

AUGUST 24-30, 2025

# SUNDAY POST

HERE . NOW

## CANINE CONUNDRUM

COVER STORY

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SUNDAY

With 'Bou Buttū Bhuta' becoming the biggest blockbuster ever, Jagdish Mishra has firmly established himself as one of the most promising filmmakers in the industry. The VSSUT Burla alumnus began his professional career at Tata Power before discovering his true passion for filmmaking. In 2014, he enrolled at Xavier Institute of Communications (XIC), Mumbai, where he honed his craft for four years. Returning to his roots in Odisha, he embarked on a creative journey. His first Hindi short, 'Lost and Hound', was followed by Odia projects such as the music video 'Kichhi Khyana' and horror short 'Navigator'. His breakthrough came with the hit web series 'Gangs of Puri', paving the way for the massive success of 'Bou Buttū Bhuta'. Currently, he is developing a comedy-drama with Swaraj, a thriller starring Anu Choudhury, and a Hindi film

ANISHA KHATUN, OP



**Family first**  
On Sundays, I prefer a calm and laid-back routine. I enjoy spending time with my loving wife and adorable daughter.

**Wanderlust**  
We often head out for a nearby visit or simply take a random drive with no set destination. Sundays, for me, are always about enjoying fun-filled quality family time together.

**A day sans anxiety**  
My ideal Sunday is one without work pressure—no unfinished tasks, no urgent Monday deadlines. A completely anxiety-free day, where I can truly relax and unwind, makes Sundays the absolute best.



With wife

**Part time chef**  
Though not a great cook, I enjoy cooking whenever possible and love experimenting with dishes. I may not be a branded foodie, but I truly relish good food and exploring new cuisines.



With actor Jagannath Seth

**Idyllic break**  
I've transformed my biggest hobby into my profession, so leisure for me means watching films, reading, café hopping, or writing—or simply lounging on the sofa, blissfully doing nothing.



WhatsApp

This Week

Only on **Sunday POST!**

Send in your most interesting WhatsApp messages and memes at: [features.orissapost@gmail.com](mailto:features.orissapost@gmail.com)  
And we will publish the best ones

THE BEST MEMES OF THIS ISSUE

- They say “don't try this at home” so I'm coming over to your house to try it...
- The 3 stages of man: He believes in Santa Claus. He doesn't believe in Santa Claus. He is Santa Claus.
- Why was the horse so happy? Because he lived in a stable environment.
- If you want breakfast in bed, sleep in the kitchen.



Impacts of online games

Sir, Last week's cover story 'Play Paradox' reflects the rising popularity of online games and its consequences, both good and bad. Online gaming sparks instant connections, sharpening reflexes, strategic thinking and team skills while opening lucrative esports or streaming careers. Cooperative titles like Valorant build global friendships and creative problem-solving. Yet unchecked play breeds addiction, eye strain, disrupted sleep and rising in-game debts. Toxic chats foster bullying; scams lurk behind flashy skins. Hours lost at screens erode physical health and real-life bonds. Balance is vital: schedule breaks, mute abusers, watch spending. Gaming can elevate minds and communities, or quietly drain wallets and well-being. However, in view of passing of real money gaming ban Bill, fantasy games like Dream11 and My Circle 11 should be viewed from different perspectives. These companies appear not to promote or betting as the top court and several high courts, in their judgements, treated these platforms as 'game of skills'. Moreover, they already have generated employments for thousands and have become sponsors of national cricket team as well as IPL teams.

