

ODISHA UNRAVELLED



ODISHA
INDIA'S BEST KEPT SECRET.

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A Newsletter by Department of Tourism, Government of Odisha



Ratha Yatra 2023

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Becon Island, Chilika

Odishaaah!

Credit - Satyam Bhuyan

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ODISHA UNRAVELLED

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



FOREWORD



ASWINI KUMAR PATRA

*Minister of State (IC) for Tourism and
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Odisha, the land of Lord Jagannath, is an epitome of resilience. Despite the recent unfortunate train accident in Balasore, the people of Odisha came together in large numbers to help the victims while engaging in relief work. From the State Government helping the Centre in restoration of the railway tracks to providing urgent medical care to the wounded, display of humanity in such critical times showcased the State's proactive response to disaster management, which was lauded across the world.

Overcoming the tragedy, the State geared up for celebration of the State's biggest festival 'Ratha Yatra'. Department of Tourism, through OTDC facilitated visitations to the festival in Puri from Bhubaneswar for devotees who availed the Ratha Yatra package.

Besides, during the 9 days, the menu in Nimantran restaurant in Bhubaneswar was changed to serve only authentic Odia vegetarian platter. Besides, Raja festival was also held across the State and OTDC registered a record sale of traditional Raja Pitha during the 3 days of the festival amounting to INR 15 Lakh.

From celebration of traditional Odia festivals like Pana Sankranti to launching of Jala Chattras across the State during the scorching summer months and from hosting Odia diaspora meets to commemorate launch of direct flight services connecting Odisha with the Middle East & Southeast Asia to participating in the international travel markets, Department of Tourism has taken progressive steps in promoting both Odia culture and tourism in the State in the recent quarter.

EDITOR'S NOTE



 **SURENDRA KUMAR, IAS**
Additional Chief Secretary, Tourism, GA and PG

The development of tourism sector in the State is bound to see a fillip, thanks to the launch of direct flight services to Dubai, Singapore and Bangkok from Bhubaneswar. Further, Odisha Tourism successfully hosted events in Dubai and Singapore with an aim to define Odisha's growth trajectory through the Odia diaspora's global outreach, knowledge, expertise and influence.

From participating in the leading travel market in the Middle East 'ATM Dubai' to holding roadshow in Southeast Asia's top cosmopolitan city Singapore, Odisha Tourism has taken massive strides in the recent quarter to network with the

tour and travel stakeholders and facilitate flow of international tourist footfalls in Odisha.

Besides, to boost domestic footfalls and promote tourism investment opportunities in the State, Odisha Tourism successfully participated in the Great Indian Travel Bazaar as well in the G20 panel discussions held in Jaipur.

From hosting tourism promotion and cultural events both internationally and within State to participating in travel and tour exhibitions, this edition of the newsletter is a recap of all the strategic steps taken by Odisha Tourism towards development of tourism sector in the State.

PROMISE DELIVERED: DIRECT FLIGHTS INITIATED TO DUBAI, SINGAPORE AND BANGKOK FROM BHUBANESWAR

With global connectivity being the development focus, Hon'ble Chief Minister Shri Naveen Patnaik flagged off the maiden flight from Bhubaneswar to Dubai at the Biju Patnaik International Airport on 15 May 2023.

Highlighting the benefits of aligning Odisha with a global travel junction such as Dubai, Shri Naveen Patnaik said, "Global connectivity is a key driver of overall developments – be it industrial development, facilitating investments, promoting tourism or establishing communication for the Odia diaspora residing outside India. Dubai is a major travel and tourism junction in the middle east providing gateway to the European and the US markets. The 15th day of May 2023, marks a new chapter scripted in Odisha's stride towards global connectivity."

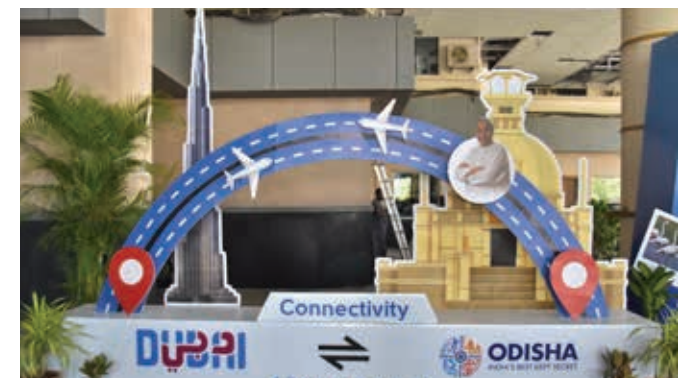


To mark the occasion, delegates from Odisha including officials of Mission Shakti, Dept. of SD&TE, delegations from the World Skill Centre, Special Development Council, Panchayati Raj, and celebrated sportspersons, who were felicitated by the Chief Minister at Naveen Nivas earlier in the day, boarded the flight with the rest of the travellers who had booked their tickets after the ticket sale went live on Utkal Dibasa on 1st April 2023. A total of 170 people including the aircraft crew travelled on this maiden flight from Bhubaneswar to Dubai.

Special arrangements were made to see off the travellers from Odisha. The flyers were felicitated with Uttariya, Odisha Tourism kit bag and offered sweets and flowers by the hostesses at the departure terminal. Meanwhile, the travellers who arrived via the 1st direct flight from Dubai to Bhubaneswar were given a warm welcome in presence of Hon'ble Minister Tourism & OLLC Shri Aswini Kumar Patra and Hon'ble Minister Commerce & Transport Smt. Tukuni Sahu.

