities. Among its key initiatives are:

- **Modernisation of the Digbarni Beach, Puri:** The project envisages an integrated development including a multi-storeyed parking under PRASAD Scheme, a recreation zone with beach showers and changing rooms, a food hub and shopping zone and an administrative centre comprising medical facilities, security and surveillance, ticketing and other aspects.
- **Development of Niladri Beach Stretch:** The beach, adjacent to the designated Blue Flag stretch, is approximately 500m long and has infrastructure such as a stone pavement and sitting blocks, besides an open air gymnasium (which will be installed), toilet complex and an open air theatre built with funding under the HRIDAY Scheme.
- **Development of Talsari - Udaypur Beachfront:** The project aims to holistically develop a 2 km beach stretch with star hotels, budget hotels, amusement park, beach front promenade and all other basic infrastructure.
- **Chandrabhaga Beachfront:** This key project on the Puri-Konark Marine Drive is envisaged to attract high-end tourists and create world class infrastructure along with beach shacks on the beach stretch.

Shamuka Beach Project



The highly anticipated Shamuka Beach Project this year received all statutory clearances including the Environmental Clearance from the Union Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change. The Revised Master Plan will be finalized by April 2020 and the SPV Shamuka Tourism Development

Corporation (comprising IDCO and OTDC) is working on trunk infrastructure development.

Once complete, the project will house a Golf Course, multiple resorts and hotels across luxury, leisure and business categories. Globally acclaimed architects have been taken on board for the finalisation of masterplan of the Shamuka Beach Project. All statutory approvals for the project are in place and Govt. of Odisha aims to initiate land allotment in 2020.

Odisha emerging as a Water Sports and Recreation Hub



In its quest to boost the diversity of experiences for tourists, the Government of Odisha had last year identified eight waterbodies for watersports operations. After the Department's familiarisation tours for operators and investors, new private sector watersports facilities have been recently inaugurated at Chandrabhaga, Barkul (Chilika), Tampara and Gopalpur. As a result of enthusiastic responses to the initiatives, the operations at Chandrabhaga

have been expanded to double the capacity. The initiative has significant strategic implications, given its potential to create a professional ecosystem for hosting international watersports events, including the revival of the annual surfing festival in Puri.

Parallely, with a view to offer leisurely stays in the ecologically rich ambience of the state's wetlands, the Department has identified Chilika Lake, Bhitarkanika Backwaters and Hiraakud Reservoir

for operation of Houseboats with the hope to be operational by the start of calendar year 2021. Another crucial component of the vision is to operationalise river cruises along viable stretches of National Waterways in the state. The Inland Waterways Authority of India (IWAI) along with the Inland Water Transport Department of Odisha will be conducting detailed feasibility studies pertaining to four circuits involving National Waterways No. 5, 14 and 64, besides a possible day cruise on the Jobra – Dhabaleswar stretch on the Mahanadi in Cuttack. In pursuance, the Odisha Tourism Development Corporation (OTDC) has commissioned the production of a 40-seater cruise boat for operation in Chilika Lake.

Lending a greater depth to the segmental vision, the Department has initiated discussions with Kerala State Inland Navigation Corporation (KSINC) for technical support.

Reaching out globally

OTB 2019



The Department of Tourism initiated the second phase of 2019-20's outreach to Tour Operators, Travel Agents and hospitality sector players with Odisha Travel Bazaar 2019 in association with FICCI,

which witnessed a record number of prescheduled 2400 B2B meetings involving 25 foreign TAs, over 60 domestic TAs and 50 TAs from Odisha as key sellers, besides several hoteliers and hospitality entities.