SANATAN SAHOO, JAGATSINGHPUR

LETTERS



A word for readers

Sunday post is serving a platter of delectable fare every week, or so we hope. We want readers to interact with us. Feel free to send in your opinions, queries, comments and contributions to

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Though there's a surge in dog-bite cases of late, Jagabandhu Mohanty, an experienced dog trainer, points out that they have existed for centuries but drawn more attention now due to social media reporting. If strays are fed regularly, treated with compassion, and allowed to feel secure, they are far less likely to attack, he adds

# CANINE CONUNDRUM

ANISHA KHATUN, OP

For generations, stray dogs have been woven into the fabric of both villages and cities—sometimes as guardians of neighborhoods, sometimes as companions of the lonely, and often as silent witnesses to human neglect. Yet, beneath this coexistence lies a simmering tension. Rising incidents of dog bites, territorial aggression, and public anxiety have ignited fierce debates: are human lives and liberties being overshadowed in the pursuit of protecting animal rights? The Supreme Court's recent verdict on stray dogs has thrust this dilemma back into the spotlight, compelling society to reflect not only on law but also on conscience. On one hand is the call for compassion—acknowledging that stray dogs are sentient beings, deserving of dignity, care, and a rightful place on this earth. On the other stands the urgent demand of citizens for safety, health, and freedom of mobility without the constant shadow of fear. This conflict is not one of absolutes; it is layered with complex questions of ethics, jurisprudence, and public welfare. Where does one draw the line between safe-

guarding human rights and preserving the lives of voiceless creatures? The answer is neither simple nor singular. Yet, the path forward cannot be built on cruelty or exclusion. The true challenge lies in forging a middle ground—an equilibrium where humans and strays may coexist without hostility, where compassion does not undermine safety, and where justice extends its hand to every living being that shares our world.

Since the debate continues to stir strong opinions, Sunday POST seeks practical measures from experts toward fostering peaceful coexistence.

## 'Authorities must scale up ABC programmes'

Purabi Patra, founder of Animal Welfare Trust Ekamra (AWTE), has devoted her life to the cause of animal welfare. Leaving behind a promising academic career as an Assistant Pro-

fessor at Indraprastha University, Delhi, she returned to Bhubaneswar to dedicate herself fully to the care and protection of stray animals. Patra strongly believes that India's current challenges with stray dogs do not stem from the presence of these animals, but from ineffective implementation of existing programmes. She draws comparisons with developed nations, where structured systems ensure both public

safety and animal welfare. "When we are in a race to become a developed country and we don't want to see dogs on the road, we should ensure we have the capability to match their infrastructure and resources. They don't kill dogs; they implement effective Animal Birth Control (ABC) programmes," she explains.

Highlighting the shortcomings of the current system, Patra points out how the Animal Birth Control



(ABC) programme, which is designed to be simple and effective, has failed across much of India. The ABC programme typically involves a basic five-day cycle—catching, sterilizing, monitoring, and releasing stray dogs back into their communities. However, despite its straightforward design, the programme has not produced the desired results.

She also critiques proposals that suggest lifetime sheltering of stray dogs, calling them both unrealistic and unsustainable. India's cities, she notes, lack the infrastructure and resources for such an undertaking. "It's impractical to expect the Delhi government to accommodate 3 million dogs, appoint sufficient manpower, and allocate substantial funds for their upkeep. Moreover, housing them together would lead to reproduction if they aren't sterilized, defeating the purpose," she stresses.

According to Patra, the more viable and humane solution lies in ensuring that sterilization programmes are carried out effectively. Neutered dogs not only remain healthier but also become more docile, minimizing the risk of aggressive behavior. Releasing these dogs back into their original territories after sterilization creates a stable and safe balance between human communities and animal populations, while significantly reducing the financial burden on governments.

For Patra, the way forward is clear: instead of investing in impractical large-scale sheltering, authorities must strengthen and scale up ABC programmes. This approach, she argues, is both compassionate and sustainable, creating a coexistence model where humans and animals can thrive together.

## 'This planet is not ours alone'

Actress and animal activist Elina Samantray has long been the voice for those who cannot speak. From childhood she has felt a profound compassion for animals, convinced that real progress means striking harmony between humans and every other living creature.

"I have felt this compassion since I was a child," she says.





“Very few people truly understand the voiceless.

Society must restore balance; this planet is not ours alone. Every being has an equal right to live and thrive.”

Elina believes the lesson must start early. Teach children kindness and respect toward animals, she urges, and a safer, more empathetic world will follow.

“If a child learns from day one to be gentle and friendly, no animal will feel the need to strike back. They attack only when they fear harm. Give them safety, and they will return it.”



