Contemporary Odisha

By **Brajabandhu Mahanta** • August 27, 2026 • Updated October 9, 2026 • 9 min read

Period guide · 2000 – present

Contemporary Odisha: *a state remaking itself*

How Odisha has changed since 2000 — politics and governance, industry and welfare, disaster resilience, sport, and the living heritage of Jagannath — with our analysis, editorials and news on the questions shaping the state today.

By **Brajabandhu Mahanta**, MA (Gold Medalist)Updated **October 202612 min** read

See the timeline ↓ Browse all 37 articles

- **2000**start of the period
- **2011**Orissa becomes Odisha
- **2024**change of government
- **37**linked articles

On this page

1. Overview
2. Timeline
3. Politics & governance
4. Economy & industry
5. Welfare, health & education

6. Environment & disasters
7. Living heritage
8. Sport & cities
9. All articles
10. FAQ

On this page

1. Overview
2. Timeline
3. Politics & governance
4. Economy & industry
5. Welfare, health & education
6. Environment & disasters
7. Living heritage
8. Sport & cities
9. All articles
10. FAQ

01 · Overview

What is contemporary Odisha?

Contemporary Odisha in 60 seconds

- From **2000 to 2024** Odisha was governed by the **Biju Janata Dal** under **Naveen Patnaik**, one of India’s longest-serving chief ministers.
- In **2024** the **BJP** won the assembly election and formed its first government of its own in the state.

- Mining, steel, aluminium and ports made Odisha one of India’s fastest-changing industrial economies — and raised hard questions about land, forests and displacement.
- After the **1999 super cyclone**, Odisha built a disaster-management system now cited as a model for the country.
- The state became a centre of **Indian hockey**, hosting two men’s World Cups.
- The **Jagannath Temple** remains at the heart of public life, from the Puri heritage corridor to debates over temple administration.

The history of **contemporary Odisha** begins around the turn of the millennium. Still recovering from the 1999 super cyclone, the state entered a quarter-century of political stability, rapid industrial growth and large welfare programmes, followed in 2024 by its first change of ruling party in a generation.

This page sets out the main developments and links to our editorials, opinion pieces and news reports. Because it deals with recent events, some details change quickly; the date at the top shows when it was last reviewed.

- Period**c. 2000 – present**
- Capital**Bhubaneswar**
- Official name**Odisha (changed from Orissa in 2011)**
- Classical language**Odia, recognised in 2014**
- Assembly**147 seats**
- Statehood day**Utkala Dibasa, 1 April**

02 · Timeline

Timeline of contemporary Odisha

1. 2000

   Naveen Patnaik becomes Chief Minister in March, at the head of a BJD-led government; he would win five consecutive elections.

2. 2001

   Mission Shakti is launched to organise women’s self-help groups across the state.

3. 2005

   Odisha signs an agreement with POSCO for a large steel plant near Paradip; the project later stalls amid local protests and is abandoned.

4. 2008

   IIT Bhubaneswar begins classes, followed by AIIMS Bhubaneswar in 2012.

5. 2011

   The state’s official English name changes from Orissa to **Odisha**, and the language from Oriya to **Odia**.

6. 2013

   Cyclone Phailin: large-scale evacuations keep the death toll far below that of 1999.

7. 2014

   Odia is recognised as a **classical language** of India.

8. 2016

   Bhubaneswar tops the first list of cities selected under the national Smart Cities Mission.

9. 2018

   Odisha becomes the sponsor of the Indian hockey teams and hosts the Men’s Hockey World Cup in Bhubaneswar.

10. 2019

    Cyclone Fani strikes Puri; mass evacuation again limits loss of life.

11. 2023

    The Men’s Hockey World Cup returns, played in Bhubaneswar and Rourkela.

12. January 2024

    The Shree Jagannath heritage corridor around the temple in Puri is inaugurated.

13. June 2024

    The BJP wins a majority in the assembly election and Mohan Charan Majhi becomes Chief Minister, ending 24 years of BJD rule.

03 · Politics & governance

Politics and governance

For most of this period Odisha's politics were remarkably stable. Naveen Patnaik's BJD governed from 2000 to 2024, combining welfare schemes with a centralised, bureaucracy-led style of administration — including the much-debated **5T** governance initiative of its final years. The 2024 election brought the BJP to power and opened a new chapter of debate over priorities, accountability and the conduct of the assembly.