WTM London

Odisha Tourism then promoted its bouquet of experiences at the annual global tourism fair, WTM London from 3 to 6 November 2019. The Odisha Tourism delegation led by Hon'ble Tourism Minister Shri. Jyoti Prakash Panigrahi and Commissioner cum Secretary Shri. Vishal Kumar Dev IAS conducted 40 meetings with Media, Travel Trade Firms and

Odisha at NFDC Film Bazaar 2019 (Goa)



Odisha Film Development Corporation and Odisha Tourism jointly represented the state at the NFDC Film Bazaar 2019 in Goa from 21 to 23 November 2019. Apart from

hardselling the enigmatic sights and experiences of India's best kept secret, the delegation comprising OFDC chairman Shri. Kuna Tripathy, OFDC MD Dr. Nitin Jawale IAS and Director Tourism Shri. Sachin

Jadhav IAS conducted meetings, pitching the diverse opportunities in terms of shooting films in the state. The recently notified Film Tourism aims to provide subsidy up to Rs 2.5 crore to a film that promotes the State, its culture, heritage as a tourist destination. Director tourism Shri. Jadhav said, "Be it the virgin environs of Odisha's sea beaches and Chilka lake, the tranquility of the Diamond Triangle, Buddhist Circuit, the unique synthesis of the modern and traditional in Smart Temple City of Bhubaneswar or the spiritual ethos of Puri, shooting films in the State is sure to give filmmakers greater cinematic output at a lower cost."

A glocal amalgamation of arts

The week-long Odisha Biennale 2019, curated by Odissi danseuse of Japanese origin, Ms. Masako Ono through the Mudra Foundation, showcased an array of events in dance, art, music, photography, film, design and fashion in an international context with special attention to creating a sustainable environment by amalgamating social causes with the reaches of cultural and artistic efforts.

Dancers, film artists, designers, craft artisans, visual artists, singers, actors, installation artists, architects, professors, fashion stylists, meditation instructors, performers, 3D mapping artists and photographers participated in the event. "Through such illustrious artists from India and abroad merge into the art and culture of Odisha, interacting with the people of Odisha, the universal amalgamation happens in Odish", said Commissioner cum Secretary Tourism Shri. Vishal Dev.



More wings to Odisha



Odisha's efforts to boost air connectivity yielded sustained results in late 2019, with new flights by Indigo from Bhubaneswar to Ahmedabad and Thiruvananthapuram, by Spicejet connecting Jharsuguda with Bangalore, and by Alliance Air connecting Jharsuguda with Kolkata in the winter schedule. Air Asia started direct flights from Bhubaneswar to Bengaluru, Hyderabad and Kolkata, and is hoping to resume the Bhubaneswar Kuala Lumpur flight in early 2020.

Festive vibes of December



Konark Dance Festival and International Sand Art Festival



Odisha's December calendar was further enriched with the Odisha Biennale complementing the artistic vigour of Konark Dance Festival and International Sand Art Festival at Chandrabhaga.

The focus on the first five days of December was on Konark, with the unparalleled Konark Dance Festival curated by Guru Kelu Charan Mohapatra Odissi Research Centre and the International Sand Art Festival spearheaded by Padmashree awardee Shri.

Sudarshan Pattnaik. Leading exponents and dance enthusiasts of almost all main classical dance forms of India including Odissi, Bharatanatyam, Kathak, Kuchipudi, Mohiniattam and Balinese Dance Group from Indonesia performed at the five-day classical dance carnival, which drew 18,538 audience, including 235 foreign audience. The Sand Art Festival witnessed the participation of 123 artists from across India and an artist each from USA, Ireland, Denmark, Russia, Canada, Togo and Sri Lanka displaying their sand art.

Answering the spiritual quests of the aged



Baristha Nagarika Tirtha Yatra Yojana was launched by Govt of Odisha in 2016 to enable underprivileged senior citizens domiciled in the state to fulfil their spiritual aspirations of conducting pilgrimages to diverse and widespread pilgrimage centres across India. Over the years, 11,647 senior citizens from across the state have availed the benefit of this scheme through 12 trips, visiting centres such as Rameswaram, Prayagraj, Rishikesh, Ajmer, Tirupati Balaji, Triambakeswar (Nashik), Velankani, Kamakhya, etc.

The budgetary expenditure made so far has been over INR 22 crore, but the return has been invaluable, given the happiness that this scheme has brought into the lives of the elders of our society.