It is pertinent to note that the State Govt. made a commitment back in June 2022 during the Odisha Investors' Meet held in Dubai to establish international flight connectivity between Odisha and Dubai in the first phase. These flights, being operated by Indigo Airlines, will run thrice a week.

Besides, the State Government has also worked towards establishing direct flight connectivity with the Southeast Asian markets through Singapore and Bangkok.



The maiden flight from Bhubaneswar to Singapore took off from the Biju Patnaik International Airport on the morning of 3 June 2023 while the first flight to Bangkok took off in the evening.

To mark this historic day towards improving Odisha's global connectivity, delegates from the State including officials of Mission Shakti, Dept. of SD&TE, Housing & Urban Development, Health & Family Welfare, Women & Child Development, OLLC, and School & Mass Education, who were felicitated by the Chief Minister at Naveen Nivas a day before, boarded the flight to Singapore along with the rest of the travellers. A total of 170 people including the aircraft crew travelled on this maiden flight from Bhubaneswar to Singapore.



The flyers on the maiden flight to Singapore which took off at 6:25 AM in the morning were felicitated with Odisha Tourism kit bag by the hostesses at the departure terminal in Bhubaneswar. Meanwhile, similar arrangements were made for the travellers who made their departure from Bhubaneswar to Bangkok on the maiden flight which took off at 4:50 PM in the evening.



ODIA DIASPORA CONNECT HELD IN SINGAPORE TO MARK OPERATION OF DIRECT FLIGHT SERVICES BETWEEN BHUBANESWAR AND SINGAPORE

An evening of Odia Diaspora connect, commemorating the launch of direct flight operations between Bhubaneswar and Singapore the day before, was held at hotel Fairmont in Singapore on 4 June 2023. The event was a low-key affair considering the tragic loss of lives that occurred due to the unfortunate train accident in Balasore on 2nd June. Hon'ble Chief Minister Shri Naveen Patnaik made a solemn address virtually before a gathering of more than 400 participants which included Odia Diaspora residing in Singapore and Malaysia.



Post the traditional showcase of the State anthem 'Bande Utkala Janani', a few minutes of silence was observed for the departed souls and messages of condolences shared by the officials for the victims of the tragic incident.

Addressing the delegates ACS, GA & PG and Tourism Shri Surendra Kumar highlighted strategic steps taken by the State Government to drive development in Odisha through global connectivity.

High Commissioner of India to Singapore H.E. Mr. P Kumaran spoke highly of Odisha Government on this landmark step towards improving the State's connectivity in the Southeast Asia. Highlighting the benefits of commencement of direct connectivity



between the major travel junction in Southeast, Singapore and Odisha, he expressed confidence that the Odia Diaspora along with the Indian Diaspora not only in Singapore but the neighbouring Asian countries will take advantage of this direct connectivity to visit and explore 'India's Best Kept Secret'.

This was followed by addresses by Hon'ble Minister Higher Education Shri Rohit Pujari enumerating various initiatives taken by the State Government to transform Odisha into a leading education hub.

A video on Mo Paribar was showcased followed by a video on Government of Odisha's transformation agenda that relies on Technology, Teamwork, Timeliness and Transparency leading to Transformation. It outlined the activities and initiatives taken by the State Government over the years to bring Odia diaspora together across the globe, highlighting how this connection with one of the top Asian cosmopolitan cities will augment travel, tourism and trade relations between Odisha and the Southeast Asian Nations. The video was an earnest call to the Odia Diaspora to explore the various opportunities that the State offers and join Odisha's growth story.



Deliberating on the State Government's efforts towards improving the diaspora connect, the welcome address was earlier given by President Odia Society of Singapore Shri Alok Kumar Panda while the vote of thanks was delivered by President Malaysia Odia Association Shri Ekamra Mahapatra.

The delegates from Odisha, who had reached the day before on the maiden flight, were taken on a familiarisation trip to various landmark destinations in Singapore to analyse the country's development in a short span of time with respect to travel and tourism.

ODIA DIASPORA IN DUBAI CELEBRATE ODISHA DIBASA

MORE THAN 1000 NROS IN THE MIDDLE EAST JOIN IN TO CELEBRATE DIRECT FLIGHT OPERATIONS BETWEEN BHUBANESWAR AND DUBAI

Commemorating the launch of direct flight operations between Bhubaneswar and Dubai, a special cultural evening 'Odisha Dibas' was held at hotel Le Meridien in Dubai on 16 May 2023. Hon'ble Chief Minister Shri Naveen Patnaik virtually addressed the gathering of more than 1000 participants which included Odia Diaspora in UAE, Middle East and dignitaries.



The event kicked off with mesmerising cultural performances by local troupes from Odisha arranged by Department of Odia Language, Literature and Culture while the guests were welcomed. The main event was launched with the video of Hon'ble Chief Minister Shri Naveen Patnaik's announcement of flight commencement followed by showcasing of the people boarding the inaugural flight and take off.



Congratulating the State Government on this landmark step towards improving Odisha's global connectivity, Consulate General of India in Dubai Dr. Aman Puri spoke about how the commencement of direct connectivity between the global city, Dubai and Odisha will create unparalleled opportunities for the State and will connect the State to the world. He expressed confidence that the Odia Diaspora and the Indian Diaspora in UAE and Middle East will take advantage of this direct connectivity to visit and explore 'India's Best Kept Secret'.