She observes that adults, often without realising it, are the ones who plant fear in animals. “Older people often walk with sticks, which can appear threatening to animals. When you approach a stray dog, be gentle and reassuring—let them feel safe, not scared. The animals that have attacked people may have previously been harmed by humans themselves,” she points out.

Elina insists we ignore animal psychology while endlessly debating human and child psychology.

“Animals aren’t as mature as we are. As the smartest species, it’s our duty to understand them, not banish them from society.”

On stray dogs, she endorses sterilize-and-vaccinate as the only humane, workable plan.

Vaccination erases rabies fears. Sterilization keeps numbers in check.

“Mass shelters are impossible: I’ve seen the crowding, the violence, the infections. They solve nothing,” says the actress.

Her one-line manifesto: Be kind. Be compassionate. Let animals live beside us—equal partners on this planet.

‘Public perception should shift from fear to coexistence’

Amulya Nayak, Secretary of People for Ani-

mals (PFA), firmly believes that the only sustainable way to address India’s stray dog issue is through large-scale sterilization and vaccination. For him, the solution lies not in confining animals but in bridging the wide gap between reproduction and sterilization rates.

“To balance this co-existence, sterilization and vaccination programmes should be carried out in mass. Twice a year is their breeding season, but monthly we are able to sterilize only 500-600 dogs, which annually stands at 6,000. As per estimation, there are around 60-70 thousand dogs, out of which 20-30 thousand are female. If they give birth twice, you can imagine the gap between reproduction and sterilization. So we need to do mass vaccination and sterilization; otherwise the situation will grow grim day by day,” Nayak explains.



He emphasizes that sterilization and vaccination are not optional but essential. Sterilization directly controls the dog population, while vaccination protects against rabies, one

of the most serious public health concerns linked to strays. Yet, current efforts fall short. “Sterilization and vaccination is the only way to control the population of stray dogs. Sterilization will control their population and vaccination will control rabies. The 6,000 dogs sterilized annually are being vaccinated, but what about the others? They also need to be vaccinated. As a result, rabies is not coming under control and is aggravating the situation,” he stresses.

Nayak also voices his opposition to the Supreme Court’s recent verdict on stray dogs, rejecting the idea of confining them in shelters. For him, such

measures are not only impractical but also harmful to ecological balance. “We don’t support this Supreme Court verdict. They can’t be put in a jail. Stray animals act as scavengers in our society. If they are not here, then how will our ecosystem be balanced?” he asserts.

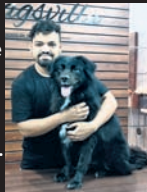
Alongside policy and implementation gaps, Nayak believes society’s attitude toward stray dogs needs transformation. Public perception, he insists, should shift from fear to co-existence. “I will urge people to raise love and respect for these animals, to run awareness drives, and to treat dogs as cohabitants and not as threats,” he appeals.

For Nayak, the vision is clear: strengthen sterilization and vaccination programmes, address rabies through mass drives, and nurture a culture of compassion where stray dogs are seen as fellow inhabitants, not adversaries.



Reasons dogs turn violent

Jagabandhu Mohanty, owner of Wagsville Dog Training Academy and an experienced dog trainer, shares valuable insights into the behavior of dogs and why they sometimes turn violent. According to him, dogs have always been territorial by nature. “Whenever they sense something unusual or suspicious around them, they react instinctively. This is not a new phenomenon,” he explains. Mohanty points out that dog-bite cases have existed for years, though the recent rise in incidents has drawn more attention. However, he cautions that not all reports in the media are accurate, as many stories are exaggerated to gain views and traction when the subject trends. Importantly, he emphasises that stray dogs should not be blamed solely for aggressive behavior. “We humans share responsibility for this situation,” Mohanty notes. If dogs are fed regularly, treated with compassion, and allowed to feel secure, they are far less likely to attack. Unfortunately, in many cases, people mistreat, hurt, or even beat stray dogs, leading the animals to retaliate in defence. Mohanty stresses that long-term change lies in education and awareness. Parents, he says, play a crucial role. “Some parents teach their children that dogs are a threat, which only creates fear and misunderstanding. Instead, we should encourage children to see dogs—and all animals—as companions deserving of kindness.” By nurturing compassion and removing fear, he believes, society can foster harmony between humans and animals. “Only then can we truly coexist peacefully,” Mohanty concludes.





