Chilka lake

Asia's largest brackish water lagoon with water spread ranging from 1165 sq km m the rainy season to 906 sq km in the dry season is nestled in the heart of the coastal Odisha (Orissa). It extends from Bhusandpur in Puri district in the North to Rambha-Malud in Ganjan district in the South, separated from the Bay of Bengal by a 60 km long narrow strip of marshy islands and sand-flats.

Some of the prominent islands like Nalabana, Kalijal, Somolo, Honeymoon, Break-fast, Birds and Rajahansa inhabited by small subsistence fishermen families, are popular destinations for daily **boat trips**. Because of its rich bio-diversity and socio-economic importance, **Chilika** was designated as a **Ramsar** site in 1981 to afford better protection.

**Chilika** is recognized as one of the most important wetlands in the world because it is home to a phenomenal variety of birds. Chilika Lake offers visitors a spectacular display of its colorful avian charms in a thousand different hues presented by over 160 species in the peak season between November and February. The lake and its reed islands teem with nesting birds-white bellied sea eagles, ospreys, golden plovers, sand pipers, flamingos, pelicans, shovellers, gulls, include migratory ones flying great distances from Iran, Central Asia and Siberia.

The large **Nalabana Island** (Forest of Reeds) covering about 16 sq km in the lagoon area was declared a bird sanctuary in 1987. The core area of about 9 sq km attracts around 400,000 waterfowls of different species. Often underwater, the island gradually emerges with the outset of summer. It is literally a paradise for bird-watchers.

Another major attraction at **Chilika** is Irrawady dolphins which are often spotted off Satpada Island. Satpada, bounded by the lagoon on three sides, offers an excellent view and attracts the visitors to its entire 30 km stretch of sand bar. Boats arranged by OTDC are available for both the islands. The lake also supports the local fisherman in earning their living from Chilika's prawn, mackerel and crabs.

Of late, slightly reduced number of birds owing to growth in prawn farming as well as silting and reduced salinity has alarmed the conservationists. The plying of mechanized boats, the increasing of different fishing nets and gears has threatened the flagship species of the Chilika lagoon, the Irrawady dolphin.

**Odisha State Museum**

The genesis of the Odisha State Museum goes back to the year 1932, when two notable historians Prof. N. C Banerjee & Prof. Ghanshyam Dash of Ravenshaw College, Cuttack started collection of archaeological treasures from various places. The small museum was then housed within the premises of the College. In 1938, by a suitable order, the Government of Odisha transformed this nucleus into the Provincial museum of Odisha.

Maintaining close contact with the general public and the Archaeological Department of the Government of India and other States, the Museum continued to grow. In order to popularize the cultural exhibits of the Museum, leaflets printed both in Odia and English were published in the Samaj and the New Odisha and copies of the same were sent to officials and the public to create a sense of awareness about the significance of the Museum. As a result of this publicity, students and the general public started visiting the Museum in large numbers. The teachers of the History Department made sustained efforts to explain to them the cultural value of the Museum and its exhibits.

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## KONARK SUN TEMPLE

An Architecture Marvel of Eastern India and A symbol of India's heritage, Konark Sun Temple, commonly known as Konark is situated in the eastern state of Odisha (earlier known as Orissa), India and is one of the eminent tourist attractions. Konark houses a massive temple dedicated to the Sun God. The word 'Konark' is a combination of two words 'Kona' and 'Arka'. 'Kona' means 'Corner' and 'Arka' means 'Sun', so when combines it becomes 'Sun of the Corner'. Konark Sun Temple is situated on the north eastern corner of Puri and is dedicated to Sun God. Konark is also known as Arka khetra. There are [three images of the Sun God](http://www.thekonark.in/konarksungod.html) at three different sides of the temple, positioned in proper direction to catch the rays of the sun at morning, noon and evening.

Sun Temple of Konark, built in the middle of 13th century, is a massive conception of artistic magnificence and engineering dexterity. King Narasimhadeva I, the great ruler of the Ganga dynasty had built this temple, with the help of 1200 artisans within a period of 12 years (1243-1255 A.D.). Since the ruler used to worship the Sun, the temple was considered as a chariot for the Sun God. Konark Temple was designed in the form of a gorgeously decorated chariot mounted on 24 wheels , each about 10 feet in diameter, and drawn by 7 mighty horses. It is really difficult to understand, how this huge temple, every inch-space of which was so wonderfully carved, could have been completed within such a short time. Whatever that might be, the konark temple even in its present ruined state, still a wonder to the whole world. Great poet Rabindranath Tagore wrote of Konark: "***here the language of stone surpasses the language of man***."

# Puri

**Puri** ([About this sound](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Puri.ogg) [listen](https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/5/5f/Puri.ogg) ([help](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wikipedia:Media_help" \o "Wikipedia:Media help)·[info](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Puri.ogg))) is a city and a [municipality](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Municipality) in the state of [Odisha](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Odisha" \o "Odisha) in eastern [India](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/India). It is the district headquarters of [Puri district](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Puri_district" \o "Puri district) and is situated on the[Bay of Bengal](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bay_of_Bengal), 60 kilometres (37 mi) south of the state capital of [Bhubaneswar](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bhubaneswar). It is also known as *Sri Jagannath Dham* after the 12th-century [Jagannath Temple](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jagannath_Temple_(Puri)" \o "Jagannath Temple (Puri)) located in the city. It is one of the original [Char Dham](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Char_Dham) pilgrimage sites for [Hindus](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hindus).