Secretary to Hon'ble Chief Minister (ST) Shri V.K Pandian interacted with the delegates in an engaging session and outlined Government of Odisha's transformation agenda that relies on Technology, Teamwork, Timeliness and Transparency leading to Transformation. He spoke about how the State has leveraged its natural resources, strategic location and infrastructure to create a conducive environment for business, trade, tourism and entrepreneurship to flourish. He called upon the Odia Diaspora in middle east to explore the various opportunities that the State offers and join the growth bandwagon.



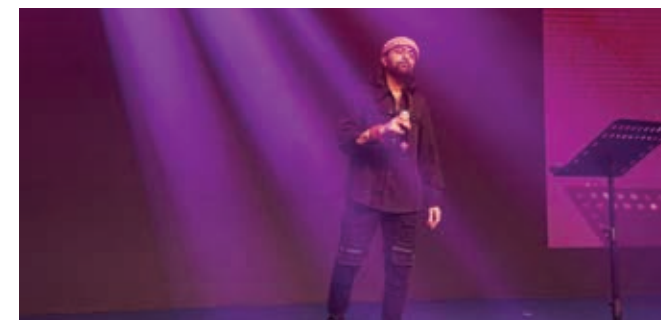
This was followed by addresses by Hon'ble Cabinet Minister, Science & Technology, Public Enterprises and Social Security & Empowerment of Persons with Disability Shri Ashok Panda and ACS-cum-Development Commissioner Smt. Anu Garg. The welcome address was delivered by Director Odisha Parivar Shri Dilip Routray highlighting the State Government's efforts towards improving the diaspora connect.



During the event Odisha Parivar showcased a video outlining the activities and initiatives taken by the State Government over the years to bring Odia diaspora together across the globe. The event concluded

ed with a starry performance by Odisha-born Bollywood singer Rituraj followed by dinner with menu celebrating Odia cuisine.

Earlier during the day, the delegates from Odisha, who had reached the night before on the maiden flight, were taken on a familiarisation trip to various landmark destinations in Dubai to analyse the country's culture and submit a report highlighting their experience with notes on improving visitor experience in Odisha.



ODISHA TOURISM CONDUCTS TOURISM ROADSHOW IN SINGAPORE

MORE THAN 150 TOUR & TRAVEL OPERATORS IN SINGAPORE NETWORK WITH TOURISM STAKEHOLDERS FROM ODISHA

Odisha Tourism conducted its first leg of international promotional campaign to boost travel, tourism and hospitality sector in Odisha via a tourism roadshow in Singapore on 5 June 2023. Organised in association with FICCI, the event witnessed more than 150 tour and travel operators from Singapore networking with tourism industry stakeholders of Odisha who flew there post the inauguration of direct flight services by Hon'ble Chief Minister Shri Naveen Patnaik on 3 June 2023.



Post the interactive B2B and B2C sessions between the stakeholders of both the countries, Director Tourism Shri Sachin R. Jadhav gave a presentation on Odisha Tourism's initiatives towards Sustainable tourism projects that has been attracting tourists in Odisha post the lifting of travel restrictions due to the pandemic. Highlighting Odisha's diverse tourism offerings ranging from sports, ecotourism, cuisine, culture, heritage, etc., he called upon the tour and travel operators of Singapore and Odisha to make use of the direct flight connectivity and aid in development of tourism sector in both the countries.

A special address was given by Additional Chief Secretary Tourism Shri Surendra Kumar urging the Singapore Tourism Board to conduct roadshows in the State. Welcoming the tourism stakeholders of Singapore to explore India's best kept secret, he said, "Odisha as a state has many things to offer for all tourists. The state's infrastructure is well developed keeping in sync with the potential of its diverse destinations while catering to the needs of the global travel community. We welcome our Singapore tourism stakeholders to visit of Odisha and participate in the Odisha Travel Bazaar – our annual flagship tourism meet that hosts leading foreign tour operators from various countries as well as domestic tour operators from different Indian States and several

international airlines - all of whom engage in B2B meetings with tour operators and hoteliers from Odisha. These travel operators are then taken on various Familiarization trips across Odisha."

Mr. Siddhartha Nath, Deputy High Commissioner of India to Singapore delivered an address who enumerated the close ties between India and Singapore and how India has contributed towards growth of tourism sector in Singapore, ranking 2nd in tourist footfalls for the year 2022. With the advantages of direct flight connectivity, he expressed confidence in improvement of bi-lateral trade relations between Singapore and Odisha.

Besides, a meeting with the officials of Singapore Tourism Board was held with the officials of Odisha Tourism on 2 June 2023 in Fairmont Hotel, Singapore. Recognising the importance of commencement of direct flight operations, Regional Director India, Middle East & South Asia Mr. GB Srithar and Incoming Area Director India, South Asia and Africa Mr. Lim Kean Bon of the Singapore Tourism Board discussed ways of collaboration with Odisha Tourism for promotion of tourism and travel trade in both the countries.



With an aim to establish Odisha as a tourist friendly destination not only in India but across the world, Odisha Tourism is currently invested in strategic master planning and development of priority destinations in the State. Niche tourism offerings such as houseboat and cruise tourism, camping, homestays, caravan tourism, culinary tourism and a lot more are being rolled out in phases to attract visitors to the State. A series of roadshows like Singapore has been planned out to be held in various source markets in Asia that'll make use of the direct flight services to Bhubaneswar from Singapore and Bangkok.

ODISHA TOURISM PARTICIPATES IN THE G20 TOURISM EXPO AND THE 12TH GREAT INDIAN TRAVEL BAZAAR IN JAIPUR.