# Monsoon care for your furry friends

**M**onsoons are the time when your pets develop hair and skin issues due to the moisture in the air, humidity and the heat wave. It is, therefore, essential to ensure a thorough and regular grooming session, which will help them survive the season without any issues. For instance, keeping them dry should be the first step to ensure healthy skin and hair.

Keeping your pets clean and healthy will also be beneficial for your hygiene. I suggest some of the best practices that you can incorporate regarding grooming routine that would ensure your pet does not have to face any issues related to hair and skin:

**Keep your pets dry**

Make it a point to keep the fur of your pet dry, ensure that after a morning walk or time when there's moisture in the air, or your pet's fur seems damp, dry it with towels.

Using a hair dryer on a low setting to dry off their fur is the best way to ensure no moisture is left.

Focus on areas like skin folds, paws and underbelly.

Invest in a good quality rain gear for your pet as they too require protection against the rain. Also, ensure there is no stagnant water in the surroundings where your pet lurks, and keep the environment around them comfortable and clean.

**Avoid damp bedding**

Keep your pet's bedding dry and ensure there's no moisture to

avoid any infections. Place a plastic sheet under the bed or use water-proof bedding.

During monsoons or extreme humidity, reduce their outdoor activities as it may lead to dampness that would settle in their fur, leading to fungal infections.

Regular cleaning and changing of bedding will ensure that your pet is able to stay dry and their fur is healthy in the monsoon season.

**Regular check**

Treat your pet like a child and regularly check them for dampness, especially after walks when

it is incessantly raining.

Regularly check for any signs of skin irritation or redness. If you see them scratching excessively, then consult a vet.

Keep a regular check to ensure they do not have any fleas or ticks.

Excessive panting and lethargy can be more than just a passing phase. These point to dehydration. Ensure that they have access to clean drinking water at all times.

Consider providing boiled drinking water to your pet to ensure they stay away from any waterborne diseases, especially during summer.

Keep antifungal powder, tick and flea repellents handy to ensure that your pet is free of pests.

**Grooming routine**

Regularly brush the fur of your pet. This helps dislodge loose fur, prevents matting and enhances air circulation, improving their coat.

Keep their fur trimmed, especially during monsoon. This will protect the fur from dampness and matting.

Use specially formulated antifungal shampoos. It will help prevent fungal infections.

Dirt and muck from the ground easily get stuck in the paws; therefore, I suggest regularly cleaning them with antiseptic after every walk to ensure their hygiene. Additionally, you can invest in good-quality pet boots to protect their paws during monsoons.

**Regularly clean their ears**

Your pet is like a best buddy that loves you unconditionally, and you should also ensure their life is comfortable and well taken care of. In the same light, ensure you feed them a balanced and healthy diet, inclusive of fibre, omega-3 and omega-6 fatty acids for healthy skin and coat. Proper hydration is required to avoid dehydration.

The author is international fame beauty expert and is called herbal queen of indi.

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SHAHNAZ HUSSAIN







## Ladheï slated for Diwali release

**Bhubaneswar** — The much-awaited Odia film *Ladheï* is set to light up theatres this Diwali, delivering a potent mix of action, emotion and fresh talent. Directed by the seasoned Ashok Pati and produced by Debasis Patnaik under the banner of DRS Enterprises, *Ladheï* introduces dynamic newcomer Lohitakshya Pattnaik as Leo, a man caught in a storm of inner conflict and outer chaos. Opposite him, rising star Abhilipsa brings new-age chemistry to Odia cinema. Written by Bharadwaj Panda, *Ladheï* is more than an action film; it is a journey of transformation. As Leo battles his demons, audiences will be taken on an emotional roller-coaster rooted in originality and real-life grit. Veteran actors Pritiranjana, KK, Smita Choudhury, Manoj Dandapat and Rajlaxmi Dakua round out the cast, blending experience with youthful energy.