Four trips have been scheduled for 2019-20 starting 13 December 2019, from:

- Balasore to Haridwar-Hrishikesh
- Sambalpur to Agra-Mathura-Brindaban
- Bhubaneswar to Prayagraj-Varanasi
- Berhampur to Rameswaram-Madurai-Tirupati

LOOK WHO VISITED



Kamal Haasan, Indian Film Superstar:

"Kalinga's resurgence was founded in the dharma chakra that was generated in a great mind as that of Samrat Ashoka. Today, Odisha is once again in a virtuous cycle, with good governance and conducive civic life attracting sectors such as sports and tourism. My visit to the different places here has convinced me that it is an opportune moment for India and the world to explore Odisha and its natural and cultural richness."



Venkatesh Prasad, Legendary Attack Bowler, Team India:

I offer my hearty congratulations to Odisha Tourism for organising the Marine Drive Eco Retreat. My stay here has been nothing short of a premium holiday and I wish to come here again. Odisha is indeed India's Best Kept Secret!



Dharmendra Pradhan, Hon'ble Union Minister of Petroleum & Natural Gas:

There's always something about Odisha that sets it apart from the rest. The Marine Drive Eco-Retreat festival set across the idyllic Ramchandi beach in Konark is just a beginning. This first of its kind initiative will further give boost to Odisha's coastal potential. Our 482 Km long coastline will be the trigger for a game-changer in ushering economic prosperity for the people.

Deomali: Truly, Odisha's Best Kept Secret!

Trips & Love is an initiative by Pratik & Nidhi, one of the first established couple travel bloggers of Odisha. Travel photography, blogging, and vlogging are some of the things that we're extremely passionate about!

You probably must have sighted a lot of mountains in your life – some might have been your eternal favorite ones, and others would have given you amazing memories. But let us tell you, the Deomali peak of Odisha is surprisingly the best of all. Perhaps, you can only know that once you have visited the Deomali hill range, which is also the highest peak of Odisha.

Located at a distance of around 60-65 odd kms from Koraput town, Deomali is easily accessible by road. While on the way, you'll feel like getting down from the car multiple times and soaking in the gorgeous view. We must tell you, as you keep going higher, the views simply get better. And once you're at the top, you'll forget the rest of the world around you – because DEOMALI IS BREATHTAKING!

The majestic view of the mountains is so gorgeous that you'll never get enough of it. The various layers of high and low hill ranges, with the

sun playing hide and seek and the occasional rains adding to the beauty, is just what you cannot miss out on.

Therefore we'd advise you to stay at the peak for at least 2-3 hours, pack some light snacks or food, carry some water bottles and have the most memorable time out here. We did the same, and can't get over the fact that we had our luncheon at Odisha's highest peak. Royal isn't it? No, more than that it was one of the best times of our lives, which we will cherish forever, and keep encouraging people to be there at least once.

Such kind of natural beauty exists in Odisha is so astonishing, and the fact that it can give a run for all the other popular tourist peaks is just unimaginable. Be there to feel the rejuvenating feeling which we felt.

While you're there, don't forget to click some amazing pictures.

Do stay a bit cautious about your steps, because it may tend to get



slightly slippery at times. Plus, do your bit in being responsible, and do not pollute the top of the peak or its surroundings with your belongings or waste items. Collect all your trash in one place and dump where it originally should be. Happy Deomali expedition to each one of you!

How to reach: From Koraput town, Deomali is around 60-65 odd kms, and the roads are pretty good.

What to wear: The place witnesses frequent short showers, so do carry a rain-cum-wind cheater, as it also might get chilly towards the end of the day.

What to carry: Do bring your own water and food, as there are no shops for miles.

About Odisha Tourism

Established then as the Department of Tourism & Culture in 1973, the Department of Tourism strives to:

1. Promote diverse and sustainable tourism with a view to enhancing the national and global visibility and favourability of Odisha as a prime tourist destination
2. Create employment opportunities to bring socio-economic benefits to the community and boosting community participation in tourism
3. Preserve, enrich and promote Odisha's unique cultural heritage and ecological diversity through sustainable development

Apart from undertaking various initiatives for the development of tourism infrastructure and services in the state under the Odisha Tourism Policy 2016, aims to establish its brand globally and enhance the favourability of Odisha as a prime tourist destination through the twin strategies of event based promotion and destination experience promotion, through innovative advertising and multimedia based outreach to national and global markets.