In a bid to promote the tourism sector and attract private sector investments, Odisha Tourism participated in a panel discussion held at the G20 Tourism Expo organised alongside the 12th Great Indian Travel Bazaar in Jaipur. Speaking on the 'Role of Tourism towards one World, Sustainability & Inclusive Growth' during the panel discussion, Director Tourism highlighted the proactive steps taken by the State Govt. in attaining the Sustainable Development Goals through novel tourism initiatives.

Besides, Odisha Tourism was presented with the 'Best Booth Design Award' at the 12th Edition of Great Indian Travel Bazaar '23. The 3-day event scheduled from 23rd to 25th April '23 was attended by key stakeholders of the Travel & Tourism Industry.



ODISHA TOURISM PARTICIPATES IN ARABIAN TRAVEL MARKET 2023 IN DUBAI

Odisha Tourism participated in Arabian Travel Market Dubai 2023 to aid in promotion of travel and tourism sector in the State through stakeholder relations and gathering data insights into trending destinations and products. An official delegation from Odisha comprising Tourism Minister Shri Aswini Kumar Patra, Additional Chief Secretary Tourism Shri Surendra Kumar, Director Tourism Shri Sachin R. Jadhav, Jt. Director Tourism Shri Biswajit Routray along with few other officials from Odisha Tourism and stakeholders from tourism sector of Odisha – M/s Swosti Premium, M/s Swosti Travels and M/s Odisha vacations, participated in ATM Dubai 2023 held from 1st to 4th May 2023.

A promotional stall was curated and set up at the exhibition venue where the delegates interacted with tourism fraternity and investors from across the world. Besides fruitful meetings were held with the Consul General of India to Dubai Dr. Aman Puri and other dignitaries in the UAE.



Consul General of India to Dubai Dr. Aman Puri being felicitated by Tourism Minister Odisha Shri Aswini Kumar Patra



Tourism Minister Puducherry Mr. Thiru K. Lakshminarayan and Indian Ambassador to UAE H.E. Sunjay Sudhir being felicitated by Add. Chief Secy. Odisha Tourism Mr. Surendra Kumar on their visit to the Odisha Tourism stand at Arabian Travel Market Dubai 2023

SPORTS & MORE...

INDIA LIFTS THE HERO INTERCONTINENTAL CUP 2023

The Intercontinental Cup 2023 was held at Kalinga Stadium in Bhubaneswar where Vanuatu, Mongolia, Lebanon and India battled it out on the football field to win the coveted trophy from 9th June to 18th June 2023.

India beat Lebanon 2-0 in the finals, making history. Hon'ble Chief Minister Shri Naveen Patnaik handed the coveted Hero Intercontinental Cup trophy to the champions India in front of a jubilant crowd. He said, "It is a matter of great pride for our State to host this prestigious Intercontinental Cup. Congratulations to India on their victory in the face of stiff competition. It is our intention to hold many more football events in Odisha and support the growth of the sport in Odisha and India".



Following the Chief Minister's announcement to reward the champions, 'Blue Tigers' were presented with a cheque of INR 1 Crore by Sports Secretary Shri Vineel Krishna in the presence of AIFF General Secretary Shaji Prabhakaran and officials of Dept. of Sports & Youth Services, Govt. of Odisha.



62nd National Interstate Senior Athletics Championships held at Kalinga Stadium in Bhubaneswar from 15th to 19th June 2023 saw over 800 best athletes participating from across the country. This event holds great significance as it serves as a platform for Indian athletes to qualify for prestigious competitions such as the Asian Games 2023, World Athletics Championships, and Asian Athletics Championships.



13th Hockey India Junior National Championship 2023 was hosted in Birsamunda Hockey Stadium in Rourkela. Madhya Pradesh emerged victorious beating Chandigarh/ Madhya Pradesh in a high-octane match held on 22nd June 2023.

Haryana won the bronze medal match beating Odisha.



International Yoga Day celebrated at Kalinga Stadium in Bhubaneswar on 21st June 2023



Delegates from Athletics Federation of India visited the upcoming India's 1st indoor athletics stadium at Kalinga Stadium. The facility being developed at a fast track mode will be completed soon facilitating athletes to train through all weathers.



'PANA PRASTUTI PARBA' ORGANIZED BY ODISHA TOURISM AND OTDC ON EVE OF PANA SANKRANTI

30 'JALA CHHATRAS' ACROSS ODISHA INAUGURATED BY MINISTER TOURISM

In a novel initiative to promote Odia culture and cuisine - Pana Prastuti Parba, a Pana Making Ceremony was held amid much fanfare at Nimantran Bhubaneswar on the eve of Pana Sankranti and Odia Naba Barsha on 13 April 2023. The event was organized by Odisha Tourism in association with OTDC.



Gracing the occasion as Chief Guest, Minister Tourism & OLLC Shri Aswini Kumar Patra said, "Pana as a beverage is deeply rooted in Odia culture and forms an integral part of various festivities so much so that the Maha Bishuba Sankranti, which marks the beginning of Odia New Year, is more commonly known as Pana Sankranti. This simple, delicious, thirst-quenching cool beverage is traditionally prepared using milk, chhena, jaggery and an assortment of various fresh and dry fruits, especially Bael". Around 25 Food Bloggers including Celebrity Chefs joined the Tourism Minister, Chairman OTDC and other officials in Pana mixing ceremony which had a special table laden with dry ingredients used to prepare Pana by adding it to the liquid ingredients. Executive Chef of Nimantran Sanjoy Sarkar explained the process of Pana preparation following which the guests carried out the mixing. The Pana prepared during this ceremony was later distributed to guests as well as the public.