## Vaani's note of gratitude

**N**etflix and YRF Entertainment's much-awaited series *Mandala Murders* premiered July 25, 2025, bringing audiences a mythological-crime thriller unlike anything seen on Indian OTT before. For Vaani Kapoor, the show marked a special milestone—her streaming debut and her first collaboration with filmmaker Gopi Puthran, the creator of the acclaimed *Mardaani* franchise. Reflecting on its success, Vaani expressed her gratitude for the global response. “Seeing *Mandala Murders* trend worldwide for three weeks has been surreal. I never imagined such overwhelming love. This debut is deeply personal, and I’ll always cherish it,” she said. She further added that the show’s universal impact lies in its roots. “India has always been known for its mythology and stories. That rooted-ness al-

lows our content to connect not just with Indian audiences but also with viewers across the globe curious about our culture and identity.” Adapted from the novel *The Butcher of Benares*, the series is set in the fictional town of Chaurandaspur, Uttar Pradesh. It follows detectives Rea Thomas and Vikram Singh as they unravel ritualistic murders linked to a secret cult, the Aayastis, and a terrifying mythical force called Yast. Featuring Vaibhav Raj Gupta, Surveen Chawla, and Shriya Pilgaonkar, and directed by Puthran, *Mandala Murders* cements itself as one of Netflix India’s most ambitious and genre-defying originals.



## Shruti claps back at trolls

**S**hruti Haasan has never hesitated to speak her mind, and recently she addressed the criticism she faced after candidly admitting to undergoing cosmetic procedures. In an interview, the actress revealed that she was labeled “plastic ki dukaan” after opening up about her choices. Shruti explained that while such remarks can be harsh, they don’t affect her anymore. “I know what and how much I have done, and how much more others have. That’s the price you pay for honesty. It’s okay, and I never promote it. This is my choice,” she said. She emphasised that her decisions were personal and not meant to set an example for others. According to her, people will always criticise when someone dares to speak the truth—whether in love, life, or career—but, she added, “What a good price to pay.” On the professional front, Shruti’s latest film *Coolie*, directed by Lokesh Kanagaraj and starring Rajinikanth, is enjoying a strong theatrical run. Released on August 14, the action-adventure has grossed over 200 crore despite clashing with *War 2*. Featuring Nagarjuna, Upendra Rao, Sathyaraj, and Soubin Shahir, with cameos by Aamir Khan and Pooja Hegde, the film stands apart from Kanagaraj’s famed cinematic universe.



## Rashmika's 'happy dance'

**A**ctress Rashmika Mandanna’s heart did a little ‘happy dance’ after back-to-back big updates, including the launch of her perfume line Dear Diary, followed by the FIA parade and the release of the Thama teaser. The Pushpa actress posted a string of goofy selfies on social media and expressed her gratitude, saying, “Sooo many things happening at once and my heart is just doing a little happy dance...Dear Diary launch.. then the FIA parade and now the Thama teaser finally out in the world!!!” “Sometimes I just sit back and go like ‘Rushie, breathe... take this in’ And honestly, I feel nothing but grateful. Gratitude is the word,” Rashmika added. Rashmika launched her perfume line Dear Diary in July this year.

“For me, fragrance is memory. I don’t remember most things, or maybe it’s just selective memory, but perfumes bring back special moments that might otherwise be forgotten. It’s how I hold on to the people, places, and experiences that shaped who I am,” she wrote. Not just that, Rashmika and Vijay Deverakonda took the centre stage at this year’s India Day Parade in New York. The Geetha Govindam co-stars served as co-grand marshals during the celebrations 17th August under the theme Sarve Bhavantu Sukhinah – a Sanskrit phrase meaning “May all be happy”. Over and above this, the teaser of her much-anticipated romantic horror-comedy, *Thama*, alongside Ayushmann Khurrana is also out.