Puri is known by several names since the ancient times, and was locally known as "Shrikhetra" and Lord Jagannath temple is known as "Badadeula". Puri and the Jagannath Temple were invaded 18 times by Hindu and [Muslim](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Muslim) rulers, from the 4th century AD till the early 19th century with the objective of looting the treasures of the temple. Odisha, including Puri and its temple, were under the [British Raj](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/British_Raj) from 1803 till India attained independence in August 1947. Even though [princely states](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Princely_states) do not exist in India today the heirs of the [Gajapati Dynasty](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gajapati_Kingdom" \o "Gajapati Kingdom) of [Khurda](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Khurda_(District)" \o "Khurda (District)) still perform the ritual duties of the temple. The temple town has many Hindu religious *[math](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Matha" \o "Matha)*[s](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Matha" \o "Matha) or monasteries.

The economy of Puri town is dependent on the religious importance of the Jagannath Temple to the extent of nearly 80 percent. The 24 festivals, including 13 major ones, held every year in the temple complex contribute to the economy; [Ratha Yatra](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ratha_Yatra" \o "Ratha Yatra) and its related festivals are the most important which are attended by millions of people every year. [Sand art](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sand_art_and_play) and [applique](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Applique) art are some of the important crafts of the city.

Puri has been chosen as one of the heritage cities for [Heritage City Development and Augmentation Yojana](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Heritage_City_Development_and_Augmentation_Yojana) (HRIDAY) scheme of Government of India.

Gopalpur beach

In the southern coastline of [Odisha](https://www.holidify.com/state/odisha/) just 15 km from the city of Behrampur is located a quaint, tiny town of Gopalpur which was a sea port, bustling with trade and commerce, in the Colonial Era.

What was once a bustling port city before being deserted, is today, one of the best beaches in the eastern coastline of the country. It is know for being an offbeat destination and a place for relaxation. The sea port remains though largely in ruins, the British have gone too but what remains is one of India's most loved beaches. The Gopalpur-on-sea is considered to be one of India's most beautiful beaches largely due to its remoteness, its peace and its offbeat crowd. The beaches are sparkling gold which along with the azure water of the Bay of Bengal providing a perfect place to relax and immerse yourself in nature. Besides the beach, the food is also pretty great in the town with many shanties providing tongue tickling sea food. Gopalpur is rapidly becoming one of the most sought after beaches in the country, with more and more people becoming aware of its beauty.

The very name of “Nandankanan”, in mythology, delineates the ecstatic but imaginary beauty of the celestial garden. It also indicates the real beautiful spots par excellence on earth, where one can see the panoramic views of nature and appreciate the glamour that exists in the external morphology of plants and animals.

The zoo is enriched with 210 enclosures with at Nandankanan. It has the significance of having both the cages and open moat enclosures. There are 116 cages and 94 open moated enclosures to house all the captive animals of Nandankanan. It has the glory of having 156 species of animals which includes 41 spp. mammals, 83 spp. birds, 26 spp. reptiles and 6 spp. of amphibians. Nandankanan has huge number of animal collections. There are 3004 no animals, including 1175 mammals, 1546 birds, 262 reptiles and 21 amphibans. In these 156 species, 103 are indigenous and 53 are exotic.There are 15 spp of mammals, 120 spp of birds, 15 spp of reptiles, 85 spp of butterflies which are freely move inside the sanctuary.

Nandankanan is the only zoo in India with the credit of having Patas monkey (Erythrocebus patas), Eastern Rosella (Platycercus eximus) and Open-billed Stork (Anastomus oscitans). Besides, it has the glory among the 2 zoos in India having Orang-Utan (others in Kanpur Zoological Park, Uttar Pradesh), Indian Pangolin (others in Jhargram Zoo, West Bengal), Spotted Munia (Others in Sayajibaug Zoo, Gujurat) and Burmese Python (others in Culcatta Snake Park, West Bengal). It is among the three zoos of India having Green-winged Macaws and Cinereous Vulture.

Nandankanan has created its unique place for successful captive breeding of endangered Gharials in 1980. Birth of white tiger from normal coloured tigers has given a special place to Nandankanan over the world as one of the major host zoo for the white tigers. The other significant breeding success of Nandankanan includes Indian pangolin (1971), Mouse deer (1972), Malayan Giant squirrel (1974), Sloth bear (1978), Mugger (1982), Himalayan Black bear (1982), Lion-tailed Macaque (1983), Brow-antlered deer (1984), Salt water crocodile (1985), Indian porcupine (1986), White necked stork (1986), Caiman crocodile (1990), Water monitor lizard (1996), Swamp deer (1998), Chimpanzee (1999), Grey heron (2000) and Siamese crocodile (2010), ratel 2012 and many free living animals including Open billed storks.