On this occasion, two traditional pana – one using Bael fruit as the main ingredient and another with chhena and mix fruits was prepared by the Food



Bloggers and Celebrity Chefs present. Further, Detox Pana – a modern take on the traditional Pana was also demonstrated which combined blanched spinach, fresh green veggies and fruit with honey for a nutrient rich twist to traditional beverage suitable for the health conscious.

Thanking the media personnel and bloggers for participating and promoting Pana, Chairman OTDC Dr. Lenin Mohanty highlighted the importance of Pana and its health benefits, especially in beating the heat during the summer. He urged the Food Blogger community and media to promote Odia culture and food associated with it to keep these centuries old unique traditions alive.

Earlier during the day, Minister Tourism Shri Patra inaugurated the Jala Chhatra set up by Odisha Tourism at Janpath, where visitors can avail free drinking water to quench their thirst and keep themselves hydrated during the scorching summers. With the temperatures soaring above-normal temperatures, a total of 30 Jala Chhatras will be made operational across Odisha, especially in major tourist sites, railway stations, and other locations frequented by travellers/ visitors, for a period of 60 days, till June.



Addl. Secretary Ananta Narayan Singh Laguri, Jt. Secretary Ellora Bharati Jena, Financial Advisor Rajkishore Palei, General Manager OTDC Lagnajit Rout, OSD Tourism Ansuman Rath, Divn. Manager OTDC Abhijit Swain and other senior Officials of Odisha Tourism and OTDC were present on the occasion.

The event concluded with an announcement of a special pure vegetarian Sankranti Meal Platter to be made available for guests visiting Nimantran Outlets on the day of Odia New Year. The attending Celebrity Chefs and Food Bloggers were felicitated on the occasion and gifted with Odia Panji and Odia Calendar for the year 2023-24.

ODIA NABA BARSA CELEBRATED AT PANTHANIVAS BHUBANESWAR

CUTTACK ARTISTS ORGANISATION SHOWCASES SPECIAL ART EXHIBITION

To celebrate Maha Bisubha Sankranti and Odia Naba Barsa, a special art exhibition and cultural evening was inaugurated by OTDC Chairman Dr. Lenin Mohanty at Panthanivas Bhubaneswar on 14 April 2023. Principal IHM Sharada Ghosh and Founder of Sarna Educational Trust Jitu Mishra were the distinguished guests on the occasion.



Gracing the occasion as Chief Guest, OTDC Chairman Dr. Lenin Mohanty said, "I congratulate the artists on presenting such amazing artworks on the theme of 'Odia Naba Barsa'. This novel programme is a representation of Odisha's art and cultural heritage that brings Odias from across the globe and

I urge everyone to keep our traditions alive through such celebrations."



Odia Cine Superstar Buddhaditya Mohanty and Producer Jyoti Ranjan Mohanty joined the Odia New Year Celebrations as Special Guests and urged the guests present to watch recently released Odia Movie 'Delivery Boy' which has been made tax free by the Govt. of Odisha. Superstar Buddhaditya thanked OTDC being a Leader in the Hospitality and giving Team 'Delivery Boy' a platform to bring forward the challenges faced by Delivery Boys.

Around 42 artists from Cuttack Artists Organisation were felicitated during the event for showcasing their artworks. The event was followed by a cultural evening and special Sankranti dinner served to guests.

Jt. Secretary Odisha Tourism Rajkishore Palei, OSD Tourism Ansuman Rath, DM (Finance) Abhijit Swain, DM (Marketing) Prasanta Panda, DM (Transport) Ranjan Mishra were also present on the occasion.



RAJA MAHOTSAV 2023 INAUGURATED IN OTDC

PITHA COUNTERS MADE LIVE ACROSS ALL OTDC HOSPITALITY UNITS IN ODISHA

Raja, the annual festival celebrating womanhood in Odisha, was inaugurated at Odisha Tourism Development Corporation (OTDC) Panthanivas in Bhubaneswar on 13 June 2023. The Raja Mahotsav was inaugurated by Hon'ble Tourism Minister Shri Aswini Kumar Patra in presence of Chairman OTDC Dr Lenin Mohanty and General Manager OTDC Shri Lagnajit Rout, as part of the three-day festival from 14-16 June 2023.



Speaking on the occasion, Tourism Minister Shri Aswini Kumar Patra said that OTDC has made itself synonymous with the festival of Raja. The OTDC Raja Mahotsav which was started in the year 2010 aims at promoting authentic Odia delicacies coupled with celebrations during Raja including traditional Raja Doli, Raja Pitha and Raja Paan, as a tribute to Mother Earth and also as a mark of respect for the women folk. Chairman OTDC Dr. Lenin Mohanty also spoke on the occasion and thanked the audiences as well as media personnel present for helping OTDC in propagating the culture and traditions of the state.



On the occasion of Raja Mahotsav, special arrangements were made to ensure sale of Raja delicacies and sweets across all hospitality units of OTDC in Odisha including Nimantran Restaurant in Bhubaneswar and Silver City Boat Club in Cuttack. Further, traditional Raja Doli (swings) were set up and Mehndi artists invited at Panthanivas Bhubaneswar for the women visiting OTDC Panthanivas to indulge in free of cost. Jt. Secretary Dept. of Tourism Rajkishore Palei and Company Secretary OTDC Prashant Panda also spoke on the occasion.



Further, to spread the festive fervour while making an effort to keep the culture and traditions associated with Raja alive, 'Pitha on Wheels' special Vans were deployed for sale of Raja delicacies at important places in Bhubaneswar like Sahid Nagar, Khandagiri and Patia, etc. from 8 am to 5 pm. These vans provided options for take away of Raja Pitha and delicacies prepared by OTDC. During three days of the festive period, OTDC registered a record revenue of INR 16 Lakh through the sale of Raja Pitha and other Odia delicacies which is a 33% increase over the revenue recorded last year, which was INR 12 Lakhs.