- Analysis5T Under ScrutinyA critical look at the 5T governance initiative.Read article →
- AssemblyPolitical Deadlock in the Odisha AssemblyDisruption, debate and the functioning of the House.Read article →
- ElectionsBJD Alleges Discrepancies in Odisha PollsThe opposition's claims after the 2024 election.Read article →
- Law & orderCrime Trends in Odisha, 2024What the latest figures show.Read article →
- SecurityBangladeshi Infiltration RacketReports of an illegal migration racket in Odisha. Read article →

04 · Economy & industry

Economy, industry and agriculture

Rich in iron ore, bauxite, coal and chromite, Odisha attracted huge investment in steel, aluminium, power and ports. The POSCO steel project near Paradip, signed in 2005, became a national symbol of conflict over land; the site was later allotted to JSW Steel. Growth has lifted state revenues and incomes, but mining districts such as Keonjhar face questions

about environmental damage and who benefits. Agriculture remains the largest employer, with new pushes towards organic farming and exports.

- IndustryEconomic Growth or Environmental Fallout? JSW in KeonjharWeighing investment against its local cost.Read article →
- EconomyOdisha on the RiseThe state’s economic momentum.Read article →
- OverviewOdisha: A Land of Heritage and ProgressTradition and development side by side. Read article →
- InfrastructureShree Jagannath International Airport, PuriPlans for an international airport at Puri.Read article →
- AgricultureOdisha’s Mangoes Set to Conquer Global MarketsFarm exports and new markets.Read article →
- AgricultureOdisha’s Bold Step towards Organic FarmingThe state’s organic farming push. Read article →

05 · People

Welfare, health and education

Large welfare programmes have defined Odisha’s recent politics — from Mission Shakti’s women’s self-help groups to housing and health-insurance schemes. Higher education expanded with IIT Bhubaneswar, AIIMS Bhubaneswar and new universities, but shortages of teachers and controversies over recruitment examinations and university governance remain live issues.

- WomenMission Shakti 2.0The next phase of the women’s self-help movement.Read article →
- HousingAntyodaya Gruha YojanaThe state’s rural housing scheme.Read article →
- HealthAyushman Bharat Scheme in OdishaNational health insurance comes to the state. Read article →

- HealthRising Caesarean Deliveries in OdishaWhat the rise in C-sections tells us.Read article →
- EducationOdisha’s Higher Education Faculty ShortageEmpty posts in colleges and universities.Read article →
- EducationOdisha Universities (Amendment) Bill, 2024Changes to how state universities are run.Read article →
- EditorialBroken Seals, Broken TrustWhy recruitment exams need independent oversight. Read article →
- SocietyBaby for Sale: Unmasking a Hidden CrisisPoverty and child trafficking in Odisha. Read article →

06 · Land, water & climate

Environment and disasters

The super cyclone of October 1999 killed close to ten thousand people. Odisha responded by building a disaster-management authority, cyclone shelters and a culture of early evacuation that sharply reduced deaths in later cyclones such as Phailin (2013) and Fani (2019). Other environmental pressures are harder to solve: air pollution in industrial towns, conflict between people and elephants, and villages displaced or cut off by dams and mines.

- PollutionOdisha’s Air Quality: Is It Time to Act?Rising AQI in the state’s towns.Read article →
- WildlifeRising Elephant ElectrocutionsPower lines and the deaths of wild elephants.Read article →
- DisplacementIndravati’s Forgotten VillagesCommunities left behind by a dam project. Read article →
- WaterBadabarli’s Cry for Water and JusticeA village’s struggle for drinking water.Read article →

07 · Living heritage

Jagannath, culture and heritage today

The Jagannath Temple at Puri is not only a monument but a living institution, governed by the Shree Jagannath Temple Act and served by hereditary *sevayats*. Recent years have brought the Puri heritage corridor, new rules for darshan, training for temple servants and the reopening of the temple's treasury, the Ratna Bhandar. Odia festivals, foods and commemorations keep the state's culture visible nationally.

- Temple lawThe Shree Jagannath Temple ActHow the law governs the temple's administration.Read article →
- TempleDhadi Darshan at the Jagannath TempleThe queue-based darshan system for pilgrims.Read article →
- TempleTraining for the Temple's SevayatsPreparing the servitors of Jagannath.Read article →
- Ratha YatraSacred Timber for the Rath YatraWhere the wood for the chariots comes from. Read article →
- HeritageShakti CorridorA heritage project for Odisha's Shakti shrines.Read article →
- Utkala DibasaUtkal Divas 2025 and Odia PakshaCelebrating Odisha's foundation day. Read article →
- CommemorationHonouring Mata KarmaIndia Post's commemorative stamp.Read article →
- FoodWorld Chhenapoda DibasaHonouring Odisha's iconic sweet and its creator.Read article →

08 · Sport & cities

Sport, Bhubaneswar and the new Odisha

Since 2018 Odisha has sponsored India’s national hockey teams and hosted two men’s World Cups, at Kalinga Stadium in Bhubaneswar and the new Birsa Munda stadium in Rourkela. Bhubaneswar, which topped the first Smart Cities list in 2016, has grown into an education, IT and events hub, while plans for stadiums in every block aim to spread sport beyond the capital.