# Festive DELICACIES

Ganesh Chaturthi is one of the most vibrant festivals in India, celebrated with devotion, joy, and of course, food. Lord Ganesha, fondly called Modakpriya, is believed to have a special love for sweets, and no celebration feels complete without offering him traditional delicacies. While modak remains the star of the occasion, there are several other sweets prepared during this festival that add flavour, variety, and warmth to the festivities. Here are five must-try sweet recipes for this festival season

## Coconut Barfi

A classic festive sweet, Coconut Barfi is simple to prepare but incredibly rich in taste. Freshly grated coconut is cooked with condensed milk or sugar until it thickens, and flavored with cardamom. It is then spread on a greased tray and cut into square or diamond-shaped pieces. Soft, chewy, and mildly sweet, coconut barfi is perfect for offering to Lord Ganesha. To make it even more festive, you can add a layer of edible silver leaf (varak) or sprinkle pistachios on top.



## Chhena Jhili

A rare gem from Odisha's culinary treasure, Chhena Jhili originates from Nimapada in Puri district. Made with freshly curdled chhena (cottage cheese), these deep-fried dumplings are soaked in light sugar syrup that perfectly balances sweetness with softness. Once a staple at Odia festivals, Chhena Jhili is slowly fading from regular festive menus but remains a melt-in-the-mouth delicacy worth reviving for Ganesh Chaturthi.

## Shrikhand

For those who prefer a creamy dessert, Shrikhand is a delightful choice. This yogurt-based sweet is made by straining curd to obtain thick hung curd, which is then whisked with sugar, saffron and cardamom until smooth. Garnished with nuts, shrikhand is served chilled, making it a refreshing addition to the festive menu. It pairs beautifully with puris or can be enjoyed on its own as a rich, cooling treat after a day of celebrations.

## Mandua Pitha

Mandua Pitha is a wholesome Odia delicacy prepared with wheat flour, jaggery, and aromatic spices like fennel and black pepper. Once a common festive sweet in rural Odisha, it was offered during religious occasions and known for its earthy flavor and nutritional richness. Deep-fried in ghee until golden brown, these pithas are crisp on the outside and soft inside, carrying a subtle sweetness balanced with a hint of spice. Including Mandua Pitha in Ganesh Chaturthi feasts revives a fading tradition while adding a touch of rustic charm to the festivities.



## Rava Ladoo

Quick, easy, and utterly delicious, Rava Ladoo (or Suji Ladoo) is a popular sweet for Ganesh Chaturthi. Made with roasted semolina, ghee, sugar, and flavored with cardamom, these laddoos are shaped into round balls and garnished with cashews and raisins. The texture is grainy yet soft, making them a favorite among kids and adults alike. Since they have a longer shelf life compared to other sweets, rava laddoos are often made in bulk during the festival and shared with family, neighbors, and guests.

Ganesh Chaturthi is not just about rituals and prayers—it is about togetherness, joy, and celebrating the sweet side of life. These recipes add variety and richness to the festive platter while honouring Lord Ganesha's love for sweets. So, this Ganesh Chaturthi, bring home the blessings of Bappa with these delightful sweets and make the festival truly memorable.





www.stellarhistory.com

*It was a peculiar conflict that took place in Western Australia in 1932 involving soldiers and a large population of emus that were destroying crops. The emus, however, proved to be surprisingly resilient leading to a series of failed attempts by the military and ultimately a rather comical and humiliating defeat for the humans. The failure was the subject of national and international ridicule*

# THE GREAT EMU WAR

Several wars throughout history stand out as particularly fascinating due to their scale, impact, or unique characteristics. In this series about, **Sunday POST** last week shared how the Persians used cats as shields to beat Egypt in 5th BCE. Though there are a few wars where animals played crucial roles in deciding their fate, not many instances are there when people waged a war against animals and were left in the losing side.

One such battle is the The Great Emu War. As the name suggests, the war was against thousands of emus in Australia and the result had gone in favour of the animals.