The inaugural event saw the participation of senior Officials from OTDC and Dept. of Tourism. Enthusiastic citizens, especially girls and young women, thronged OTDC Panthanivas to experience Raja Doli and indulge in the Raja Pitha delicacies on the occasion.



RATHA YATRA 2023

As per tradition on the auspicious occasion of Akshaya Tritiya, The Ratha Anukula ritual was held in Puri on 23rd April marking the beginning of construction of the chariots for the annual Ratha Yatra. The festival of Chandan Yatra was also observed during this period at Sri Mandir which continued for 42 days. More than 100 carpenters were engaged in making of the three massive chariots – 45 feet high Nandighosha chariot for Lord Jagannath, 44 feet high Taladhwaaja chariot for Lord Balabhadra and 43 feet high Debadalana chariot for Goddess Subhadra.



On 4th June 2023 Lord Jagannath, Lord Balabhadra and Goddess Subhadra were escorted from the sanctum sanctorum of the Sri Mandir to the Snana Mandap (bathing altar) in a 'Pahandi' (procession) after 'Mangal Arati' for the auspicious festival of Deva Snana Purnima. Emotions ran high as lakhs of devotees visited Shri Jagannath Temple on this occasion since it is believed to be the birthday of Lord Jagannath. After being bathed with 108 pitchers of fragrant divine water brought from the Suna Kua or the golden well, the deities fell ill and were then taken away from public view for a period of 15 days called Anasara to recuperate.



The annual chariot festival of Rath Yatra was held on 20th June 2023 in the holy town of Puri. The festival witnessed more than 1 Million devotees pulling the divine chariots of Lord Jagannath, Lord Balabhadra and Goddess Subhadra along the Bada Banda (Grand Road) for their annual 9-day sojourn at their Aunt's place – Gundicha temple.



BAHUDA YATRA 2023

28th June 2023 officially marked the return of Lord Jagannath and his siblings from their aunt's place – Gundicha Temple. Devotees in lakhs pull the holy trinity's chariot during the Bahuda Yatra towards Sri Mandir, revelling in the glory of Shri Jagannath culture.



The Suna Besha of the holy trinity was observed on 29th June 2023. Also known as Raja Besha or Rajarajeshwara Besha, this festival is celebrated for five times in a year – 4 times while the deities are inside the temple on their Ratna Singhasana and the fifth time, outside the temple while on the chariots where the deities are adorned with Gold ornaments.



Before the Niladri Bije, due to be held on 1st July 2023, which marks the final return of the deities to their sanctum sanctorum inside the Sri Mandir, a ritual of Adhara Pana was held on 30th June 2023. 100 litres of Pana (sweet drink) was specially made combining milk cream, cheese, sugar, banana, camphor, nutmeg, black pepper and other such spices and fed to the holy trinity in terracotta pots. These pots were then broken to liberate the souls/spirits residing in the chariots. It is believed that evil spirits wait for this day to consume the pana to attain salvation.



OTDC NIMANTRAN SERVES 'SPECIAL VEGETARIAN PLATTER' DURING RATHA YATRA 2023

PLATTER COMPRISED 15+ DISHES, UNLIMITED FOOD WITHOUT ONION & GARLIC

In a novel initiative to celebrate the festive spirit of Ratha Yatra, OTDC Nimantran in Bhubaneswar launched a special vegetarian platter on 19th June 2023 for the festive period of Ratha Yatra 2023. This platter containing 15+ dishes prepared without onion and garlic, was exclusively served from 20th to 28th June 2023 at Nimantran Bhubaneswar at just INR 549 inclusive of taxes. The menu was made dynamic and on each day, during the festive period, Nimantran served a variety of authentic Odia dishes as part of this platter and patrons enjoyed to their heart's fulfilment.



On this occasion, a food tasting ceremony was organised which saw the participation of more than 150 Food Bloggers, Social Media Influencers and Media Personnel. The participants' views and expert opinion was taken so as to offer visitors a platter with an unmatched taste during the festive period. OSD Tourism Ansuman Rath, Company Secretary OTDC Prashant Panda, Divn. Manager OTDC Ranjan Mishra and Executive Chef Nimantran Sanjoy Sarkar were also present on the occasion.



Speaking on the occasion Chairman OTDC Dr. Lenin Mohanty said, "Department of Tourism along with Odisha Tourism Development Corporation have been taking strategic strides over the years to popularise Odia culture, festival and cuisine among the masses. Through Nimantran, which is an authentic Odia-cuisine restaurant, a special vegetarian platter has been curated with an aim to popularise Odia Sattvik Cuisine generally consumed by the masses during this 9-day holy festival of Ratha Yatra in Odisha. We invite the citizens of Bhubaneswar to join us in this effort towards popularising authentic Odia cuisine."



It is pertinent to mention that the restaurant didn't serve any non-vegetarian or a la carte menu dishes during this period. The entire kitchen as well as the dining area was thoroughly cleaned, and handling of any non-vegetarian ingredients was completely prohibited in the restaurant till Bahuda Yatra. This special vegetarian platter was served both during lunch and dinner hours.

ODISHA TOURISM IN FOCUS



The OTDC Rath Yatra 2023 Tour Package Buses were flagged off early morning on 20th from Panthanivas Bhubaneswar. Devotees availing the package were seated at Puri Shri Nahar premises where arrangements had been made for them to witness the festival of Rath Yatra.