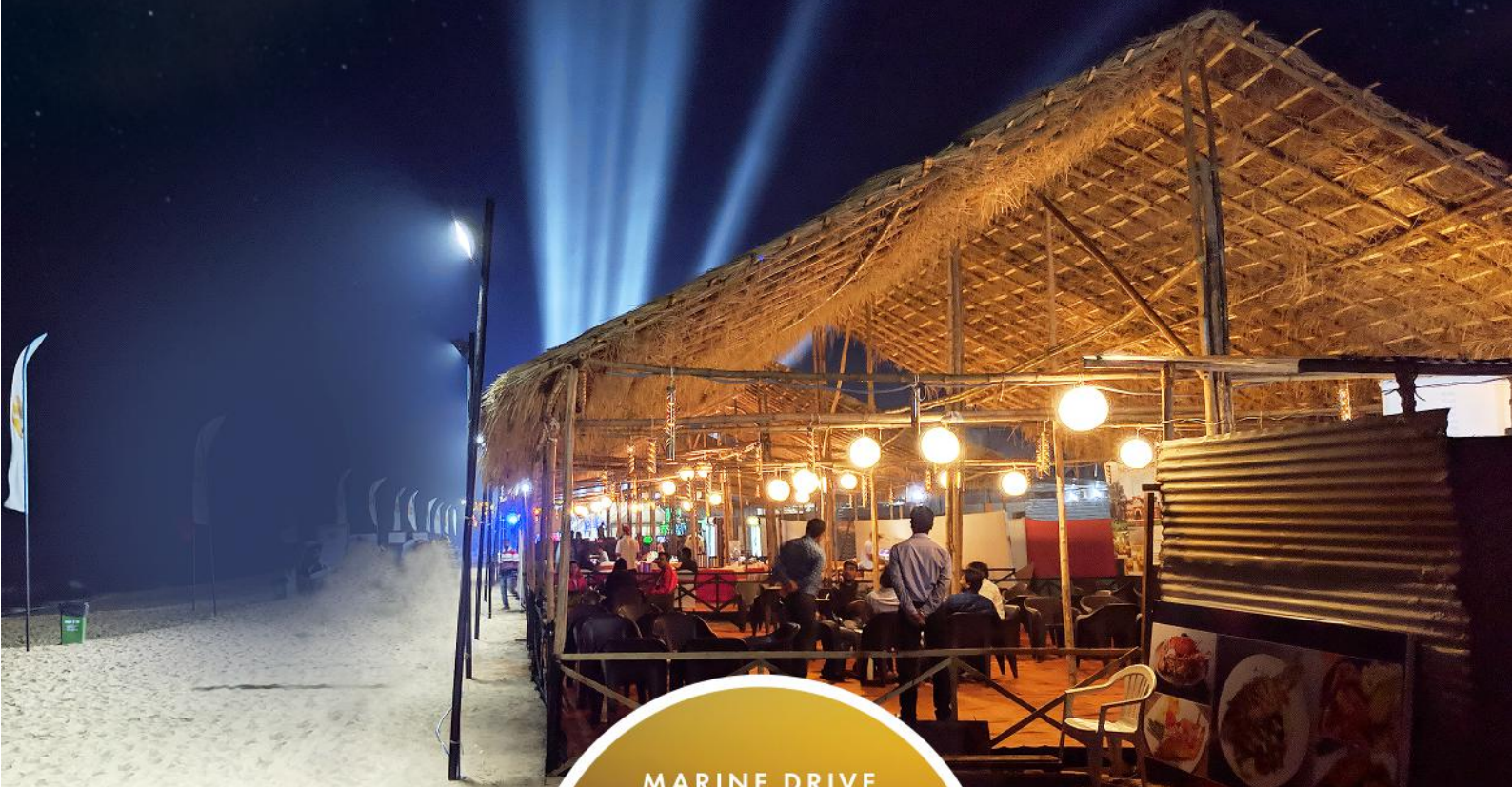
Chausath Yogini Temple

Department of Tourism, Govt. of Odisha, Paryatan Bhawan, Lewis Road, Bhubaneswar - 751014,
Ph: 0674 - 2432177/ 2431896, Fax: 0674 - 2430887
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