- SportA Stadium for Every BlockBringing sports infrastructure to rural Odisha.Read article →
- Heritage125 Years of the Paralakhemundi Light RailwayFrom royal rails to modern tracks. Read article →

09 · Complete index

All articles on contemporary Odisha

Every news report, editorial and opinion piece on present-day Odisha on this site, grouped by theme. Type below to find one quickly.

Filter articles 37 articles

Politics & governance

1. 5T Under Scrutiny
2. Political Deadlock in the Odisha Assembly
3. BJD Alleges Discrepancies in Odisha Polls
4. Crime Trends in Odisha, 2024
5. Bangladeshi Infiltration Racket

Economy & industry

1. Odisha on the Rise
2. Odisha: A Land of Heritage and Progress
3. JSW in Keonjhar: Growth or Fallout?
4. Shree Jagannath International Airport, Puri
5. Odisha’s Mangoes Set to Conquer Global Markets
6. Odisha’s Bold Step towards Organic Farming

Welfare, health & society

1. Mission Shakti 2.0
2. Antyodaya Gruha Yojana
3. Ayushman Bharat Scheme
4. Rising Caesarean Deliveries in Odisha
5. Baby for Sale: Unmasking a Hidden Crisis
6. Benga Maa of Odisha

Education & youth

1. Higher Education Faculty Shortage
2. Odisha Universities (Amendment) Bill, 2024
3. Broken Seals, Broken Trust: Recruitment Exams
4. A Stadium for Every Block

Environment & rural Odisha

1. Odisha’s Air Quality: Is It Time to Act?

2. Rising Elephant Electrocutions
3. Indravati’s Forgotten Villages
4. Badabarli’s Cry for Water and Justice

Jagannath & temple affairs

1. The Shree Jagannath Temple Act
2. Dhadi Darshan at the Jagannath Temple
3. Training for the Temple’s Sevayats
4. Sacred Timber for the Rath Yatra
5. Shakti Corridor

Culture & commemoration

1. Utkal Divas 2025 and Odia Paksha
2. Honouring Mata Karma: India Post Stamp
3. World Chhenapoda Dibasa
4. Sambalpur Hanuman Jayanti 2025
5. 125 Years of the Paralakhemundi Light Railway

From province to present

1. Just after the Birth of Modern Odisha
2. Odisha’s Formation Debate

No article matches that search. Try “Jagannath”, “education” or “environment”.

10 · FAQ

Frequently asked questions about contemporary Odisha

What period does contemporary Odisha cover?

On this site, contemporary Odisha covers roughly the year 2000 to the present: the long BJD government under Naveen Patnaik, the change of government in 2024, and current social, economic and cultural issues. Earlier events are covered in History of Modern Odisha.

How long was Naveen Patnaik Chief Minister of Odisha?

Naveen Patnaik was Chief Minister from March 2000 to June 2024, winning five consecutive assembly elections — one of the longest tenures of any chief minister in India.

What happened in the 2024 Odisha assembly election?

In the 2024 election the BJP won a majority in the 147-seat assembly, ending 24 years of BJD rule. Mohan Charan Majhi was sworn in as Chief Minister in June 2024.

When did Orissa become Odisha?

The state’s official English name changed from Orissa to Odisha, and the name of the language from Oriya to Odia, in 2011.

When was Odia declared a classical language?

Odia was recognised as a classical language of India in 2014, the sixth Indian language to receive the status.

Why is Odisha called the hockey capital of India?

Since 2018 the Odisha government has sponsored India’s national hockey teams, and the state hosted the Men’s Hockey World Cup in 2018 and 2023, at Bhubaneswar and Rourkela. Sundargarh district has also produced many national players.

How did Odisha become a model for disaster management?

After the 1999 super cyclone, Odisha set up a dedicated disaster-management authority, built cyclone shelters and trained communities for early evacuation. Mass evacuations during cyclones Phailin (2013) and Fani (2019) kept deaths far lower than in 1999.

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