Odisha Tourism delegation called on High Commissioner of India to Singapore H.E. P. Kumaran ahead of the event for Odisha Diaspora Connect in Singapore to commemorate Direct Flight connectivity between Bhubaneswar & Singapore and discussed avenues for tourism promotion between Odisha & Singapore on 1st June 2023.



Odisha Government ensured safe evacuation of 21 Odia students stranded in Imphal due to the ensuing violence and brought them to Bhubaneswar on 9th May 2023. Evacuated students thanked Hon'ble CM Shri Naveen Patnaik for providing all the support & help. OTDC and Directorate of Odisha Paribar facilitated their lodging, boarding & onward journey.



'Chhenapoda Dibasa' was celebrated by the Dept. of Tourism & OTDC on 11th April 2023 at Paryatan Bhawan. Chairman OTDC Dr. Lenin Mohanty & Director Tourism cum MD OTDC Sachin Jadhav & other senior officials of DoT & OTDC were present on the occasion.



Changi Airport welcomes our newest city link - Bhubaneswar! This is our first city link to India's eastern state of Odisha and 17th link to India. @IndiGoB now operates twice-weekly flights between Singapore and Bhubaneswar, an ancient city known for its Hindu temples.



A symposium on 'Values and Spirituality for Better Governance' for administrators was held in association with Prajapita Brahma Kumaris Ishwariya Vishwa Vidyalaya at OTDC Head Office, Bhubaneswar on 24th April 2023. Chairman Dr. Lenin Mohanty, Officers & Staff participated in the symposium.

ODISHA HOSTS TWO G20 WORKING GROUP MEETINGS IN BHUBANESWAR

Odisha played host to two G20 meetings welcoming delegates from across 20 G20 member countries, guest nations and several international organisations. The Odisha State Government along with the Ministry of Education, GOI, organised the 3rd G20 Education Working Group Meeting from 26th to 28th April 2023 while the 2nd G20 Culture Working Group by the Ministry of Culture was held from 14th to 17th May 2023. A set of cultural experiences were curated for the delegates through the course of their visit from cuisine to heritage excursions and from fine arts to performing arts.



Hindusthan Art & Music Society in collaboration with Tridhara, Bhubaneswar organised Bharat Sanskriti Yatra - a festival of Indian Classical Music & Dance at Bhanja Kala Mandap in Bhubaneswar on 21st May 2023.



In remembrance of Guru Debaprasad Tridhara a pioneer organization which upholds the unique style of Guru Debaprasad Das organized Debasmruti Festival 2023 (an evening of Odissi Dance) at Bhanja Kala Mandap in Bhubaneswar on 30th May 2023.



On the occasion of Lord Jagannath's holy Deva Snana Purnima, the annual celebration of Sri Dance Academy, founded by Odissi Dance Guru Smt. Namita Ray, organized Nritya Bilash at Utkal Rangamancha in Bhubaneswar on 4th June 2023.



Three-day Shree Jagannath devotional music festival 'Guhari', organized by Guru Kelucharan Mohapatra Odissi Research Center and supported by the Department of Odia Language, Literature and Culture, was held at Rabindra Mandap in Bhubaneswar from 23rd June to 25th June 2023.

PANTHANIVAS HOSTS 'PARICHAYA'- CONTENT CREATORS MEET

100 CONTENT CREATORS ACROSS ODISHA FELICITATED

Parichaya, an appreciation day for Odisha's content creators in the field of food, travel, art, and culture was organized by Odisha Tourism in association with Odisha Tourism Development Corporation, Foodies of Bhubaneswar and Chalo Odisha at Panthanivas Bhubaneswar on 30 April 2023. Inaugurated by Chairman OTDC Dr. Lenin Mohanty by lighting of the ceremonial lamp, the event had eminent personalities from the field of art – Ollywood actor Sabyasachi Mishra and Odia Rapper Big Deal along with senior officials of Odisha Tourism and OTDC interacting and felicitating around 100 Content Creators across Odisha from the field of Travel, Comedy, Art, Culture and Cuisine.



Highlighting the role content creators play as influencers Chairman OTDC Dr. Lenin Mohanty said, "The role of today's generation is as much important for promotion of Odisha as a hub of tourism and culture as that of the Government. The amazing content put out by digital content creators present here today not only entertains but spreads awareness on the various offerings Odisha has – be it scenic destination, food, its people, culture, etc. The influence such kind of experiential content has is more impactful than traditional forms of marketing. I thank the blogging community present here who have time and again through their content helped in not only the transformation of brand Odisha in the minds of travelers but also in aiding livelihood development of the local community members".



Community blogging handles Foodies of Bhubaneswar and Chalo Odisha were credited with bringing together food and travel bloggers for promotion of Odisha and its many offerings via their Social Media handles. A round of interactive session was held which had discussions on various ways to digitally promote tourism in Odisha with the event becoming a platform for content creators to network, exchange ideas, and gain inspiration.