The war was a military operation to address the issue of emus, large flightless birds, damaging large amounts of crops in Western Australia. The campaign lasted from November to December 1932. The target was to cull roughly 20,000 emus using machine guns. The assignment was made in response to petitions from local farmers complaining of emus destroying their crops. After two months, fewer than 1,000 emus were reported killed. The failure was the subject of national and international ridicule.

## Why a "war" was declared

In 1932 Western Australia was reeling. Wheat prices had collapsed during the Great Depression, promised subsidies never arrived, and 20,000 emus—six-foot-tall flightless birds weighing up to 55 kg—marched out of the drought-stricken interior toward newly cleared soldier-settler farms around Campion and Walgoolan. The birds shredded fences, devoured crops, and opened the way for rabbits and dingoes. Desperate veterans, many of whom had handled Lewis guns on the Western

Front, petitioned the Minister of Defence, Sir George Pearce, for something decisive. Pearce agreed, seeing a chance both to appease angry constituents and give his troops live-fire practice. A Fox Movietone cameraman was even dispatched to record the expected triumph.

Human forces were tiny: Major GPW Meredith, Sergeant S McMurray and Gunner J O'Halloran of the Royal Australian Artillery—three men in total—plus two Lewis light machine-guns and 10,000 rounds of ammunition. Their enemy, emus numbered roughly 20,000 and could sprint at 50 km/h through scrub and wheat stubble.

## Opening skirmishes

The first ambush failed almost comically. Locals tried to herd fifty emus into the gunners' sights; the birds split into small squads and vanished. Later that day a dozen fell, but only after exhausting bursts of fire at extreme range. The most promising set-piece came on November 4, when more than 1,000 emus approached

a dam. At point-blank range the gun jammed after twelve birds—then the rest scattered like "feathered cavalry."

## Tactical adaptations

Major Meredith mounted one Lewis gun on a flat-bed truck, reasoning that motorized pursuit would outrun the birds. The tactic flopped: the truck lurched over ruts, the gunner could not hold aim, and one vehicle even overturned trying to keep pace. Meanwhile, the emus appeared to adopt guerrilla discipline, splitting into groups of five to ten and using cover so effectively that soldiers expended ten rounds for every confirmed kill.

Observers were amazed at the birds' resilience. Rounds that struck glanced off dense feathers and tough hide; emus sometimes absorbed half a dozen bullets before collapsing. Meredith ruefully reported that "if we had a military division with the bullet-carrying capacity of these birds it would face any army in the world."



## Withdrawal & offensive

After six days and 2,500 rounds fired, fewer than 200 birds lay dead. Embarrassed by mocking headlines, the House of Representatives recalled the detachment on November 8. Farmers begged for a second chance; the government quietly ordered Meredith back to the field.

Reinforced but wiser, the trio tried coordinated sweeps with settlers on horseback. Daily tallies improved—about 100 emus killed per week—but the birds simply kept coming. By early December ammunition was almost exhausted; the final tally, according to Meredith's log, was 986 confirmed kills plus an estimated 2,500 wounded birds presumed dead—still a tiny fraction of the invading horde. On December 10 the "war" was officially abandoned.

## Public reaction

Australian newspapers roasted the government: "Our men were out-generalled by birds." British outlets gleefully compared the emus to Zulu warriors. Internationally, the incident became a Depression-era comic relief piece, but it also spurred early wildlife-management debate. Ornithologists Dominic Serventy and Hubert Whittell denounced the slaughter as "an attempt at mass extermination," and public sympathy swung toward the emus.

## Aftermath

Humiliated, the federal government refused three later requests (1934, 1943, 1948) to deploy troops against emus. Instead, a bounty system introduced in 1923 was expanded; in six months of 1934 alone, civilians claimed rewards for 57,034 emus, proving marksmanship plus incentives more efficient than military hardware. The episode also hastened research into emu-proof fencing and migration corridors, laying groundwork for modern coexistence strategies. Ironically, the national icon emerged from the "war" more popular than ever, its image featured on the Australian coat of arms and countless road signs cautioning drivers to yield to the victorious birds.

Australian wild emus became formally protected by the Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act in 1999.

OP DESK