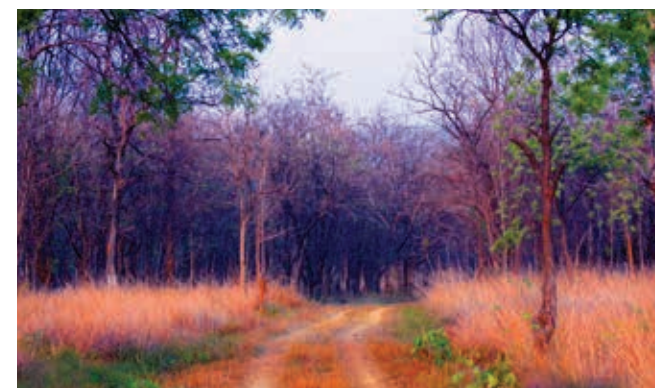
Financial Advisor cum Addl. Secretary Tourism Shri R.K Palei, OSD Tourism Shri Ansuman Rath, and other senior Officials of Odisha Tourism and OTDC were present on the occasion. The event concluded with a special Odia cuisine buffet made available for guests and attendees.



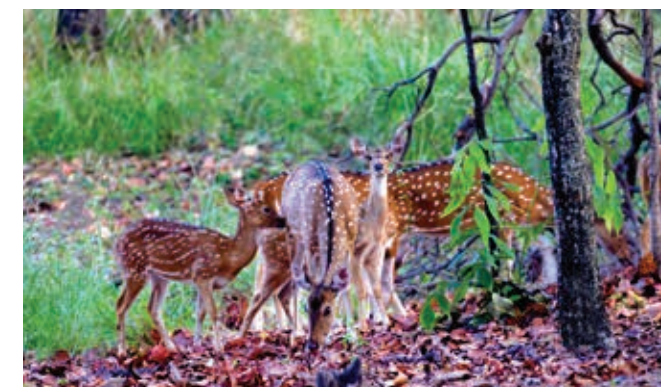
HIGHER PREY DENSITY RECORDED IN DEBRIGARH WILDLIFE SANCTUARY

PREY DENSITY INCREASED TO 46 PER SQ. KM. WHILE MORE THAN 1099 CARNIVORE SIGNS RECORDED

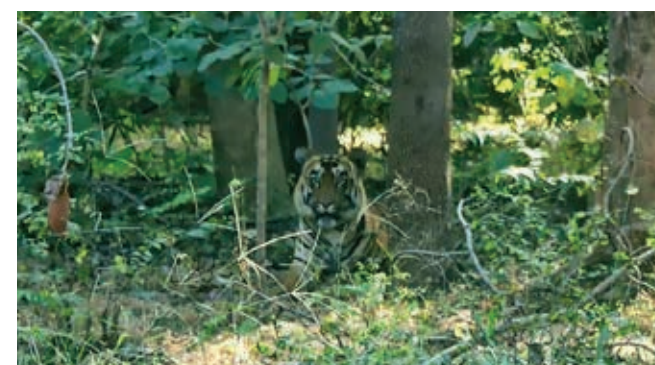
A sign survey was conducted by Hirakud Wildlife Division from 29th May to 3rd June 2023 in the Debrigarh Wildlife Sanctuary. The survey showed a healthy rise of herbivores in the density from 29-28 prey per square kilometre last year to 46 prey per sq. km. this year. It is pertinent to note that 40-60 animals per sq. km. reflects a healthy habitat.



The density of Spotted Deer was the highest while Wild Boar, Indian Gaur, Sambar and Chowsingha were among other high-density species. Besides the prey density, more than 1099 carnivore signs were also recorded. Apart from the presence of a Royal Bengal Tiger which was recorded, the sanctuary showed higher presence of bear and leopard this year compared to last year showing increase from 72 to 80.



It may be noted here that the wildlife division has amped up measures within the sanctuary to protect the wildlife. Further, three operational control rooms have been set up and 12 teams are actively monitoring the RBT 24X7. The contact numbers of all the control rooms have been shared with the villages surrounding the sanctuary to establish quick communication on the movement of the carnivores.



Picture Credit : Ms. Anshu Pragyan Das

DFO Hirakud Wildlife Division

Pictures from Debrigarh Wildlife Sanctuary



JYOTI RANI BISWAL

VISITING KORAPUT “THE HEAVEN OF ODISHA”

My passion is learning about life through travelling and exploring new things. As I am an Odia, it's my utmost priority to visit my state's many destinations first. I love to show the world that Odisha is a very beautiful place. Therefore, I decided with my friends to visit Koraput on 16th of January. It was very exciting and scary for me as I was travelling by train for the first time. We started at 8:30 pm and reached Damanjodi early morning. We had already booked a resort in Semiliguda, so we went there first. The resort was beautifully designed like a nature camp. Since, it was winter, it was all the more exciting to stay in a tent. We visited the famous COFFEE GARDEN as Koraput is famous for coffee. By evening we came back to our tents and enjoyed by the bonfire set up by the resort.



We woke up to a cup of super-hot coffee and by 7:30 am we started for Deomali hills, the highest range on the Eastern Ghats in Odisha located just 60 kms away from Koraput. I was stunned by seeing the green forests, rolling hills, and cascading waterfalls. A kind-hearted man guided us on our way and even suggested us to have lunch in a dhaba where the food was very delicious. We tried



their specialty dish i.e. crabs and chicken and it was truly delicious. Next, we went to Rani Duduma waterfalls. The place was as beautiful as the story behind it. It is said that Rani of Duduma, Jeypore had taken a bath there and the waterfall was thus named after her.



The sightseeing tour then brought us to Duduma waterfall which is also known as Machhkund. We were mesmerised by a natural infinity pool there and clicked many picture. The waterfall falls from a height of over 150meters creating a stunning mist that blankets the surrounding area.



By covering these places we realised that Koraput is truly the 'Heaven of Odisha'. Moreover, I was struck by the hospitality and kindness and left with a newfound appreciation for their culture.

*Jyoti Rani Biswal is a
Lawyer and a Lifestyle Blogger*



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